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**Subject:** Morning Clips – Monday, December 19, 2016

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## Morning Clips – Monday, December 19, 2016

### General Assembly News:

**Associated Press:** Bill aimed at preventing online porn in South Carolina

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=z19OD85s](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=z19OD85s)

Meg Kinnard

People buying computers in South Carolina would be limited in their access to porn online under newly proposed legislation. A bill pre-filed this month by state Rep. Bill Chumley would require sellers to install digital blocking capabilities on computers and other devices that access the internet to prevent the viewing of obscene content. The proposal also would prohibit access to any online hub that facilitates prostitution and would require manufacturers or sellers to block any websites that facilitate trafficking. Both sellers and buyers could get around the limitation, for a fee. The bill would fine manufacturers that sell a device without the blocking system, but they could opt out by paying \$20 per device sold. Buyers could also verify their age and pay \$20 to remove the filter.

**Post and Courier:** Rep. Robert Brown hopes to bring Hollywood to Hollywood

[http://www.postandcourier.com/news/rep-robert-brown-hopes-to-bring-hollywood-to-hollywood/article\\_5b49acee-c15c-11e6-a32c-83061737307c.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/news/rep-robert-brown-hopes-to-bring-hollywood-to-hollywood/article_5b49acee-c15c-11e6-a32c-83061737307c.html)

Prentiss Findlay

State Rep. Robert Brown wants to bring a touch of Hollywood, Calif., to Hollywood, S.C. "It's an idea I decided to pursue," he said. "I contacted the (S.C.) Film Commission to ask them to help us." In response, commission spokesman Dan Rogers said he will talk with businesses and community leaders in Hollywood, Meggett and Ravenel about the potential for filmmaking in that area. Photos of the rural section of Charleston County will be put in the commission database of potential places available for TV shows and movies, he said. "It makes sense near Charleston. Most of the productions end up in Charleston," Rogers said. He noted that jungle scenes for "Forrest Gump" were filmed on Hunting and Fripp islands. South Carolina has been the backdrop for more than 100 feature films and 70 TV movies, series and pilots. The state offers production incentives to bring Hollywood spending here. Films such as "Dear John" and "The Notebook" and TV shows including "Army Wives" have been here.

### SC Political News:

**Post and Courier:** Like his presidential pick, S.C.'s next governor grows real estate holdings

[http://www.postandcourier.com/news/like-his-presidential-pick-s-c-s-next-governor-grows/article\\_275ac0b0-c212-11e6-806e-f72cb5574ba0.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/news/like-his-presidential-pick-s-c-s-next-governor-grows/article_275ac0b0-c212-11e6-806e-f72cb5574ba0.html)

Andy Shain Just as the United States is going to get a real estate mogul as its next leader, South Carolina is about to get one, too. S.C. Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster and his wife, Peggy, have amassed 20 single-family homes and multi-family properties in Columbia worth \$5.8 million on Richland County tax rolls, according to a review of public records by Free Times. "That's pretty substantial," said Fred Williams, a broker with Columbia-based Dial, Dunlap & Edwards, of McMaster's holdings. All but one is near the University of South Carolina campus. A company owned by the McMasters rents them to students and other tenants. McMaster and his wife bought up real estate during the past three decades as McMaster served in elected office and worked as a political appointee. It's a business that mimics that of his presidential choice, Donald Trump, who was elected by voters favoring his

background in real estate. And like Trump, the McMasters have had up and downs with their holdings. South Carolina's soon-to-be first couple are winning better reviews from neighbors about how they care for their rentals than in past years, but they continue to collect citations from the city of Columbia.

**Associated Press:** SC's presidential electors poised to cast ballots for Trump

<http://bigstory.ap.org/7bd1c9cf3d924525a5cdcfb91fb4c49f>

South Carolina's members of the Electoral College are gathering to pledge the state's nine electoral votes to Republican Donald Trump. It's part of the formal process to choose the next president based upon state-by-state voting results. Electors gather Monday morning at the office of Secretary of State Mark Hammond. Last month's popular vote determined that electors nominated by the South Carolina Republican Party will cast the official ballots for the state. Some Democrats upset with the Nov. 8 results have urged electors around the country not to cast their ballot for Trump. But state Republican Party Chairman Matt Moore has said he and the state's other electors have not been swayed. Progressive groups and state Democrats are planning a rally at the Statehouse before the meeting.

