

World News Roundup

Race

Biden's 2020 opening?

US needs to address 'ugly racism history'

MANCHESTER, NH, Feb 23, (AP): Sen **Elizabeth Warren**, who said earlier this week that she supports reparations for black Americans who have been affected by slavery, told reporters Friday that the nation needs to confront its "ugly history of racism" and "talk about the right way to address it and make change."

Warren addressed race in a speech Friday to New Hampshire Democrats, but didn't speak specifically about reparations. She said black families in America have been disadvantaged by "structural racism" and have only \$5 in wealth for every \$100 in wealth owned by the average white family.

"Race matters and we need to say so," she said. Warren was asked later whether she would include Native Americans in her support for reparations. She responded: "I think it's a part of the conversation. It's an important part of the conversation."

She has been criticized for claiming Native American identity early in her career and apologized recently to the Cherokee Nation for releasing DNA test results as evidence she had Native American in her bloodline, albeit at least six generations back.

During her speech, Warren told the audience she proposed a universal child care plan because no American family should experience the desperation she did as a working mother to find safe, reliable, quality child care.

"We're the richest country in the history of the planet," Warren told a room of about 1,000 people in Manchester at the state Democratic Party's biggest fundraiser. "Access to high-quality care and education during the first five years of a child's life shouldn't be a privilege reserved for the rich. It should be a right for every child."

The Massachusetts senator delivered her remarks during her second visit to the state since announcing her presidential bid.

Warren would pay for universal child care with a 2 percent tax annually on households' net worth greater than \$50 million. Under the plan, no family would pay more than 7 percent of its income for child care, and families earning below 200 percent of the federal poverty line — about \$51,000 a year for a family of four — would pay nothing.

Child care

Warren said her plan would give all families access to the kind of child care the federal government currently provides military families.

"When a working family here in New Hampshire is paying a quarter of their income to cover child care, a Republican-controlled Congress decided it was more important to pass a trillion-dollar giveaway to the wealthiest and giant corporations," Warren said, referring to the 2017 tax overhaul.

Local communities would oversee their child care, preschool and in-home providers under Warren's plan, but they would be held to national standards. Warren said her plan would benefit women especially because they, more often than men, give up jobs and careers when families can't find child care.

Meanwhile, in town halls, television interviews and social media posts, Democratic presidential candidates are touting their support for "Medicare-for-all," higher taxes on the wealthy and a war on climate change. But foreign policy, one of the chief responsibilities of a president, is largely taking a back seat on the campaign trail.

Former vice-president Joe Biden is seizing on that opening to position himself as the sole global policy expert in a crowded Democratic field if he decides to run for president.

In a series of speeches over the past month, Biden sought to position himself as an authoritative counterweight to President Donald Trump's isolationist and nationalistic impulses. Last week, he told an audience in Germany that his vision of America "stands up to the aggression of dictators." The problems of the 21st century, he later said at the University of Pennsylvania, can't be solved "without there being cooperation." His advisers have endorsed his foreign policy credentials to key political operatives and allies in early-voting presidential states.

The moves reflect the vulnerabilities Biden, a 76-year-old firmly aligned with the Democratic establishment, could face in a crowded primary with rivals who are decades younger and working overtime to appeal to the party's liberal base. In that kind of race, Biden could carve out space as a battle-tested statesman with the experience to stabilize America's role in the world.

Sen Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat who has already pledged to support Biden over home-state colleague Kamala Harris, recently summed up his advantage: "Huge international experience," she told reporters. "And a knowledge that's really unparalleled in terms of what's happening in the world."

Scott Mulhauser, Biden's former deputy chief of staff, said focusing on foreign policy and national security "is a smart way to draw distinctions" in the primary field.

But running on foreign policy could carry risks for Biden. Although the election season is in its infancy and a crisis could shuffle priorities, it's not clear that foreign policy is a top issue on voters' minds.

AP VoteCast, a nationwide survey of the American electorate, found that 5 percent of 2018 midterm voters said foreign policy was the top issue facing the country.

That falls well behind the percentage saying health care (26 percent), immigration (23 percent) or the economy (18 percent) topped their list of issues facing the country.

Trump's foreign policy has alarmed longtime allies and spurred criticism at home. A January AP-NORC survey found that 35 percent of Americans approve of the president on foreign policy, while 63 percent disapproved. Trump's slated second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un next week will provide a fresh opportunity for the president to rebound or fall further, as well as for his Democratic would-be opponents to draw sharp contrasts with his self-proclaimed "America First" diplomacy.

But that doesn't mean that Democrats, who are sorting through the most diverse and wide-open primary field in a generation, will warm to a Biden campaign focused on foreign policy.



