

VOA NEWS

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I'm VOA's Joe Ramsey with this worldwide news update.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday night is expected to lay out his plans for Congress and the American people after a turbulent first few weeks in office. Some Democrats are declining to attend Trump's address. Many Democratic lawmakers plan to wear blue and yellow ties and scarves to show support for Ukraine.

The White House says Trump's theme is "renewal of the American dream" and said he would lay out his achievements as well as appeal to Congress to provide more money to finance his aggressive immigration crackdown.

Trump is speaking at a critical juncture in his presidency as voters who returned him to the White House on his promise to fix inflation are instead facing economic concerns over inflation, tariffs and declining stock markets.

Four people familiar with the situation on Tuesday said President Trump plans to sign a much-debated minerals deal with Ukraine, signaling a possible easing of tensions following a heated exchange in the Oval Office last week between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Reuters correspondent Olivia Zollino reports.

Three sources said that Trump was planning to announce the agreement in his address to Congress Tuesday evening. But they also cautioned that the deal hasn't been signed yet and that things could change.

The deal would signal something of an improvement from the disastrous meeting last Friday.

"If you didn't have our military equipment, this war would have been over in two weeks."

"In three days, I heard it from Putin. In three days."

That ended with Zelenskyy's visit to the White House cut short.

On Tuesday, the Ukrainian leader posted on social media that Ukraine was ready to sign the deal and called the Oval Office meeting, quote, "regrettable."

Reuters correspondent Olivia Zollino.

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European Union leaders will meet with Zelenskyy on Thursday in Brussels to discuss boosting defense spending for Ukraine and Europe's own security in the face of Russia. The meeting comes amid fears that the United States' longtime support to Europe may end. Lisa Bryant reports from Paris.

On Tuesday, European Commission Chief Ursula von der Leyen outlined a \$5.840 billion plan to aid Ukraine and give EU countries financial leverage to rearm.

"The real question in front of United States is whether Europe is prepared to act as decisively as the situation dictates and whether Europe is ready and able to act with speed and with the ambition that is needed."

Some, like Poland, have invested heavily in rearming.

Now, after years of U.S. calls to do more, others are stepping up, including Britain, Denmark, Germany and France, where President Emmanuel Macron wants EU members to plow 3 percent or more of their GDP into defense.

Lisa Bryant, VOA News, Paris.

Arab leaders on Tuesday endorsed Egypt's post-war plan for the Gaza Strip that would allow its roughly 2 million Palestinians to remain in the territory. AP correspondent Haya Panjwani reports.

Meeting in Cairo, the leaders endorsed a counterproposal to Trump's plan to depopulate the territory and redevelop it as a beach destination.

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, says, "We in the Kingdom categorically reject any infringement of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, whether through settlement policies, annexation of Palestinian lands or attempts to displace Palestinians from their lands."

It's unclear if Israel or the United States would accept the Egyptian plan.

I'm Haya Panjwani.

President Trump's due 25 percent tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada took effect on Tuesday, along with a doubling of duties on Chinese goods to 20 percent. Reuters correspondent Alex Cohen has more.

Trump said all three countries had failed to do enough to stop fentanyl from entering the U.S.

The trade wars could slam economic growth and lift prices for Americans still hurting from years of high inflation.

Canada swiftly retaliated. Here's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

"Now it's not in my habit to agree with *The Wall Street Journal*. But Donald, they point out that even though you're a very smart guy, this is a very dumb thing to do."

Mexican President Claudia Scheinbaum said she would unveil her response this weekend.

Reuters correspondent Alex Cohen.

That wraps up this update, but the world and news never stop. For additional updates, visit our website, voanews.com. I'm Joe Ramsey, VOA News.