VOA NEWS

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

The U.S. State Department said on Thursday it was suspending security assistance to Pakistan until Islamabad takes action against the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network.

State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert: "We are suspending security assistance, security assistance only to Pakistan at this time until the Pakistani government takes decisive action against groups including the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network. We consider them to be destabilizing the region and also targeting U.S. personnel. The United States will suspend that kind of security assistance to Pakistan."

One official said the aid is worth more than $255 million.

The Trump administration has denied the U.S. has had any hand in the protests in Iran, but Iran's prosecutor general says they name directly a CIA official as being the main designer of the protests that have shaken the country.

The CIA declined comment.

On Wednesday, Vice President Mike Pence also spoke of supporting the Iranian people.

"The American people stand with them. And if they will just continue to show the courage of their convictions and reach out and embrace a free and democratic future, that America and the world will be with them."

The U.S. State Department says the U.S. condemns in strongest possible terms protest-related deaths and arrests of Iranians.

Nearly 30 civilians, including children, have been killed in airstrikes in rebel stronghold in Syria outside the capital, Damascus.

For more on this, go to our website. This is VOA news.

At a White House meeting on immigration with Republican senators, President Donald Trump said current U.S. immigration policies are failing Americans.

"Chain migration is a total disaster which threatens our security and our economy and provides a gateway for terrorism. Likewise, the visa lottery is bad for our economy and very bad for security. You saw that recently in New York along the West Side Highway. We need a physical border wall. We're going to have a wall - remember that, we're going to have a wall - to keep out deadly drug dealers, dangerous traffickers and violent criminal cartels. Mexico's having a tremendous problem with crime and we want to keep it out of our country."

Trump has given Congress until March 5 to agree on legislation that would provide equivalent protections for those offered to children who came here illegally and include funding for his proposed border wall and end chain migration and the visa lottery.

A lawyer for President Donald Trump sought Thursday to block publication next week of a book recounting insider recollections of Trump's chaotic first year in the White House, contending that it is defamatory and libelous.

Attorney Charles Harder demanded in a letter to author Michael Wolff and his publisher that they stop Tuesday's release of Wolf's book *Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House*.

White House spokesperson Sarah Sanders said the book is "full of lies."

"There are numerous mistakes, but I'm not going to waste my time or the country's time going page by page, talking about a book that's complete fantasy and just full of tabloid gossip, because it's sad, pathetic, and our administration and our focus is going to be on moving the country forward."

Strong words, too, from White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders, also about suggestions that the president may be mentally unfit for the job.

"It's disgraceful and laughable. If he was unfit, he probably wouldn't be sitting there and wouldn't have defeated the most qualified group of candidates the Republican Party has ever seen. This is an incredibly strong and good leader."

A suicide bomb attack occurred in Kabul, Afghanistan, Thursday not far from the U.S. embassy. At least 20 people are dead or wounded in the blast.

This is VOA news. I'm Anne Ball from Washington.

That's the latest world news from VOA.