**Associated Press:** Groups hold vigil ahead of South Carolina electors' vote

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=DdniCCeo](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=DdniCCeo)

SC State Wire

Conservatives and progressives are gathering to urge South Carolina's electors not to cast their votes for Donald Trump this week. Organizers say groups planned to gather at the South Carolina Statehouse Sunday afternoon for a vigil urging electors to vote their conscience. South Carolina's Electoral College members meet Monday morning to officially cast their ballots in the formal process of choosing the next president, based upon state-by-state voting results. Last month's popular vote determined electors nominated by the South Carolina Republican Party would cast the official ballots for the state. Some Democrats upset with the Nov. 8 results have urged electors around the country not to cast their ballot for Trump. But state Republican Party Chairman Matt Moore has said he and the state's other electors have not been swayed.

**The State:** Protesters turn out at SC State House before Electoral College vote

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article121677492.html>

Teddy Kulmala

About two dozen people gathered at the S.C. State House early Sunday night for a vigil in advance of Monday's meeting of Electoral College members. Most speakers at Sunday's event expressed concerns about GOP President-elect Donald Trump, while others urged electors to vote their conscience. South Carolina's Electoral College members meet Monday morning to officially cast ballots in the formal process of choosing the next president, based upon state-by-state voting results. Last month's popular vote determined electors nominated by the S.C. Republican Party would cast the official ballots for the state. "I pray that they pause, that they choose a reset button, that calmer minds and truer hearts prevail," Pamila Lorentz said while clutching a candle. "This is an opportunity to put all the rhetoric and all that has been inflamed to us in the last two years ... aside and listen to what the choices are really before us, to choose where this country is going to go in the next four years, and how we can represent this light of democracy still in the world. That's their choice and that's their vote."

**Dylann Roof Case:**

**Post and Courier:** After 'painful week,' Mother Emanuel rejoices from other side of the valley

[http://www.postandcourier.com/news/after-painful-week-mother-emanuel-rejoices-from-other-side-of/article\\_05de65e2-c526-11e6-b00f-571cd4b30f2e.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/news/after-painful-week-mother-emanuel-rejoices-from-other-side-of/article_05de65e2-c526-11e6-b00f-571cd4b30f2e.html)

Derrek Asberry

Eyes closed and on bended knee, The Rev. Edward Ducree gave thanks to God for guiding his congregation through a "painful week." Emanuel AME Church had just endured the final days of the

Dylann Roof trial, which ended with the jury finding the self-proclaimed white supremacist guilty of 33 charges. "We thank you for being with us last week - a painful week," Ducree prayed. "It was a week that reminded us of horrific acts that happened in this fellowship hall." Talks of God bringing the church through the valley dominated the worship service. Led by Ducree and Pastor Eric Manning, the service mirrored life on the other side of the valley. Tears were few as the choir, accompanied by the piano, drums and trumpet, sang "Jesus Oh What a Wonderful Child." The congregation joined in. A woman in red stood up and started singing and clapping to the beat of the drum, followed by another woman. In a matter of seconds, a couple dozen folks were doing the same.

**WCIV:** First Sunday sermon after Emanuel AME gunman's conviction focuses on 'a new day'  
<http://abcnews4.com/news/emanuel-ame-shooting/first-sunday-sermon-after-emanuel-ame-gunmans-conviction-focuses-on-a-new-day>

Lindsey Maloney

Pastor Eric Manning delivered a powerful sermon Sunday. It was his first sermon since the conviction of Emanuel AME gunman Dylann Roof. The message -- "A new day is upon us." With bowed heads on bent knees, a congregation once again showed the power of prayer. With prayer and his leadership, Pastor Manning hopes church members can find comfort after spending weeks enduring testimony in a trial that forced many to relive the night nine church members were shot and killed. The pastor said he's spent time getting to know the survivors. "I pray it made a difference. I hope it did," he said. He has a new appreciation for survivors Polly Sheppard and Felicia Sanders after witnessing the strength they displayed as they were forced to speak in court about the murders. "When you begin to look at the testimony, when you begin to look at his taped confession, then of course, that was one of those days where you said 'I can't believe it,'" Pastor Manning said. The pastor said trust has been broken, and a new foundation needs to be built.

