

## American Nephrology Nurses Association

### Daily Capitol Hill Update - Monday, January 6, 2020

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

#### Schedules: White House and Congress

##### WHITE HOUSE

- President Trump says he is prepared to strike Iran “in a disproportionate manner” if it retaliates against any U.S. target following the deadly drone attack on the Islamic Republic’s most prominent military commander
- 11:45am: Trump takes part in an Oval Office ceremony for newly appointed ambassadors to Washington, D.C.
- 12:15pm: Receives intelligence briefing
- 1pm: Trump has lunch with the Vice President Mike Pence

##### CONGRESS

- Senate meets at 3pm; Kelly Loeffler is sworn in as Georgia’s junior senator at 5pm; vote on limiting debate on nomination of Jovita Carranza to lead the Small Business Administration
- Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Friday he was working to arrange a briefing for senators on the Iraq airstrikes
  - McConnell also said his chamber will continue with “ordinary business” while it waits for the Democratic-led House to transmit articles of impeachment against Trump

#### Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Health Care Coverage Legislation Hearing:** The House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee meets Wednesday to discuss seven measures addressing health care coverage, including H.R. 3935 to continue requiring Medicaid coverage of nonemergency transportation to medically necessary services; H.R. 4801 to reauthorize the Healthy Start program; and H.R. 5534 to provide for extended months of Medicare coverage of immunosuppressive drugs for kidney transplant patients.
- **Trump Vows Possible Disproportionate Strikes, House Plans Vote:** Trump told U.S. lawmakers yesterday he was prepared to strike Iran “in a disproportionate manner” if the Islamic Republic hits any U.S. target, and that his Twitter posts are sufficient to notify Congress of his intentions.
  - House Democrats responded within hours with a plan to vote to limit the president’s war powers and a reminder to Trump that “you’re not a dictator.”
  - Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said in a letter to colleagues last night that the House this week will introduce and vote on a war powers resolution that would limit Trump in any potential military actions regarding Iran. Pelosi said the

legislation is similar to that introduced in the Senate by Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.). It would stipulate that “if no further Congressional action is taken, the Administration’s military hostilities with regard to Iran cease within 30 days.”

- The resolution will be sponsored by Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-Mich.), a freshman who flipped a Trump-won House district in 2018, and was a former CIA and Pentagon analyst.
  - Senior Pentagon officials briefed staff members from the House Armed Service Committee and Senate Armed Service Committee on Friday about recent threats and attacks on U.S. personnel and interests, including the 11 attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq since October and attack on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad on Dec. 27. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said more congressional briefings would come this week.
  - Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) said on ABC yesterday that that the White House’s formal notice to Congress on the U.S. strike that killed top Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, delivered on Saturday, had been “very unsatisfying” on the reasoning behind the strike. “I think Congress, and I will do everything I can to assert our authority,” Schumer said. “We do not need this president either stumbling or impulsively getting us into a major war.”
- **Biden Defends Foreign Policy Record:** Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden defended his foreign policy record as he campaigns on the argument that he’s best suited to be commander-in-chief amid Trump’s threats against Iran. “It’s not to suggest I haven’t made mistakes in my career but I would put my record against anyone in public life in terms of foreign policy,” Biden said Saturday at a rally in Des Moines, Iowa, when a voter asked him how he could be trusted given his past positions. The voter cited Biden’s 2002 vote to authorize the use of military force in Iraq and how he reportedly discouraged President Barack Obama from moving ahead with a raid on the Afghan compound where Osama bin Laden was believed to be hiding.
    - On Sunday, a trio of House Democrats with military backgrounds, all elected since Trump took office, endorsed Biden. Reps. Conor Lamb (Pa.), Chrissy Houlahan (Pa.), and Elaine Luria (Va.) are backing the former vice president. Trump won Lamb and Luria’s districts in 2016, and Houlahan flipped her seat when she was elected in 2018. “Joe Biden is ‘battle-tested’ on the world stage, in Congress, and in the White House,” Luria said in a statement. “He will defeat Donald Trump and win in tough districts like mine. When he walks into the Oval Office, he will immediately get to work, rebuild the middle class and restore our standing on the world stage”
- **Iowa Poll Shows Sanders, Biden, Buttigieg Tied:** A CBS News poll shows a three-way tie among Democrats in Iowa, with Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Biden and Pete Buttigieg each at 23% support. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) at 16% and Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) at 7% rounded out the top five, a month before Iowa voters attend the caucuses.
    - In New Hampshire, the second state to hold a 2020 nominating contest, Sanders was in the lead at 27% to Biden’s 25%, with Warren at 18% and Buttigieg at 13%.

