

## **Impeachment looms amid fear of violence**

**Extremist threat: All 50 states, DC brace for protests**

### **ATTACK ON US CAPITOL**

#### **Impeachment:**

Fast-track vote among scenarios

#### **Homeland:**

Acting Secretary

Chad Wolf resigns

Trump aims to defend legacy with

Texas trip

#### **David Jackson**

USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – As lawmakers call for his removal – and plan a second impeachment – President Donald Trump is likely to defend himself Tuesday with a speech in Alamo, Texas.

No, not *that* Alamo.

This Alamo is a small town on the Texas-Mexico border where the outgoing president plans to promote his immigration policy and defend his legacy – a legacy tarnished by last week’s attack on the U.S. Capitol by enraged Trump supporters.

The ostensible purpose of the visit is “to mark the completion of more than 400 miles of border wall – a promise made, promise kept – and his Administration’s efforts to reform our broken immigration system,” according to a White House statement.

Trump is leaving behind a Washington still gripped with fear over last week’s insurrection, while the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent economic ramifications continue to batter the country. And there are concerns



---

about even more violence, with the FBI on Monday warning of events planned at statehouses in all 50 states.

Jennifer Mercieca, an associate professor of communication at Texas A& M University, said the event serves as a chance for Trump to try to shape the narrative around his final days in office.

“Trump has lost his agenda-setting power, and he’s trying to force positive news stories about his presidency by doing a ‘highlights reel’ of events and photoops,” said Mercieca, who wrote the book “Demagogue for President: The Rhetorical Genius of Donald Trump.”

Deprived of his account by Twitter, faced with defections from his staff and seeing his political ratings slide, Trump has been largely silent for several days as Democratic lawmakers prepare articles of impeachment.

Even some Republicans have called on Vice President Mike Pence and the Cabinet to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office immediately. The Trump Cabinet is not likely to act on the suggestion.

The House impeached Trump in 2019 over a phone call in which he pressured the government of Ukraine to investigate Biden and members of his family. The Republican-led Senate acquitted Trump last year.

Despite the calls for his ouster, Trump is likely to stay in office until the legal termination of his presidency at noon Jan. 20, a week from Wednesday. He is preparing a series of farewell gestures, including pardons, executive orders and perhaps more public comments like the ones planned in Texas on Tuesday. This is Trump’s first in-person speech since Wednesday, when he addressed a rally near the White House to protest the election of Joe Biden.

As a backdrop to Trump’s trip to Alamo, Texas, the House Democratic majority plans an impeachment vote as soon as Wednesday. About 250 miles south of San Antonio, the town of Alamo is named for the 19th-century

mission and fortress where a Texas army was defeated by Mexican troops in 1836. Texans used the defeat at the Alamo as a rallying cry during their fight for independence from Mexico.

Located in Texas' Rio Grande Valley, this portion of the U.S.-Mexico border continues to be the busiest corridor for human smuggling among the agency's nine sectors located along the U.S.-Mexico border. The Rio Grande Valley also remains a major focus of border wall construction, especially in areas that previously did not have any barriers.

Customs and Border Protection has not publicly disclosed how many miles of new wall have been built in areas of the border that previously did not have any barriers. However, at least the 17 miles that CBP said have been completed in the Rio Grande Valley sector are in areas without any barriers in the past.

Some political analysts said they would prefer to see Trump give a resignation speech at this Alamo, but they expect more defiance from him.

Tim Miller, a former Republican strategist who worked for 2016 presidential candidate Jeb Bush, said Trump "is fundamentally incapable of speaking without making our precarious situation worse and potentially inciting more violence."

How much last week's violence undercuts Trump's political standing "remains to be seen," said Janine Parry, professor of political science at the University of Arkansas. Pollsters for both parties are probably "in field now" trying to answer that question, she said.

Early returns are not great for Trump, according to a Quinnipiac Poll released Monday. "A majority of Americans hold President Trump responsible for the chaos at the Capitol, and a slight majority believe that he should be removed from office," said Tim Malloy, polling analyst at Quinnipiac University.

Trump's approval rating, Quinnipiac reported, dipped to 33%, down 11 percentage points from his mark last month.

Trump is likely to appeal to his remaining base of supporters, many of whom hail from rural areas such as Alamo. "It's no accident he selected this part of the country for remarks in this particular environment," Parry said.

Even though the town is not the hallowed location of battle, the very word – "Remember the Alamo!" – remains a potent symbol for many Texans.

"Instead of walking back the incendiary effect of his most recent public rally, he appears – with this choice – to be upping the ante," Parry said. "If Americans know anything about the Alamo, it's that it was a place to make a 'last stand' or even to go out in a 'blaze of glory.' "

*"Trump has lost his agenda-setting power, and he's trying to force positive news stories about his presidency by doing a 'highlights reel' of events and photo-ops."*

*Jennifer Mercieca,*

*Texas A& M University*