VOA NEWS

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

"Great opening ceremony. It's gonna be a fantastic event and this evening was wonderful."

"It was beautiful, it was perfect and I'm very glad to be here, part of history. History was made here tonight. It's fantastic. And I'm very glad."

The 2018 Winter Olympic Games are underway amid extraordinary unity between the two Koreas.

Athletes from the South and North Korea marched behind the blue and white Korean Unification Flag.

VOA's Steve Herman was also at the event with Vice President Mike Pence.

"Well, he was in the VIP box with the host, Moon Jae-in, the president of South Korea, and right next to (the) U.S. vice president was the prime minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, and from where we could see the VIP box looking out from our seats in the stadium, a few meters away, to the left of the U.S. vice president were two North Korean officials, the ceremonial head of the government and Kim Jong Un's sister."

According to Mr. Pence's office, there was no interaction between the U.S. vice president and the North Korean officials.

Winter Games run through February 25.

With President Donald Trump's signature, the U.S. government reopened on Friday after a short shutdown. Very early Friday morning, the House of Representatives followed the Senate in passing the bill. (The) two-year bill will provide funding for defense and domestic programs.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell: "The bipartisan agreement before us funds our troops, addresses the opioid crisis, funds our veterans and many other shared priorities. The speaker of the House supports the bill as waiting for it to pass the Senate."

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Social media footage appeared to show that children were among the civilians injured in airstrikes in rebel-held towns in Syria.

The video said to be filmed today in eastern Ghouta and Duma purported to show the aftermath of the aerial bombardment. Several children were among the victims pulled out from under the rubble of damaged buildings by members of the White Helmets civil defense group.

Warplanes have mounted further attacks on the rebel stronghold.

President Bashar al-Assad, who has seized a clear advantage in the war with Russia and Iranian help, is hammering two of the last key rebel pockets of Syria, eastern Ghouta and Idlib in the northwest near the Turkish border.

U.S. National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster is due in Turkey this weekend as a potential military confrontation looms between the countries over Syria. The NATO allies disagree over Turkey's military intervention into Syria against a Kurdish militia which is a key U.S. ally in the war against Islamic State.

With more from Istanbul for VOA, Dorian Jones.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu this week lambasting Washington, accusing it of making deals with the Islamic State militants and claiming his government has lost confidence in its alliance with the U.S.

Such verbal assaults against Washington by Turkey's political leadership are almost a daily occurrence.

Political analyst Atilla Yeşilada of Global Source Partners says when U.S. National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster sits down for talks in Ankara, he will likely find little room to maneuver.

"Given the fact that there is this ironclad alliance between PKK and YPG, there is no way Turkey can allow a Syrian Kurdish state."

Dorian Jones, of VOA news, Istanbul.

Analysts are already warning Turkish-U.S. relations are now facing their greatest test.

U.S. stocks managed to bounce back today after having slumped earlier on Friday afternoon. A roller-coaster ride with the Dow was up 500 and down 500, finally closed with a respectable 330-point gain.

Eric Wiegand is a U.S. Bank senior portfolio manager. "We are encouraged that we did move off, you know, that 200 moving average. But this is, this contraction's been very compressed. Historically, they tend to extend over many more sessions, not just a week. So we would like to, you know, see some things stabilize in order to maintain the confidence."

Having dropped 10 percent from the last week, as of yesterday, the stock market was deemed to be officially in correction territory.

This is Joe parker reporting from Washington.

That's the latest world news from VOA.