VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Liz Parker reporting.

Controversial memo released.

United States House Republicans released a controversial memo on Friday. It contains allegations of what they say is FBI misconduct, including that a dossier by a former British spy was "an essential part" of an FBI application to run surveillance on a Trump campaign adviser with no mention it was funded by the opposing Democratic campaign.

Bill Gallo has more.

The move came over the fierce objections of the FBI and Justice Department, which have said the document prepared by the Republicans on the House Intelligence Committee is inaccurate and missing critical context.

The memo alleges that the FBI abused U.S. government surveillance powers in its investigation into Russian election interference.

Trump, who has called the investigation a "witch hunt," authorized the release of the memo in the apparent hopes that it could help undermine the probe being led by special counsel Robert Mueller.

Bill Gallo, VOA news.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said the Taliban is using Pakistan as a headquarters. This coming a day after Afghan officials gave Pakistan confessions and other proof showing that the militants who carried out a recent series of attacks were trained in Pakistan.

Here is more from Jeff Caster.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said Taliban's base is in Pakistan and asked Pakistan to take action to prevent further attacks by the militants on Afghan territory.

In a televised speech to the nation flanked by Islamic clerics Friday, Ghani also urged Taliban insurgents who wanted to talk peace with the government to separate themselves from those who only want to fight.

Jeff Caster, VOA news.

The United States on Friday banned the export of weapons and defense services to South Sudan, stepping up pressure against President Salva Kiir to end the country's four-year civil war.

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The European Union imposed sanctions Friday on three current and former South Sudanese officials implicated in human rights violations and obstructions of their country's peace process.

They are former army Chief of Staff General Paul Malong, Deputy Chief of Defense and Inspector General Malek Reuben Riak and Information Minister Michael Makuei Leuth. The sanctions include assets freezes and a ban on travel to EU countries.

Britain's minister for Africa, Harriett Baldwin, welcomed the sanctions and pledged her country's support to ending violence in South Sudan.

The United States Secretary of State Jim Mattis hosted his Ukrainian counterpart at the Pentagon on Friday. Excuse me, that's Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

Mattis reaffirmed American commitment to Ukrainian Defense Minister Stepan Poltorak in the face of what he described as Russian aggression.

"We are engaged diplomatically in attempts to try to get Russia to live by the Minsk agreement and we will continue those efforts through our State Department."

Poltorak thanked Mattis and the U.S. for approving the supply of the Ukrainian army with lethal equipment.

"... and the United States from the very first days of the conflict or ??? nations who first extended their hands of support and assistance to Ukraine in our struggle for the independence and sovereignty."

That was Poltorak speaking through a translator. He said the U.S. is an important ally for Ukraine.

President Nicolás Maduro was officially named a presidential candidate for his party in the upcoming Venezuelan election, an election that was moved up by the pro-government National Constituent Assembly.

"I have faith in the people. I have faith in history," Maduro said as a nomination happened Friday at the party meeting in the capital, Caracas.

The decision to hold elections before April 30 has taken the fractured opposition by surprise and they still do not have a nominee.

Venezuela's political crisis is expected to be part of talks during U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's tour of Latin America. His first stop was in Mexico Friday where he met with Mexican Foreign Secretary Luis Videgaray and Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland.

Videgaray spoke about the ongoing political crisis in Venezuela, pledging Mexico's full diplomatic support to resolve it.

He said it must be the Venezuelans themselves who find a road to peace.

I'm Liz Parker in Washington.

That's the latest world news from VOA.