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Thousands of armed U.S. gun rights activists join peaceful Virginia rally



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Trump lawyers call for immediate acquittal in legal, political defense



FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump gestures as he gives a speech at the American Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Convention and Trade Show in Austin, Texas, January 19, 2020. REUTERS/ Kevin Lamarque

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday rejected the Democratic-led House of Representatives' impeachment charges and called for their immediate dismissal by the Republican-led Senate in a memo offering a legal and political case against his removal.

The 116-page Trial Memorandum sought to undercut charges that the Republican president abused his power and obstructed Congress, and constituted Trump's first comprehensive defense before his Senate trial begins in earnest on Tuesday.

"The Senate should reject the Articles of Impeachment and acquit the president immediately," the memo concluded.

Trump, only the fourth of 45 American presidents to face the possibility of being ousted by impeachment, is charged with abusing the powers of his office by asking Ukraine to investigate a Democratic political rival, Joe Biden, and obstructing a congressional inquiry into his conduct.

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Democrats say Trump abused his power by withholding U.S. military assistance to Ukraine as part of a pressure campaign and obstructed Congress by refusing to hand over documents and barring administration officials from

testifying, even when subpoenaed by House investigators.

Trump's defense argued neither charge constituted a crime or impeachable offense, that he was within his rights as president to make decisions about foreign policy and what information to give Congress, and that the House pursued a flawed and one-sided process before impeaching him on Dec. 18.

The memo's executive summary asserted that the House Democrats' "novel theory of 'abuse of power'" was not an impeachable offense and supplanted the Constitutional standard of "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

It rejected the obstruction of Congress charge as "frivolous and dangerous," saying the president exercised his legal rights by resisting congressional demands for information, also known as subpoenas.

It also accused the House Democrats of conducting a rigged process, said they succeeded in proving only that Trump had done nothing wrong and argued, as the White House has repeatedly, that this was an effort to overturn Trump's 2016 election victory and to prevent his re-election in November.

While the Republican-controlled Senate is highly unlikely to remove Trump from office, it is important for him to try to diminish the Democratic accusations to limit political damage to his bid for a second term.

In part of his legal filing, Trump's lawyers cast their arguments in unabashedly political terms.

"They want to use impeachment to interfere in the 2020 election," the memo said. "Put simply, Democrats have no response to the President's record of achievement in restoring prosperity to the American economy, rebuilding America's military, and confronting America's adversaries abroad."

In their own filing with the U.S. Senate on Monday, the seven House impeachment "managers" who will make the Democrats case for Trump's removal to the Senate said he had "jeopardized our national security and our democratic self-governance."

"President Trump maintains that the Senate cannot remove him even if the House proves every claim in the Articles of impeachment. That is a chilling assertion. It is also dead wrong," they wrote, arguing that despite Trump's "stonewalling" the House had amassed "overwhelming evidence of his guilt."

Trump's team says he was well within his constitutional authority to press Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy last year to investigate Biden and his son Hunter as part of what Trump says was an anti-corruption drive. The Bidens deny any wrongdoing and Trump's allegations have been widely debunked.

While Trump's legal papers laid out extensive arguments as to why Trump did not commit a crime, the General Accounting Office, the watchdog arm of Congress, said last week that Trump did commit a crime by withholding U.S. military assistance to Ukraine, money that was ultimately sent after a brief pause.

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Thousands of armed U.S. gun rights activists join peaceful Virginia rally

RICHMOND, Va. (Reuters) - More than 22,000 armed gun-rights activists peacefully filled the streets around Virginia's capitol building on Monday to protest gun-control legislation making its way through the newly Democratic-controlled state legislature.

Despite fears that neo-Nazis or other extremists would piggy-back on the Richmond rally to stoke unrest like the violence at a 2017 demonstration by white nationalists in Charlottesville that killed a counter-protester, the Capitol Police reported just one arrest, a 21-year-old woman taken into custody for wearing a bandana over her face after twice being warned that masks were not allowed.

Chants of "USA! USA! USA!" and others praising President Donald Trump reverberated as men and women carrying handguns and rifles squeezed into the streets around the Virginia state capitol, standing shoulder-to-shoulder for three blocks in all directions.

There was a heavy security presence after Governor Ralph Northam banned carrying weapons onto the capitol grounds and the FBI earlier last week arrested three alleged neo-Nazis who it said intended to use the event to spark a race war.

