

Trump asked China's Xi for re-election help: Bolton

Ex-national security advisor writes in an explosive new behind-the-scenes book

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump pleaded with China's leader Xi Jinping for help to win re-election in 2020, the US president's former national security advisor John Bolton writes in an explosive new behind-the-scenes book, according to excerpts published Wednesday.

Bolton alleges in a blistering critique that Trump's focus on winning a second term was the driving principle of his foreign policy, and that top aides routinely disparaged the Republican leader for his ignorance of basic geopolitical facts.

In excerpts published by The Washington Post, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, Bolton also claims Trump repeatedly showed a readiness to overlook Chinese human rights abuses—most strikingly telling Xi the mass internment of Uighur Muslims was “exactly the right thing to do.”

“I am hard-pressed to identify any significant Trump decision during my White House tenure that wasn't driven by reelection calculations,” Bolton writes of the real estate magnate-turned-president, who was impeached in December for seeking dirt from Ukraine on his 2020 Democratic election rival Joe Biden.

In a key meeting with Xi last June, Trump “stunningly turned the conversation to the US presidential election, alluding to China's economic capability to affect the ongoing campaigns, pleading with Xi to ensure he'd win,” Bolton claims in his upcoming tell-all. Bolton writes that Trump stressed the importance of

US farmers and how “increased Chinese purchases of soybeans and wheat” could impact the US electoral outcome.

When asked about the claims in the book yesterday, China said it has “always pursued the principle of non-interference in internal affairs.” “We have no intention to and will not interfere in US internal politics and elections,” said foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian.

In a sign of Trump's anger over the memoir, the Justice Department filed an emergency order late Wednesday seeking to halt publication, the second time in as many days it has tried to block the book.

Arguing that Bolton failed to allow completion of vetting of the book as required, the department urged the court to take action to “prevent the harm to national security that will result if his manuscript is published to the world.” Bolton “broke the law” by divulging “highly classified information,” Trump said in a late Wednesday interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity.

He also derided his former advisor, a veteran Washington insider, as “washed up,” and mocked Bolton's past support for the US war in Iraq.

“Wacko John Bolton's ‘exceedingly tedious’ (New York Times) book is made up of lies & fake stories,” Trump later tweeted.

In the released excerpts Bolton said by intervening in cases involving major firms in China and Turkey, Trump appeared to “give



In this file photo US President Donald Trump and China's President Xi Jinping leave a business leaders event at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.—AFP

personal favors to dictators he liked.”

He describes “obstruction of justice as a way of life” in the White House, and says he reported his concerns to Attorney General William Barr.

‘Morally repugnant’

The bombshell book, “The Room Where It Happened,” is due for release next Tuesday, in the thick of a presidential campaign against Democrat Biden.

The former vice president said Bolton's revelations show Trump “sold out the American people to protect his political future.” “If these accounts are true, it's not only morally repugnant, it's a violation of Donald Trump's sacred duty to the American people to protect America's interests and defend our values.”

The conservative Bolton, himself a controversial figure in US politics, spent 17 turbulent months in the White House before resigning last September.—AFP

Atlanta police officer charged with murder for shooting black man

ATLANTA: An Atlanta police officer has been charged with murder for shooting a 27-year-old man in the back, justice officials announced Wednesday, in the latest case to spark anger over police killings of African Americans.

Rayshard Brooks' shooting came less than three weeks after a Minneapolis police officer's killing of handcuffed African American George Floyd on May 25 fuelled a national uproar over racism and police brutality.

Atlanta District Attorney Paul Howard said police officer Garrett Rolfe had no justification for shooting Brooks as he fled, and aggravated the case by kicking his body as he lay on the ground bleeding. He also said that Rolfe and fellow officer Devin Brosnan violated multiple police department regulations after they detained Brooks on June 12.

Not treated fairly

“We concluded that, at the time that Mr Brooks was shot, he did not pose an immediate threat of death or serious physical injury to the officers,” Howard said.

Donald Trump called the killing of Brooks “a terrible situa-

tion”, but went on to claim officers have “not been treated fairly” in a Fox News interview Wednesday. “I hope he gets a fair shake because police have not been treated fairly in our country,” the US president said, when asked about the charges against Rolfe.

“But, again, you can't resist a police officer like that. And they ended up in a very terrible disagreement and look at the way it ended. Very bad. Very bad.” Brooks' death ignited a fresh round of angry protests, and forced the resignation of Atlanta's police chief.

Howard said a warrant was issued for Rolfe's arrest on 11 counts, including felony murder—a homicide committed in the course of another felony crime—aggravated assault, and multiple counts of violating police procedures.

The murder count could bring a sentence of death or life in prison. Brosnan, who has agreed to become a witness for the state in the investigation, faces three charges including aggravated assault.

Brosnan and Rolfe found Brooks sleeping in his car in the drive-up line at a local Wendy's fast-food restaurant last Friday.

Over a calm 20 minute interaction, they gave him an alcohol test and, after it proved positive, sought to arrest him for driving under the influence.

After a brief struggle Brooks ran off with one of the officers' Tasers and, as he swung his arm back to point it at them, Rolfe shot Brooks twice in the back.

The issue of whether Rolfe reasonably believed he was in



ATLANTA: Tomika Miller, the widow of Rayshard Brooks, stands with her lawyer, Chris Stewart, as she participates in a press conference at the lawyers' office after Fulton County District Attorney Paul L. Howard, Jr. announced 11 charges against former Atlanta Police Officer Garrett Rolfe on Wednesday.—AFP

danger was at the heart of deciding if he should be charged. Howard said that a review of eight video recordings of the incident, from police cameras and bystander phone recordings, and multiple witnesses, showed the officers themselves never displayed fear of danger from Brooks.

They never told Brooks he was under arrest, and while he was shot and lay on the ground dying, Rolfe kicked him while Brosnan stood on his shoulders.—AFP