- **Chafee Running for President, Now as a Libertarian:** Lincoln Chafee, the former Republican senator, Independent governor and 2016 Democratic presidential candidate, has filed paperwork with the Federal Election Commission to run for president and plans to seek the Libertarian nomination, reports WPRI in Rhode Island, where Chafee previously held office. Though Chafee didn't make much of a mark in the 2016 race, his move may renew concerns among Democrats about a third-party candidate who could tip the balance in critical swing states. His brief campaign in 2016 was best known for his bristling at a debate question and plans to adopt the metric system.
- **'Friends' of Koch-Backed Group Descend on Supreme Court:** Friends of a charity tied to the Koch brothers are flooding the U.S. Supreme Court with briefs that they hope will help convince the justices to nix a California law targeting donors. Twenty-two amicus briefs urge the court to take up the Americans for Prosperity Foundation's First Amendment challenge of the requirement that non-profit charities disclose their largest donors to state officials to assist them in investigating fraud. The foundation and its supporters for high court review claim the law infringes on the right to freely associate with groups and organizations, and could put donors at risk if sensitive information ever became public.
- **Warren Backs USMCA:** Sen. Warren said on Friday she would vote for the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, joining moderate competitors Biden and Klobuchar while distancing herself from Sanders, an opponent of the accord. Her campaign said the revised agreement offered stronger labor standards, more certainty for farmers and dropped a provision that would make it harder to bring down prescription drug prices.

  - The Senate Finance Committee meets tomorrow to mark up the House-passed U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (H.R. 5430). Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) said in a statement last week he'll work to steer passage of the measure.
- **House to Vote on Age Bias Bill This Month:** The House will vote in the coming weeks on a bill that would make it easier for workers to prove age, disability, and similar discrimination claims in court, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) announced. The Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act would lower a bar that currently requires workers to show that age and disability discrimination was the "but for" reason behind an employer's decision to fire, demote, or take other adverse actions against them. If the bill becomes law, fewer cases could be thrown out or settled before trial, allowing more discrimination claims to play out in court. The vote is tentatively set to take place the week of Jan. 13, Hoyer said in a "dear colleague" letter on Friday to House lawmakers.
- **Trump Renominates Judicial Picks:** Trump renominated four of his judicial selections on Friday, including appeals court nominee Andrew Brasher, after Senate inaction on the nominations before the end of the last session caused them to lapse. All four of the nominees already had hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee in the past year, which means they likely won't need to be reheard by the panel. That could put them at

the top of the list for a vote by the committee as the new congressional session begins. The other picks renominated were Joshua M. Kindred, who is tapped for the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska; Matthew Thomas Schelp, who is nominated to the Eastern District of Missouri; and Stephen A. Vaden, who is nominated to the U.S. Court of International Trade.

- **Roe to Retire:** Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.) said in a statement Friday that he will retire at the end of 2020. He said he looks forward “to finishing my term strongly for the East Tennesseans that I love representing.” Roe’s district, Tennessee’s 1st, is one of the most Republican-leaning in the U.S. and voted for Trump by a 77% to 20% margin in 2016. He was elected in 2008 and has served as chairman of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee and is the current head of the Republican Doctors Caucus.
- **Trump’s Mideast Strategy in Tatters:** Trump and his top aides spent the weekend arguing that the killing of Soleimani would deter future attacks and help make the Middle East safer. Instead, U.S. policy in the region seems to be going in the opposite direction of what Trump has long promised -- with more U.S. troops going in, not fewer; an Iran defiant, not cowed and broken by sanctions; and regional allies giving only lukewarm support to Trump’s airstrike instead of rallying around it. Economic costs of the strike are also mounting: oil surged above \$70 a barrel, equities around the world fell and gold rose to the highest in more than six years.
- **Trump Threatens Sanctions on Ally Iraq:** Trump yesterday also threatened heavy sanctions on Iraq if American troops are forced to leave unless the country repays billions in military base construction costs. Trump, speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One last night, said going into the Middle East was the worst decision the U.S. has ever made, and that the U.S. had spent billions of dollars building a military base in the country.
  - “We have a very extraordinarily expensive air base that’s there. It cost billions of dollars to build. Long before my time. We’re not leaving unless they pay us back for it,” Trump told reporters while flying back from Florida. “If they do ask us to leave, if we don’t do it in a very friendly basis. We will charge them sanctions like they’ve never seen before ever. It’ll make Iranian sanctions look somewhat tame.”
- **Trump Finds Solace in New Adviser:** As Trump prepared to kill a top Iranian general on Thursday, he sought the advice of a relatively new aide who has rapidly become indispensable to the president: National Security Adviser Robert O’Brien. O’Brien was celebrating the holidays in Pasadena, Calif., more than two thousand miles from Trump’s Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida. Other key aides including Pompeo and Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney consulted with the president remotely, but a government jet was dispatched to fetch O’Brien and bring him to Palm Beach for the strike on Soleimani. It was telling that Trump summoned not his chief of staff or one of his Cabinet secretaries, but an aide who has won him over in recent months with a calm

loyalty and unfailing willingness to implement the president's at times controversial and dramatic lurches in American foreign policy.