### **South Carolina News:**

**Post and Courier:** S.C. farmers hope for brighter 2017 amid bad weather, low prices  
[http://www.postandcourier.com/business/s-c-farmers-hope-for-brighter-amid-bad-weather-low/article\\_0d209226-b649-11e6-a423-3784d1cdb126.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/business/s-c-farmers-hope-for-brighter-amid-bad-weather-low/article_0d209226-b649-11e6-a423-3784d1cdb126.html)

Thad Moore

It's been a difficult stretch for South Carolina's farmers. Last year brought drought and devastating floods that wiped out crops worth hundreds of millions of dollars. This year followed it up with a hot summer, a hurricane and cratering commodity prices. In all, 2016 worked out to be a so-so, break-even year when growers could have used a boost, says Nathan Smith, an agricultural economist at Clemson University. Next year could be better, he says, but he doubts conditions will improve by much. "I'll put it this way - basically, we're trying to make it through the next couple of years," Smith says. "If we have another year next year - an average-type year again like '16 - I think it's going to cause some folks to transition out. We may see some of that this year, to be honest." The state's farmers have been challenged by the global market and natural disasters alike. The U.S. produced record harvests of corn and soybeans this year, for example, so farmers here can't command the prices they could a few years ago. Those were the state's largest crops last year by market value.

**Associated Press:** Longtime civil rights activist Lottie Gibson dies at age 86  
[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=155YJPLJ](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=155YJPLJ)  
SC State Wire

A longtime civil rights activist and Greenville elected official has died. Lottie Gibson was 86. The website of the Watkins, Garrett & Woods Mortuary says Gibson died Sunday. The Greenville News reports (<http://grnol.co/2h3021Y>) that Gibson was a retired educator who served for many years on the Greenville County Council. The Rev. Jesse Jackson tells the newspaper that Gibson fought for social justice and to end segregation during the Civil Rights era. County council member Lynn Ballard says that Gibson always looked out for people who were less fortunate. Gibson was born in Seneca in 1930 and moved to Greenville when she was 6. Gibson won numerous awards. The substance abuse

treatment facility The Phoenix Center named its training center after her earlier this year. She also worked for Greenville Tech for 30 years.

## Local News:

**Associated Press:** Greenville boy dies 3 days after house fire

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=30xeFbNb](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=30xeFbNb)

SC State Wire

A Greenville boy has died three days after being pulled from a house fire. Media outlets report that Thursday evening, firefighters found 3-year-old Silas Green and his father, Danny Green, inside their Greenville home. Both were taken in critical condition to Greenville Memorial Hospital. Greenville County Coroner Parks Evans says Silas Green was admitted to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit and remained there until his death Sunday afternoon. Danny Green remains hospitalized. Four other people escaped the home without injuries. Authorities are continuing to investigate the fire.

**Associated Press:** Autopsy expected in death of 2-week-old Bennettsville boy

[http://m.apnews.com/ap/db\\_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=cNnn8DCE](http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=cNnn8DCE)

SC State Wire

Authorities are investigating the death of an infant in Bennettsville. Police tell local media outlets that 2-week-old Charles Hopkins was pronounced dead on Saturday morning at McLeod Health Cheraw. Bennettsville Police Investigator Shawn Lucas says the boy's death is under investigation. No other details have been released. An autopsy is expected to be completed by Monday.

**Greenville News:** Father, two children reported missing in Greenville

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/12/18/greenville-sc-missing-persons/95600704/>

Romando Dixson

A father and his two young children have been reported missing, the Greenville County Sheriff's Office said Sunday. A woman reported her children and their father missing about 7 p.m. Sunday, Sgt. Jennings Autrey said. She said they were last seen about 5:40 a.m. Sunday at 14 Tall Oaks Drive. The father's name is William Lee Griffin II, 43. The children's names are Syeira Yanice Lewis, 6, and Sa-nya Yurria Griffin, who is 4 months old. Griffin and his children could be traveling in a black, 2012 Chevrolet Impala with a paper tag from Hyundai of Greer. Anyone that may know the whereabouts of the missing persons is asked to contact Crime Stoppers at 23-CRIME or Greenville County dispatch at 864-271-5210. Return to GreenvilleOnline.com for more details as they become available.

**Sun News:** They came because they were missing loved ones, but hope in the candlelight remains

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article121675612.html>

Emily Weaver

The nighttime vigil had one common theme: everyone who came was missing someone and the dozens of candles they lit honored them all. In the flicker of the flames sparked a glow of hope. "We're all out here today because we're missing somebody, whether it's we're missing Heather, we're separated by a loved one during the holidays or we're just having a hard time during Christmas or we're here to support somebody else who's having a hard time," Heather Elvis' mother, Debbi Elvis, told the crowd. Community members, mourning the loss of loved ones separated by distance, death or both, gathered at Peachtree boat landing on Sunday evening to remember the ones they have lost on the third anniversary of Heather Elvis' disappearance.