Warren



High school students and others taking a tour of the University of Mississippi try to keep dry under umbrellas as rain continues to fall in Oxford, Miss., Feb. 22. A soggy South saw floodwaters push into homes and submerge highways Friday as a week of relentless rain continued to pound the Mississippi and Tennessee valleys. (AP)



Britain's main opposition Labour Party leader **Jeremy Corbyn** looks out before making a speech at a Voluntary Action rally in Beeston, England, Feb. 23. (AP)



Agnelli



Hasselmann

Europe

Widow of late Fiat chief dies:

Marella Agnelli, the 91-year-old wife of late Fiat Chairman Gianni Agnelli, died on Saturday at her home in Turin, the Agnelli family said in a statement.

Born in Florence to Neapolitan Prince Filippo Caracciolo, a diplomat, and Illinois heiress Margaret Clarke, Marella married the grandson of Fiat's founder Giovanni Agnelli in 1953.

The couple had two children, Edoardo and Margherita, mother of current Fiat Chrysler Chairman John Elkann.

A style icon, Marella was famous for her long and elegant neck, reminiscent of Modigliani's women, which earned her the nickname The Swan and inspired famous portraits by photographer Richard Avedon.

Prior to her marriage, Marella had started a career in photography in New York as an assistant to Erwin Blumenfeld, before returning to Italy and continuing to work as a photographer for Vogue publisher Conde Nast.

In the 1970s she started designing patterns for home decoration fabrics for a number of manufacturers in Italy and abroad.

Passionate about interior design and gardening, she published several books about gardens, including the autobiography "The Last Swan" written with her niece in 2014. (RTRS)

Swede gets 4.5 years:

A 22-year-old Swede was sentenced Friday to four and a half years in prison after he was convicted of stealing 17th-century Swedish royal treasures estimated to be worth 65 million kronor (\$7 million) from a cathedral last year.

The Eskilstuna District Court said Johan Nicklas Backstrom stole two crowns and an orb used at the funerals of King Karl IX and Queen Kristina. The jewels, dating from 1611, had been on display in Strangnas Cathedral, west of Stockholm.

On the closing day of his trial last week, Backstrom confessed to stealing the items on July 31. His confession came after prosecutors said his DNA was found on the jewels, which were discovered Feb 5

Brexit

Labour leader says he could back a second referendum

3 ministers throw weight behind delay

LONDON, Feb 23, (RTRS): Three British cabinet ministers have publicly indicated they will back plans to delay Brexit if lawmakers vote down Prime Minister Theresa May's plan for a new deal with the European Union, writing a column in a national newspaper on Saturday.

Business minister Greg Clark, work and pensions minister Amber Rudd, and justice minister David Gauke signalled in a Daily Mail column that they will side with rebels and opposition parties next week to stop Britain leaving without a divorce deal on March 29 if necessary, adding their weight to calls for May to rule out a no-deal departure.

May is struggling against the clock to get a deal with Brussels on Britain's exit from the world's largest trading bloc that will pass parliamentary muster. She will meet European Council President Donald Tusk on the sidelines of an EU-League of Arab States summit on Sunday, but EU diplomats are not expecting any imminent breakthrough.

In the column headlined "If we don't get a deal next week we must delay Brexit", Clark, Rudd and Gauke wrote that a no-deal exit was a risk to business, security and British territorial unity, and accused some parliament colleagues of complacency.

"Far from Brexit resulting in a newly independent United Kingdom stepping boldly into the wider world, crashing out on March 29 would see us poorer, less secure and potentially splitting up," they said, referring to the threat of a new bid for Scottish independence.

"Our economy will be damaged severely both in the short and the long term. Costs

will increase, businesses that rely on just-in-time supply chains will be severely disrupted and investment will be discouraged," they wrote.

The ministers called on members of the European Research Group, formed by Conservative pro-Brexit lawmakers, to back the government's deal in parliament or risk seeing Brexit delayed.

Both May's Conservatives and the main opposition Labour Party are formally committed to delivering Brexit. In recent days Labour has appeared to soften its stance on a second referendum, although May has ruled such an option out.

Lawmakers from both parties, however, are deeply split over how or even whether Britain will leave, and no majority has so far emerged in parliament for any comprehensive Brexit strategy.

Revised

May has promised that if she does not bring a revised deal back by Feb 27, parliament will have an opportunity to vote on the next steps. Some lawmakers are expected to use that to try to wrest control of the process from the government.

Meanwhile, British opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn said if his party won power he would renegotiate a Brexit deal with the European Union and could hold another referendum, as he comes under pressure to support giving the public another chance to stay in the bloc.

Parliament is deadlocked over Britain's departure from the European Union after resoundingly rejecting Prime Minister Theresa May's plan last month, throwing up several outcomes, including leaving without a deal or a second referendum.

Corbyn, when asked if he would hold a referendum on any deal on any deal he negotiated, told Sky News: "We'd consider putting that to the public."

Asked to clarify if he was considering calling for another referendum, Corbyn said: "That's the point we're discussing now in the party."

