VOA NEWS

March 3, 2018

From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Tommie McNeil reporting.

The governments of Burkina Faso and France said an armed group coordinated attacks Friday on France's embassy and cultural center and on the West African country's military headquarters in the capital.

At least seven soldiers were killed in the attacks and the government officials said eight other militants were slain. More than 90 people were wounded in the violence in the former French colony in West Africa and officials called it a terrorist attack.

There has been no claim of responsibility.

Five emergency centers were set up in hospitals, a military barracks and at a stadium in Ouagadougou to treat the casualties.

Gunfire and explosions resounded for hours but subsided by midday.

There are fears that the death toll could rise.

Steve Miller, VOA news.

The Kremlin spokesman Friday rejected a U.S. allegation that Russia had been developing destabilizing weapons systems for over a decade in direct violations of its treaty obligations.

"What the president talked about yesterday was the guaranteed maintenance of the strategic parity, which is necessary in order to maintain world peace and stability. Russia does not plan to get dragged into any arms race."

White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders made the allegation Thursday after President Vladimir Putin announced an array of new nuclear weapons.

President Donald Trump Friday defended his threat to impose steep tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, saying potential trade conflicts can be beneficial to the United States.

Mr. Trump's planned tariffs announced Thursday sparked concerns of a trade war, with emerging markets trading lower and not some world leaders actually threatening to take some retaliatory measures.

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The Turkish military says eight Turkish soldiers and 13 others were wounded in fighting in northern Syria's Afrin enclave in one of the deadliest days for the Turkish military since it launched "Operation Olive Branch" against the Syrian Kurdish militia.

Turkey's defense minister said Friday that 41 Turkish soldiers and 116 Free Syrian Army members had been killed in "Operation Olive Branch" so far.

Turkey's mainstream media is offering little criticism on the operation and protest and dissent on social media are banned.

A U.S. aircraft carrier group is preparing to sail through the contested South China Sea later this month, and observers expect an angry Beijing to register its opposition and quicken its militarization of small islands in the region.

The group of ships led by the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier and guided missile destroyer USS Michael Murphy is plying the South China Sea after a mid-February port call in Manila where some of the 5,500 crew members offered humanitarian aid.

A U.S. Navy statement says the group came for "promoting freedom of the seas and enhancing regional security" as well as working with allies in the region.

The U.N. migration agency says armed Boko Haram insurgents attacked a military base in northeastern Nigeria, killing and inuring workers and police.

Lisa Schlein reports for VOA from Geneva.

A spokesman for the International Organization for Migration, Joel Millman, cited IOM staff working in the camp as saying four soldiers, four mobile police and three humanitarian workers were killed while another three humanitarian workers were injured and one is reportedly missing.

"I have a quote here from Mohammed Abdiker, who is the IOM Director of Operations and Emergencies, who said 'we are outraged and saddened at the killings of two of our colleagues in an attack by Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria last evening. Ibrahim Lawan and Yawe Emmanuel represented the best in us assisting displaced civilians. We will miss them.'"

The attack follows the blazing kidnapping of more than 100 schoolgirls by Boko Haram February 19.

Afghan authorities say a suicide bomber detonated his explosive-laden car Friday near a NATO convoy in the capital Kabul, killing a six-year-old girl and wounding 20 others.

A police spokesman told VOA the attack happened near a foreign military base on a main road linked to Kabul with eastern city of Jalalabad.

He said civilians were among the victims but the blast did not harm international troops.

Heroin and fentanyl exports from Mexico to the United States are on the rise. That's according to World Drug Report 2017.

Seizures of fentanyl, a significant contributor to the overdose deaths epidemic, by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection increased significantly in 2016.

I'm Tommie McNeil, VOA news.

That's the latest world news from VOA.