But by 1 p.m. ET, nearly all rally-goers had left the area, with volunteers picking up trash left behind. The Capitol Police estimated the crowd at 22,000 people.

Activists at the rally organized by the Virginia Citizens Defense League argued that Virginia was trying to infringe on their right to bear arms, which is protected by the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

"What's going on here, if not stopped, will spread to other states," said Teri Horne, who had traveled to Virginia from her home in Texas with her Smith & Wesson rifle and .40-caliber handgun. "They will come for our guns in other states if we don't stop



them in Virginia."

Northam, a Democrat, has vowed to push through new gun control laws and is backing a package of eight bills, including universal background checks, a "red flag" law, a ban on assault-style rifles and a limit of one handgun-a-month purchase. It does not call for confiscating guns currently legally owned.

A large crowd gathers on a Gun Lobby Day in front of the Virginia State Capitol building in Richmond, VA, U.S. January 20, 2020. REUTERS/Stephanie Keith

It is not his first attempt. He called a special legislative session last year after the massacre of 12 people in Virginia Beach, but the Republicans who then controlled the legislature ended that meeting without a vote.

State Democratic leaders and activists believe that move contributed to the November victories that gave them control of both chambers.

A group of 13 student activists from March For Our Lives, a gun-control group, slept inside the capitol building on Sunday night ahead of impromptu meetings with lawmakers to encourage them to pass the legislation.



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Editor's Choice



Large migrant caravan prepares to enter Mexico from Guatemala



Democratic U.S. presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren laughs with fellow Democratic U.S. presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders during the Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day festivities in Columbia



People demonstrate during the Women's March in New York City, New York



Huawei Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou leaves her home to attend her extradition hearing in Vancouver



A police officer stands guard near the Congress Center ahead of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland January 20, 2020. REUTERS/Denis Balibouse TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Olympics - 2020 Winter Youth Olympics - Leysin Park, Leysin, Switzerland - January 20, 2020 Austria's Daniel Bacher in action during the Freestyle Skiing Men's Freeski Slopestyle Simon Bruty for OIS/IOC/Handout DAY



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson visits the Pavegen stand, a company that converts footsteps into energy, at the Innovation Zone during the UK-Africa Investment Summit in London, Britain January 20, 2020. Leon Neal/Pool via REUTERS TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Mirzaie, founder of a Sama Dance group dances with her teammates in Kabul

Hopping into an Uber or a Car2Go is a great way to get around. Unfortunately, hackers agree, exploiting weaknesses in apps to go on "phantom rides" with someone else's profile.

From such trips—like a man in Australia who went on more than 30 free drives on the GoGet car-sharing platform before being arrested—to vehicle theft and taking wireless control of cars, reported attacks on smart cars have ballooned six-fold over the past four years, according to research from cyber-security platform Upstream Security Ltd.

Hacked Wheels

As more cars connect to the web, cyberattacks go through the roof security measures after a limited number of accounts were hacked, risks around vehicle cybercrime are only going to get worse. Connected cars are forecast to double to 775 million by 2023, according to Juniper Research, enlarging the pool of convenience features like keyless entry, apps to turn on heating remotely and smartphone connection via bluetooth.

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Hacked Wheels

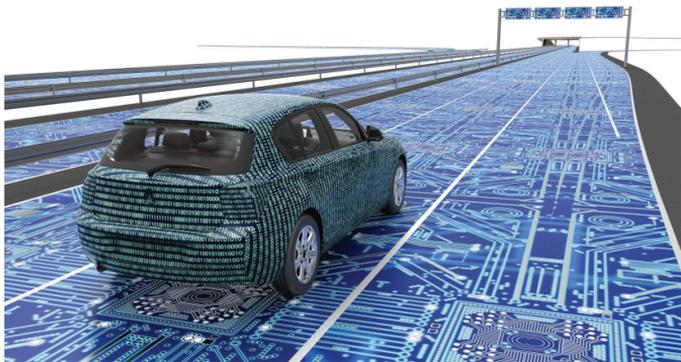
As more cars connect to the web, cyberattacks go through the roof

While companies have taken note, with Daimler AG's Car2Go car sharing beefing up security measures after a limited number of accounts were hacked, risks around vehicle cybercrime are only going to get worse. Connected cars are forecast to double to 775 million by 2023, according to Juniper Research, enlarging the pool of convenience features like keyless entry, apps to turn on heating remotely and smartphone connection via bluetooth.