This comes after nine Labour lawmakers quit the party this week over its approach to Brexit and anti-Semitism.

Earlier John McDonnell, the second most powerful man in the Labour Party, gave his strongest indication yet that Labour is close to backing a second public vote and said he would campaign for remain if one is held.

McDonnell said Labour is "moving towards" a second referendum on Brexit. He said an amendment calling for a public vote which is being tabled for debate next week by lawmakers "could be a solution".

The party's would-be finance minister said that any referendum would have remaining in the European Union as the alternative to the deal.

"If we were going on a People's Vote based on a deal that has gone through parliament in some form, if that got voted down then you'd have status quo, and that would be remain," he told the Evening Standard.

"I'd campaign for remain and I'd vote for remain."

May has ruled out staging a second vote, saying parliament should respect the 2016 referendum when 52 percent of Britons who cast a vote chose to leave the EU. But supporters of a second referendum say it is the only way to break the deadlock in parliament by asking for the people to decide.

in a garbage bin north of Stockholm. Backstrom said he cut himself when smashing the alarmed glass case during the theft.

The court noted that the king's crown was damaged, and some of the ornamental stones had fallen off.

Christopher Lundgren, the cathedral dean, said "the regalia need to be repaired as much as possible so a lot of work remains," according to Swedish broadcaster SVT.

The heist made international headlines because two thieves were seen dashing away from the 13th-century red-brick church on stolen bicycles and then fled by motorboat via the vast system of lakes west of Stockholm.

The treasures were used as funeral regalia, which were placed inside

or on top of a coffin to symbolize a deceased royal's identity and social ranking. While some funeral regalia are kept in the cathedrals of Strangnas, Uppsala and Vasteras, Sweden's crown jewels are in vaults under the Royal Castle in Stockholm. (AP)

Protesters try to move on:

French yellow vest protest organizers are trying to tamp down violence and anti-Semitism in the movement's ranks as they launch a 15th straight weekend of demonstrations.

Hundreds of people gathered Saturday at the Arc de Triomphe monument for a march through well-off neighborhoods to protest government policies they see as favoring the rich. It was among multiple actions

planned Saturday around Paris and in other cities.

Support for the movement has ebbed in recent weeks as it has splintered and outbreaks of violence continue. Online announcements for Saturday's marches appealed for peaceful action, and one of the weekend protests aims to stand up against anti-Semitism.

Extremist views of some protesters have erupted in a torrent of anti-Semitic incidents at a noted philosopher on the sidelines of last weekend's Paris protest. (AP)

Far right rebuked: The deputy Speaker of Germany's parliament rebuked members of a far-right party Thursday for reportedly suggesting women aren't fit to be lawmakers.

Green party lawmaker **Britta Hasselmann** had noted during a speech on gender equality in politics that women make up only a small share of Alternative for Germany's parliamentarians, to which an unidentified member of the party reportedly replied: "Natural selection."

Deputy Speaker Claudia Roth called on the party, known as AfD, to respect parliamentary protocol.

Separately, German public broadcaster ARD reported Thursday that the far-right party submitted an incorrect list of donors who it claimed had given money to co-leader Alice Weidel ahead of 2017 national elections.

ARD reported that several of the people named on the list Alternative for Germany submitted to parliament denied giving money to Weidel. (AP)

Protesters clash with police: Protesters backing Catalonia's seces-

sion from Spain clashed with police and blocked major roads and train tracks across the northeastern region on Thursday during a strike called to protest the trial of a dozen separatist leaders.

Regional police say they made four arrests when they met resistance trying to clear groups of protesters who had stopped traffic. The regional emergency service said that 22 people had been treated for minor injuries.

Twelve officers were also injured in the clashes, according to police. Protesters threw rocks at police lines and burned tires on some highways.

Regional transportation authorities said the disruptions affected main thoroughfares in Barcelona and half a dozen major highways and railway tracks elsewhere in Catalonia.

The general strike was organized by small unions of pro-independence workers and students. On paper, they were demanding improved social policies, including a 35-hour work week and a higher minimum wage, but the protesters carried pro-secession flags and chanted slogans for the release of the 12 separatists currently on trial in the Madrid-based Supreme Court. The main unions in Catalonia did not back the strike, which appeared to have a limited impact on businesses.

In Barcelona, students in favor of secession held a mid-day march attended by 13,000 people according to the city's urban police. The pro-secession grassroots group ANC — whose protest slogan is "self-determination is not a crime" — was planning a separate march later Thursday.

The Spanish government says regions cannot independently secede, according to the Constitution. (AP)



Sled dogs run at the 29th international sled dog race near Oberhof, Germany on Feb. 23. The trail in 2,460 ft is going through different areas along Germany's most popular path "Rennsteig" in the Thuringian Forest. (AP)