- O'Brien may face scrutiny over the strike as lawmakers and the public seek more details about "imminent" attacks Trump said Soleimani was planning. And if Iran retaliates, as it has promised, questions about the decision will intensify.
- **U.S. Official Central to Hawkish Iran Policies Departs NSC:** Richard Goldberg, the U.S. National Security Council official who clashed with other members of the administration over his push for a more hawkish stance toward Iran, is leaving the job after one year for personal reasons, a person familiar with the matter said. Former National Security Adviser John Bolton created Goldberg's job -- director for countering Iran's weapons of mass destruction -- explicitly for him. The goal was to counter what Bolton saw as a desire at the departments of State and Treasury to weaken the "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.
- **Maduro Forces Block Guaido From Entering Congress:** Opposition leader Juan Guaido saw his power base crumble yesterday when Venezuelan government and rebel opposition lawmakers ousted him as president of the National Assembly, in what's been characterized as a parliamentary coup. As security forces blocked Guaido and other opposition lawmakers entering the building, Luis Parra, a deputy ensnared in a corruption scandal, declared himself the new leader of the chamber by megaphone amid chaotic scenes. Refusing to relinquish control of the legislature, Guaido later called an off-site session of congress -- in the building that houses the newspaper El Nacional -- where his bid for a second term as head of the assembly was met with majority approval, creating what would appear to be, at least for now, dueling legislative bodies.
- **One U.S. Service Member, Two Contractors Killed in Kenya:** One U.S. service member and two defense contractors were killed yesterday in an al-Qaeda-linked raid on a joint defense facility in Kenya, authorities said. Two more service members were wounded and have been evacuated. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of our teammates who lost their lives today," U.S. Army General Stephen Townsend, commander, U.S. Africa Command, said in a statement.
- **U.S. Embassy Condemns Deadly Libya Strike:** The U.S. embassy in Libya condemned an air strike on an a military academy in Tripoli that killed 30 people, blaming it on forces affiliated with eastern commander Khalifa Haftar. The embassy warned of "toxic foreign interference" in Libya, according to its statement, saying Turkey had sent Syrian fighters to back the internationally recognized government in Tripoli, while Russian mercenaries support Haftar.
- **How the Pentagon Was Duped by Contractors:** Shell companies have come under attack for obscuring illicit money flowing into real estate. But it turns out they're also a problem for the Pentagon. Some Defense Department suppliers have used such front companies to fraudulently win manufacturing bids, according to a U.S. Government

Accountability Office study of Defense Department contractors. In some cases, the shell companies helped contractors obscure that they were making U.S. military equipment abroad, the GAO said, posing a risk to national security and quality control. More often, they were used to win contracts meant for companies owned by disabled veterans or minorities, it said.

- **China Plans to Send Team to U.S. for Deal Signing:** The Chinese trade delegation plans to sign the first phase of its trade deal with the U.S. in Washington on Jan. 15, according to people familiar with the matter. The plan is still to send its top negotiator, Vice Premier Liu He, to ink the deal, said the people, who asked not to be identified discussing the private plans. The team will be in Washington from Jan. 13 to Jan. 15, one of the people said. The South China Morning Post earlier reported the dates. The group had originally aimed to travel earlier in the month, but had to alter its plans after Trump sent a tweet saying the deal would be signed Jan. 15 at the White House, according to the SCMP.
- **Trump Administration Asks High Court to Back Abortion Curbs:** The Trump administration urged the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold a Louisiana law that requires doctors who perform abortions to get admitting privileges at a local hospital. Taking a stand in a case set for argument March 4, U.S. Solicitor General Noel Francisco said the court might need to overrule a 2016 ruling that struck down a similar Texas law. Opponents say the law would leave Louisiana with only one clinic, in New Orleans, and just one abortion doctor to serve the roughly 10,000 women who seek to end a pregnancy every year in the state.
- **Perry Joins Energy Transfer Board:** Former U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry is joining the board of the general partner that controls Dallas-based pipeline giant Energy Transfer. The move puts Perry, who departed the Energy Department in December, back at the table of one of the biggest pipeline operators in the U.S. Billionaire Kelcy Warren's Energy Transfer has made headlines for pursuing large projects and transactions that sometimes irked shareholders and regulators.
- **Selective Service Website Falters Over Draft Fears:** Concerns that Washington may revive the draft to fight a new war in the Middle East spiked after the U.S. killed a top Iranian military leader in a drone strike, taking down the Selective Service System website. Hashtags such as #WWIII, #WorldWarThree and #WorldWarThreeDraft all trended on Twitter after the U.S. took out Iran's Qassem Soleimani and announced that it was sending about 2,800 additional troops to the region -- a sudden and dramatic increase in tensions. The system website crashed because of "the spread of misinformation," the agency said Friday on Twitter. Pages were loading intermittently on Saturday. Google searches for "draft age" also jumped in the U.S. on Friday.
- **Trump Says Alleged Rape Victim Can't Sue Him in New York:** Trump asked a New York judge to throw out an advice columnist's lawsuit accusing him of defamation after

he denied her claim that he raped her in a department store dressing room two decades ago. E. Jean Carroll, who went public with her allegation against Trump in a June magazine article, can't sue the president in New York because the statements at issue were all made in Washington, his lawyer said in a New York state court filing Friday.