VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Jonathan Jones reporting.

White House officials on Wednesday detailed plans to send National Guard troops to the southern border with Mexico. It's part of President Trump's efforts to confront what he says is a growing problem with illegal immigrants.

The decision to deploy the [U.S. National Guard], or the States' National Guard, that is, to the border represents a major new aspect of Trump's wide-ranging immigration crackdown. But major parts of the move are unclear, including how many troops will be sent, when they will deploy, or what exactly they will do.

China hit back on Wednesday at the U.S. government's plan to slap tariffs on $50 billion in Chinese goods, retaliating with a list of similar duties on key U.S. imports and adding to fears that the world's two largest economies are heading towards a trade war.

Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters the door to dialogue is open but the United States has missed opportunities to resolve the issue through dialogue multiple times.

President Trump tweeted on Wednesday "We are not in a trade war with China, that war was lost many years ago by the foolish, or incompetent, people who represented the U.S."

The U.N. humanitarian adviser for Syria, Jan Egeland, said on Wednesday he wants access to the eastern Ghouta town of Douma.

"Why can we not deliver to the people of Douma today for example even though we are on the eve of a deal for Douma, they are really, really on their knees in terms of needs."

Egeland said 80,000 to 150,000 civilians in Douma need to be cared for.

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The United States involvement in Syria is "coming to a rapid end." But the White House in a statement is refusing to say when that end will come despite repeated public calls by President Trump for American forces there to come home.

In a statement on Wednesday, the White House said, "The military mission to eradicate ISIS in Syria is coming to a rapid end, with ISIS being almost completely destroyed."

Authorities in Cameroon have freed 18 people, including 12 European tourists who had been kidnapped by armed separatists fighting for the independence of the country's English-speaking regions. But dozens of hostages are still in captivity.

As correspondent Moki Edwin Kindzeka reports from the capital Yaoundé.

Twelve of the 18 former hostages looked tired, hungry and unkempt as they arrived in Yaoundé Tuesday. They refused to grant interviews.

Communications Minister Issa Tchiroma says the seven Swiss nationals and five Italians were freed from the bushes of Manyu, an administrative unit on Cameroon's southwestern border with Nigeria, after a battle between Cameroon government troops and armed separatists.

Tchiroma says local residents told the military where the hostages had been taken to.

He says the 12 tourists regained their freedom thanks to the collaboration between the population, self-defense groups and forces of law and order.

Moki Edwin Kindzeka, for VOA news, Yaoundé.

Facebook revealed Wednesday that tens of millions more people might have been exposed in the Cambridge Analytica privacy scandal than previously thought and said it will restrict the user data that outsiders can access.

Those developments came as congressional officials said Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg will testify next week.

Facebook is facing its worst privacy scandal in years.

And the U.S. Justice Department on Wednesday filed denaturalization papers against two Bosnian Muslims convicted of carrying out an execution-style massacre of Croatian villagers during the Balkan wars.

The men are both alleged former members of an elite Bosnian military unit responsible for carrying out the 1993 attack that killed 22 civilians. They are accused of hiding their crimes on their applications for refugee, permanent residency and U.S. citizenship status.

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That's the latest world news from VOA.