**The State:** Tops in U.S., USC among best in world in Sport Science Schools and Departments

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/education/article121664487.html>

Noah Feit

The College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management (HRSM) helped lead the University of South Carolina to No. 1 in the United States and No. 3 in the world in the 2016 ShanghaiRanking's Global Ranking of Sport Science Schools and Departments. The rankings credit HRSM along with the USC

departments of exercise science, physical education and athletic training for the university's standing. "Our sport and entertainment management program (SPTE) has shown phenomenal growth in both quantity and quality in recent years," said HRSM Dean Haemoon Oh. "This world ranking is not a surprise, and it reflects strongly on our faculty and our vigorous global leadership, industry engagement, and experiential education.

**Post and Courier:** Grapevine: Port of Charleston 3rd most efficient in U.S., publication says  
[http://www.postandcourier.com/business/grapevine-port-of-charleston-rd-most-efficient-in-u-s/article\\_4ce94976-bcf6-11e6-8763-9ff4e93364db.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/business/grapevine-port-of-charleston-rd-most-efficient-in-u-s/article_4ce94976-bcf6-11e6-8763-9ff4e93364db.html)

The Port of Charleston tied with the Georgia Ports Authority for the third spot on the publication's list of the most ports. The Port of Baltimore took the top spot, followed by the Port of New York and New Jersey. The SPA's North Charleston Terminal took third place in the most efficient terminals list. APM Terminals at Port Elizabeth, N.J., was the category winner with the Maher Container Terminal at the Port of New York and New Jersey finishing second. The JOC bases its rankings on a statistic called berth production, which is the number of containers moved during the entire time a ship is tied to a terminal's dock. While berth production is a key metric for how well a port operates, it can be skewed if a ship sits at the dock for several hours when no loading or unloading is taking place. Another measure of productivity is the average number of cargo containers loaded or unloaded — called crane moves — during each hour that such work is being performed. That's the metric the SPA uses to evaluate its efficiency.

**Post and Courier:** Michelin, one of Charleston port's top customers, files for Upstate distribution center permit

[http://www.postandcourier.com/business/michelin-one-of-charleston-port-s-top-customers-files-for/article\\_e2b15d60-c2da-11e6-b5f0-975b4fee50ce.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/business/michelin-one-of-charleston-port-s-top-customers-files-for/article_e2b15d60-c2da-11e6-b5f0-975b4fee50ce.html)

David Wren

Michelin North America has filed plans with regulators for a \$270 million warehouse and distribution center near Spartanburg that is designed to give the tire maker better access to a rail transportation hub linking the Upstate with the Port of Charleston. Michelin plans to build six connected buildings totaling 3.9 million square feet on a 165-acre parcel located roughly 12 miles from the South Carolina Inland Port in Greer. Michelin is one of the Port of Charleston's top customers, and more tires are exported from Charleston than any other state. The plans are detailed in an application Michelin filed last week with the Army Corps of Engineers to build a concrete pad for the massive warehouse. The construction likely will impact wetlands at the site and Michelin is proposing to buy nearly 12,400 preservation credits from state wetlands mitigation banks, according to the application.

**Post and Courier:** Charleston-based Crowdr TV to blend live video with fundraising in new app

[http://www.postandcourier.com/business/charleston-based-crowdr-tv-to-blend-live-video-with-fundraising/article\\_bf26d6a0-c2ed-11e6-b531-a7377699f70e.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/business/charleston-based-crowdr-tv-to-blend-live-video-with-fundraising/article_bf26d6a0-c2ed-11e6-b531-a7377699f70e.html)

Thad Moore

Live-streaming mobile video surged into popularity not even two years ago, but the concept has become so commonplace that it's already easy to forget life before Facebook Live and Periscope. The competition, driven by some of the biggest names in Silicon Valley, is fierce. Just ask Meerkat, the company that started the craze last spring. Its streaming service shut down this fall, overwhelmed by the resources of Facebook and Twitter, which owns Periscope. But the Charleston startup Crowdr TV thinks it can carve out a niche in the business by building a streaming platform that uses live video as a fundraising tool. Its app, Booster, is set to launch next month. Co-founder Zach Pippin said the company was initially focused on building a tool for politicians to talk with supporters and raise money, since he and CEO Michael Stevens started their careers in politics. Before long, though, they expanded their scope to cover other groups, like nonprofit organizations and entertainers. Now, they liken it to a hybrid of live-streaming and GoFundMe, the personal fundraising site.