"Each new service connected to a vehicle is a new potential entry point for hackers," Upstream wrote in a report published Monday. "Worst-case scenarios are loss to busi-

Carmakers Are Beefing Up Security Measures As Hackers Take Smart Cars For A Ride Your High-Tech Car Is A Magnet For Hacking

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



ness earnings, theft, data privacy or property damage."

Getting In

Hackers target many weak spots in cars to gain access

Carmakers from Mercedes-Benz maker Daimler to Toyota Motor Corp. are pursuing digital services as potentially lucrative additional sources of revenue, as well as keeping pace with growing competition from the likes of Uber Technologies Inc. Daimler and BMW AG are in the process of combining their car-sharing platforms, to build a far broader suite of services including a ride-hailing app, electric-car charging and digital parking services.



Car-sharing platforms lack adequate protection, said cybersecurity and anti-virus provider Kaspersky Lab after testing 13 apps from Russia, the U.S. and Europe. Most of them allowed for weak passwords, didn't protect against reverse engineering, and failed to stop phishing attempts, according to a July report that didn't name the services tested.

Valuable Access

Controlling car systems, auto theft and data access are the main reasons for hacks In the race to thwart cybercriminals, carmak-

ers regularly invite software experts to test the robustness of their setups. While phantom rides are relatively harmless, hacks can be far more dangerous. In 2015, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV recalled 1.4 million cars and trucks after Wired magazine published a story about software programmers who were able to take over a Jeep Cherokee it was driven on a Missouri highway.

Uber, the ride-hailing app that's preparing a public share sale, says it has introduced security features like two-step log-in verification, since fraudsters in China used fake accounts to go on free rides.

"We have entire systems and organizations at Uber that are able to detect this kind of fraudulent activity," Uber told Bloomberg News in a statement. "Criminals will keep trying new ways to get what they want and we need to constantly respond to their evolving techniques. Fighting fraud never ends."



The Industry Fights Back

More sensors and software are going into cars all the time but that creates new security considerations.

Why Are Cars Hackable?

Why can cars be hacked? The reason is simple: They're filled with lots of software and connectivity. Brian Witten, Head of Advanced Technologies, Office of the CTO at Symantec, notes that potential attack vectors include cellular connectivity, as well as Bluetooth, WiFi, and more. In the United States, over a third [MOU] of cars are already connected to the Internet.

Even if you don't have advanced features for streaming music or traffic updates to a navigation system, your car might still be connected to the Internet for simple automatic crash notification, saving lives.

A KPMG report, "Protecting the fleet... and the car business" notes, "The average car contains more than 150 million lines of code, plus multiple individual computers and a vast number of wireless connections to internal and external channels." It says that as a result, cars now have more code embedded in them than an F-25 fighter or a Boeing 787. It can seem almost impossible to protect automobiles, given their complex onboard systems and the logistics and money that would be required to fix all possible holes for millions of new and existing cars. A Symantec report, "Building Comprehensive Security into Cars," warns, "Companies often use redundancies at critical IT layers to keep high-volume web services running reliably, but few, if any, carmakers can afford the NASA-like investment of doing this for every vehicle."

Cars Today have more code embedded in them than an F-25 fighter or a Boeing 787

There are many potential incentives for hacking entire fleets. Imagine your car failing to start but displaying a number to which you need to wire money if you want your car to start. As such "automotive ransomware" risks become more likely, not all incentives are financial. For instance, foreign governments could do the hacking as part of a cyber attack on a nation's basic infrastructure.



An F-25 fighter Jet. "Fleet hacking is a lot more tractable than a lot of people realize," Witten says.

Many people agree with him. Elon Musk believes it will be a particularly serious problem when autonomous vehicles become more widespread. "I think one of the biggest risks for autonomous vehicles is somebody achieving a fleet-wide hack," he said at the National Governors Association meeting last summer. The federal government has also started to take notice. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Transportation (DoT) have been working on cyber security for the federal government's fleet of vehicles.

What Can Be Done About It?

What to do if you're worried about getting hacked? First, check to make sure that your car's software is updated by checking with the dealer. Many carmakers are in the process of fixing vulnerabilities in vehicle software.

Some are able to fix those vulnerabilities with updates sent "over the air" using the cellular network, but other automakers can only fix such vulnerabilities when the vehicle is brought in for regular maintenance. Still, with so many attack vectors, nothing is perfect. In addition to cellular modems that are needed to save lives through Automatic Crash Notification (ACN), some of the risks to the vehicle might be in the supply chain itself.



