VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Anne Ball reporting.

U.S. embassy moving to Jerusalem. President Donald Trump is telephoning several Middle East leaders ahead of an expected announcement as early as Wednesday that the United States will recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat praised the idea. "This historic step will send a very clear message to the world that the United States stands with the Jewish people and the State of Israel."

But Nabil Abu Rudeina, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, called the potential move against the law. "If the American embassy is going to be moved to Jerusalem, this is against the international law and this is, this will be unacceptable from our side."

Russia's Justice Ministry on Tuesday designated nine U.S. media outlets, including the Voice Of America, as "foreign agents." The ministry also listed Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and several of its affiliates after warning last month they could be affected.

Tom Kent is president of RFE/RL. "We will study carefully all communications from the ministry and other Russian official organizations. At the same time, we remain committed to continuing our journalistic work in the interests of providing accurate and objective news to our Russian-speaking audiences."

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed into law in November, the, designating media outlets as "foreign agents" and imposing sanctions against them.

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The International Olympic Committee will allow Russians to compete in the upcoming Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea. But they will not be competing under the Russian flag. Instead, they will compete as neutrals.

This announcement comes after an IOC executive board meeting in Switzerland on allegations that Russian athletes took part in state-sponsored doping campaign during the 2014 Olympics in Sochi.

Russia has repeatedly denied it carried out a doping operation.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has affirmed an "ironclad" U.S. commitment to NATO.

Speaking in a meeting with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, Tillerson reaffirmed U.S. commitments to Europe. "We look forward to a very comprehensive discussion today on how to further strengthen this alliance, confirm once again the United States commitment to the alliance, commitment to Article 5 of the alliance, and to also understand better the joint plans between the EU and NATO, which we view can only strengthen the security posture here in Europe."

Stoltenberg also praised Tillerson's strong personal commitment to NATO.

President Donald Trump's order restricting travel from six countries goes into effect Tuesday in its entirety for the first time since it was signed last January.

The Supreme Court approved the order but said it still has to make its way through two appeals courts, [that have settle] that have scheduled hearings later this week.

The countries covered under the ban include Chad, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen.

The travel order has been mired in the courts since January during which time the Trump administration has rewritten it three times. Pro-immigration groups have sued to stop the order, saying it is discriminatory and amounts to a ban on Muslims.

U.S. special counsel Robert Mueller investigating Russian meddling in last year's U.S. elections is now looking at the financial affairs of President Donald Trump.

Media reports say Mueller is examining records of about hundreds of millions of dollars in loans Deutsche Bank made to Trump's vast real estate empire. Mueller subpoenaed the records several years ago, according to Reuters and Bloomberg, and the bank has complied with the request but offering no details about its transactions.

I'm Anne Ball from Washington.

That's the latest world news from VOA.