**Post and Courier:** County Council unsure how to get money to complete I-526

[http://www.postandcourier.com/news/county-council-unsure-how-to-get-money-to-complete-i/article\\_198d2552-c39f-11e6-bce0-cb3a4dfcce48.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/news/county-council-unsure-how-to-get-money-to-complete-i/article_198d2552-c39f-11e6-bce0-cb3a4dfcce48.html)

Diane Knich

Charleston County Council Chairman Elliott Summey said the county is committed to covering \$150 million of the shortfall for the completion of Interstate 526, but nobody appears to know where the money will come from. Summey made his comments Wednesday to the S.C. Transportation Infrastructure Bank board as part of a coordinated local effort to revive the stalled project. But he wouldn't specify how the county would cover that portion of the project's shortfall, or whether he was considering taking it from the proceeds of the half-cent sales tax, which voters approved last month. Councilman Dickie Schweers, an opponent of the highway extension, said council never discussed covering \$150 million of the shortfall, which is half of the county's annual budget. But, he said, "I imagine it will be a use of the half-cent sales tax money. I can't imagine what other source it would be," he said. County Council told voters that half-cent sales tax funds wouldn't be used for I-526, Schweers said.

**Greenville News:** Greenville's affordable housing effort just first step, leaders say

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2016/12/18/greenville-affordable-housing/95584980/>

Eric Connor

The atmosphere was more-festive than usual for a City Council meeting. The chambers on the 10th floor of City Hall last week were filled to the point that the fire chief had to turn away some members of the public, who showed up in force to support the commitment of \$2 million in city tax money to the cause of affordable housing. Now that the applause has ended, the question of what to do next remains — and the answer to what the future of the affordable housing effort will look like isn't entirely certain. Will the appropriation of \$2 million of a \$5 million surplus the city accumulated this year amid unprecedented growth be the beginning of an annual commitment? Will it lead to measures beyond this one-time financial pledge, such as offering trade-offs to developers to build more affordable housing?

**President-elect Trump News:**

**Associated Press:** Electoral College meets amid effort to deny Trump presidency

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/d56309fad6af452686cef73adcfefb57>

And you thought Election Day was in November. Electors are set to gather in every state on Monday to formally elect Donald Trump president even as anti-Trump forces try one last time to deny him the White House. Protests are planned for state capitals, but they are unlikely to persuade the Electoral College to dump Trump. An Associated Press survey of electors found very little appetite to vote for alternative candidates. Republican electors say they have been deluged with emails, phone calls and letters urging them not to support Trump. Many of the emails are part of coordinated campaigns. "The letters are actually quite sad," said Lee Green, a Republican elector from North Carolina. "They are generally freaked out. They honestly believe the propaganda. They believe our nation is being taken over by a dark and malevolent force." Wirt A. Yerger Jr., a Republican elector in Mississippi, said, "I have gotten several thousand emails asking me not to vote for Trump. I threw them all away."

**Associated Press:** Trump aides: Democrats' complaints are sour grapes

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/ba910c981a574d1fa0a7e9d8b517bf24>

Sour grapes. That's how Donald Trump's closest advisers see Democrats' complaints that Moscow hacked their private emails this election season in a bid to sow discord among their supporters and sway the election toward Republicans. The pushback comes ahead of the Electoral College vote, which was expected to make official Trump's election win and pave his way to take office on Jan. 20. "Let's assume it's true," Reince Priebus, Trump's incoming chief of staff, said Sunday of Russian interference in the election. "There's no evidence that shows that the outcome of the election was changed because of a couple dozen John Podesta emails that were out there." The number of leaked emails by Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager, was actually closer to tens of thousands.

And it'd be difficult to prove exactly what influenced voters. But Democrats said it was a personal attack and a threat to democracy.

## United Nations News:

**Associated Press:** Buses resume taking remaining civilians, rebels from Aleppo

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/7339f057d0ec4f7082b40decbea8a328>

A fragile cease-fire was back on in Syria on Monday, as buses resumed evacuating those still remaining in eastern Aleppo following days of delays, and others departed with the sick and wounded from two rebel-besieged Shiite villages in the country's north. At the United Nations, the Security Council was expected to vote within hours on a resolution seeking to deploy U.N. monitors to Aleppo immediately in order to prevent what France has warned could be "mass atrocities" by Syrian forces and allied pro-government militias as they assume control of all of the rebel enclave. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and the pan-Arab Al-Mayadeen TV said that 10 buses left with civilians from the two Shiite villages long besieged by rebels — Foua and Kfarya — and were on their way to government-controlled areas on Monday. According to the deal, more than 2,000 sick and wounded are supposed to leave the villages. The Observatory and the pan-Arab TV said 15 additional buses entered the two villages to bring out more people.

