VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Steve Karesh reporting.

A possible shakeup in Washington as media reports on Thursday quoting unidentified senior administration officials indicate that U.S. President Donald Trump could name Central Intelligence Agency Director Mike Pompeo to replace Rex Tillerson as secretary of state.

The White House press secretary downplayed the reports of Tillerson's departure, saying that "there are no personnel announcements at this time."

The State Department denied the rumors as well shifting the onus on the White House. Here is spokeswoman Heather Nauert. "Here is what I know. I don't work at the White House. But what I can tell you is that chief of staff Kelly called our department this morning and said that the rumors are not true, that those reports are not true. That is what I've been told. That's what we've been told. And you heard from the White House today that they have no personnel change."

If it happens, Tillerson's departure would end a troubled tenure for the former oil executive, who's been increasingly at odds with Trump over issues, such as North Korean, and under fire for cuts at the State Department.

British lawmakers and leaders have reacted angrily to President Donald Trump's retweeting of anti-Muslim videos initially posted by a far-right British leader.

A statement by Prime Minister May on Wednesday condemned the tweets on Thursday. She said the United States and Britain have an enduring relationship, but added that her position on the tweets was clear.

"The fact that we work together does not mean that we're afraid to say when we think the United States has got it wrong, and be very clear with them. And I'm very clear that retweeting from Britain First was the wrong thing to do."

Trump dismissed May's criticism in a tweet saying she should focus on terrorism.

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U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley says North Korea's latest intercontinental ballistic missile launch is bringing "the world closer to war, not further from it."

Haley told an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council that the United States is not seeking war with North Korea.

"We need China to do more. President Trump called Chinese President Xi this morning and told him that we have come to the point that China must cut off the oil from North Korea. That would be a pivotal step in the world's effort to stop this international pariah."

North Korea announced Wednesday it successfully tested a new missile that can reach the continental United States.

It was Pyongyang's 20th ballistic missile launch of this year.

An increase in violence in Cameroon as five soldiers and five policemen have been killed within 24 hours in Cameroon's two English-speaking regions.

Separatists have claimed responsibility.

Schools have been closed in the English-speaking northwest and southwest regions since [November when] November of last year, rather, when lawyers and teachers called for a strike to stop what they believe is the overbearing use of French in the areas.

Violence erupted when separatists joined in and started asking for complete independence.

Meanwhile, the deputies of the Social Democratic Front, the SDF, Cameroon's main Anglophile opposition party, interrupted the National Assembly to demand it debate on the Anglophone crisis.

Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees in the world, and three million of them are Syrians. Most live in towns and cities across the country. But this year, a series of clashes between Turks and Syrians could be a sign that for some Turks, patience is running out.

Dorian Jones reports from Istanbul.

Turkish authorities appear to be increasingly concerned about the tensions. In some areas of Istanbul, as in other parts of the country, signs in Arabic touting businesses belonging to Syrians have been removed in a bid to lower their profile. The move comes as the Turkish media continue to devote a great deal of coverage to issues involving Syrian refugees. A recent study found that Syrians are among the main targets of hate speech, second only to Jewish people, in the Turkish media.

Opposition parties are set to make the government's Syria refugee policy a key issue in the months ahead.

Dorian Jones, of VOA news, Istanbul, Turkey.

In Buenos Aires on Thursday, Argentina's navy announced that the search for a missing submarine that has been lost for 15 days will continue but the rescue part of the mission is over, reflecting the faded hopes for finding the crew of 44 members alive.

I'm Steve Karesh in Washington.

That's the latest world news from VOA.