The answer, according to Witten, is that auto makers need to recognize the dangers of fleetwide hacking, and build wide-ranging security into cars, including a comprehensive security architecture, cryptographically protecting communications into and out of automobiles, working in concert with network operators who supply cars' connectivity, and building a vehicle security operations center where analysts can hunt security threats on at a fleetwide scale, and other systemwide protections.

"You've got to do all that, and also keep everything up to date, because security is never finished," he says. "The adversary is nimble, and if you're not agile, they are. And they're going to eat your lunch if you're not prepared." (Courtesy

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U.S.-China Trade Deal Could Be Good For Big Pharma

President Trump's new trade agreement with China includes patent protections that could be a big boon to drug companies.

Why it matters: China's enormous population is a lucrative market for pharma, and the country is also actively trying to build up its own domestic drug industry. But it's not guaranteed that China will actually abide by the agreement.

Details: The trade agreement would set up patent protections in China that are similar to U.S. law.

•It would help protect branded drugs from generic competition while they're still under patent protection.

•Drugmakers could also receive a patent extension if there's a delay during the approval process.

The big picture: This is good news for Big Pharma, especially after biologic protections were recently removed from the trade agreement with Mexico and Canada that's currently making its way through Congress.

•But the agreement doesn't include a measure giving drugs a certain patent exclusivity period, something the industry has been pushing for in trade deals in the recent past, specifically for biologics.



Between the lines: If China complies with the agreement, it'd be great for American drug companies, which could enter the Chinese market with the expectation that their patents would be respected. But it could also be good for China's budding drug industry.

•"This is a way for them to be able to create a domestic industry but also maintain affordability and access, which China is going to do anyway because it's a controlled economy," said Chris Campbell, chief strategist at Duff & Phelps.



Illustration: Aida Amer/Axios

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

The bottom line:

•It's up to China to implement the legal protections it has agreed to in the deal -- but significantly, the agreement does include six pages outlining an evaluation and enforcement mechanism. That's a step in the right direction.

•But Chinese government officials have previously falsified data, and China has reneged on agreements in the past.

Related

China offers drug companies market access in exchange for lower prices



Doctors visit a patient in the First People's Hospital of Yancheng in Yancheng.

(Photo: Xinhua/via Getty Images)

China wants to have better health care at a lower cost than the U.S. or other countries — a plan that involves extracting massive discounts from pharmaceutical companies, Bloomberg reports.

Why it matters: The trade-off for drug companies is access to China's enormous population and, thus, a giant market, and Chinese patients are now paying much less than Americans for the same drugs. •At the same time, there's been a surge of venture capital funding within China's startup biotech industry, while the biggest global drug companies receive a growing share of their revenue from China.

The bottom line: "China has set its sights on creating a holy grail healthcare system that satisfies patients' needs and control costs while still encouraging cutting-edge research — and the world is watching," Bloomberg writes.

Why drug prices matter: Lives and livelihoods are at stake

Drug prices are a big deal politically

because they're a big deal personally. Time after time, the issue is thrust back into the spotlight by virtue of giant price increases on drugs that aren't new or innovative, but are still life-savers for millions of people.

It happened when "pharma bro" Martin Shkreli bought Daraprim, a drug to treat AIDS, and raised the price by 5,000%. It happened when Mylan raised the price of the Epi-Pen by about 500% over 6 years. It has been happening for years with insulin, where prices keep creeping higher, adding up to increases of more than 200% for some products.



Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

The tradeoff between costs and benefits still matters for new drugs, too. New leading-edge treatments, like immunotherapy for cancer, offer lifesaving promise that almost any family would want but few can afford.

•The debate is more complicated with new drugs, though, because we know their development costs are still on the books.

•That's why big price hikes on old drugs, that people have depended on for decades, spark particularly fierce outrage. "It's really one of my greatest fears," Clayton McCook, who has to meet a \$3,000 annual deductible to cover medication and supplies for his diabetic 10-year-old daughter, recently told Axios. "If insulin is \$300 a vial now, what's it going to look like in 20 years when she's on her own?"

A version of that scenario is already a reality for Nicole Smith-Holt. She lost her son Alec, 26, to diabetic ketoacidosis shortly after he began rationing insulin. Alec died less than a month after he was no longer eligible for his mother's insurance plan. He was facing costs of \$1,300 per month. (Courtesy axios.com)



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