**Reuters:** U.N. council to vote Monday on U.N. monitoring of Aleppo evacuation

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-vote-idUSKBN1470UK?il=0>

The United Nations Security Council agreed a compromise draft resolution on U.N. monitoring of evacuations from the besieged Syrian city of Aleppo and will vote on Monday, diplomats said. "We expect to vote unanimously for this text tomorrow at 9 a.m.," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, told reporters after more than three hours of negotiations. The U.N. Ambassador for Russia Vitaly Churkin, an ally of the Syrian government in the civil war, told reporters: "I think we have a good text, we agreed to vote tomorrow morning."

**Associated Press:** Diplomats: UN has warned Iran about enrichment cap

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/68c7f74a340042d291496e2f2a04050f>

The U.N. nuclear agency chief says Iran is complying with obligations limiting uranium enrichment. But two diplomats say the agency has warned Tehran that unless it slows the process it could soon bust through its cap on material that could be used to make a bomb. A nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers stipulates that Iran can possess only low-enriched uranium and only in amounts far less than needed for further enrichment into the fissile core of a nuclear warhead. The warning comes at sensitive time, with the incoming U.S. administration saying it could push to renegotiate the pact. The two senior diplomats, whose main focus is Iran's nuclear program, spoke only on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to discuss the confidential issue.

**Associated Press:** 1 South African killed in rebel attack on UN force in Congo

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/d2759dbac36543b68e5dc711a5e90ec3>

The South African military says rebels in eastern Congo have attacked a South African unit that is part of a United Nations peacekeeping mission, killing one soldier and injuring two others. The military says four rebels were killed and two were captured in the fighting Monday morning near Butembu in Congo's Beni region. South Africa's statement says its soldiers repelled the rebel attack. The U.N. peacekeeping mission in eastern Congo includes a force intervention brigade with a mandate to take offensive military action against rebel groups.

## World News:

**Associated Press:** Jordan tourist site shut after deadly attack, probe launched

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/d0bca7fb9fce404c8e4a21d08f938db9>

Jordanian troops with armored vehicles have blocked access to a popular tourist site — a Crusader

castle — following attacks in the area that killed 10 people the previous day, including a Canadian visitor. State-media said on Monday that Jordan launched an investigation into the shootings, among the bloodiest attacks in recent years. The attack was also the latest in a series of assaults over the past year that challenged the pro-Western kingdom's claim to be an oasis of calm in a region increasingly threatened by Islamic extremists. Canadian officials identified the slain tourist as Linda Vatcher. The attack was likely to further harm Jordan's battered tourism industry, on the decline since militants from the Islamic State group seized control of parts of neighboring Iraq and Syria two years ago.

**Associated Press:** Trial starts for confidante of impeached S. Korean president

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/ffde047808b94e3eaecd6808361a2a5b>

The jailed confidante of impeached South Korean President Park Geun-hye denied on the first day of her trial Monday that she used her ties to Park to extort money from big companies. The hour-long hearing at the Seoul Central District Court was the first public appearance in weeks for the woman at the heart of a scandal that led to Park's impeachment after millions took to streets in protests. Choi Soon-sil, Park's friend of 40 years, wore white prison clothes and bowed deeply to the three judges before her lawyer, Lee Kyoung-jae, denied that Choi conspired with Park and her presidential aide to pressure companies to donate tens of millions of dollars last year to foundations controlled by Choi. When directly asked by a judge about the extortion charges, she denied the charges. "I'm sorry for causing trouble. I'll faithfully engage in (my) trial," Choi said.

**Associated Press:** China disputes US claim it's top source of synthetic drugs

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/24cbba2af27a4befade119cfbec6fa73>

U.S. assertions that China is the top source of the synthetic opioids that have killed thousands of drug users in the U.S. and Canada are unsubstantiated, Chinese officials told the Associated Press. Both the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy point to China as North America's main source of fentanyl, related drugs and the chemicals used to make them. Such statements "lack the support of sufficient numbers of actual, confirmed cases," China's National Narcotics Control Commission told DEA's Beijing field office in a fax dated Friday. In its letter to the DEA, which the commission also sent to AP, Chinese officials urged the U.S. to provide more evidence about China's role as a source country.

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