VOA NEWS

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

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said Friday President Donald Trump is still weighing options in response to a suspected chemical weapons attack in Syria that Washington believes President Bashar al-Assad carried out.

"Our president has not yet made a decision about possible actions in Syria. But should the United States and our allies decide to act in Syria, it will be in defense of a principle on which we all agree. It will be in defense of a bedrock international norm that benefits all nations."

Syria continues to deny using chemical weapons but Haley criticized the president there.

Meanwhile, the State Department's Heather Nauert response to question from the media who asked her to elaborate on reports on Russia that say Britain staged Syria chemical weapons attack.

"We've seen a long history of the Russian government sow discord, whether it's in our own election process, other countries. We see it through state-sponsored disinformation campaigns. We see what happened today at the U.N. Security Council where they try to completely change the story when the facts become just a little too inconvenient for them."

Violence broke out along the Gaza Strip Friday during Palestinians protest that resulted in more than 500 people being injured.

The Gaza Health Ministry [Israeli troops] says that Israeli troops used gunfire and tear gas to repel attempts by Palestinians across the border fence separating the Palestinian-governed Gaza Strip from Israel.

The protesters are demanding an end to the decade-old blockade and return of Palestinian refugees to what is now Israel, where their ancestors lived before being forced to leave after the establishment of Israel in 1948.

More at voanews.com. This is VOA news.

Trade and North Korea's nuclear and missile programs will be the key topics for Japan during U.S. President Donald Trump's meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe next week.

Earlier this month, Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga spoke about his country's priorities for the Trump-Abe meeting, saying the North Korean missile issue will be high on the agenda. So will be trade.

"We anticipate discussions on the importance of free trade since that is of interest to us during the meeting."

Trump slapped aluminum and steel trade restrictions on Japan and others last month. Tokyo wants those restrictions lifted.

Yuri Nagano, for VOA news, Tokyo.

Taliban insurgents have assaulted a security outpost in western Afghanistan, killing at least 11 government security forces.

The Thursday night attack took place in Shindand district in the province of Herat, which borders Iran.

The district governor told VOA the insurgent raid also wounded four security personnel.

The so-called law and order police post was manned by Afghan police personnel when it came under attack. The district chief of the law and order police contingent was among those slain.

A Taliban spokesman claimed in a statement sent to media that the attack in Shindand left more than 20 Afghan security personnel dead. It also said insurgents took away four armored military vehicles.

Jeff Caster, VOA news.

U.S. President Donald Trump Friday called former FBI director James Comey an "untruthful slime ball," and said it was his "great honor" to fire him after learning details of Comey's memoir to be released next week.

Former FBI director James Comey's new book, *A Higher Loyalty*, [is] has been anticipated for weeks and months. The book is due out next week. The Associated Press purchased a copy.

In our reviewing it, he, the FBI director, spares very little in terms of his attacks on the president. He calls him unethical and "untethered to truth." He often goes back comparing to a "mob boss" that the president ??? a New York crime family in some ways.

In a turnaround, Uganda's government announced Friday it may take in 500 African asylum seekers from Israel. Israel wants to relocate thousands of Africans that it says entered Israel illegally.

Uganda's state minister for relief, disaster preparedness and refugees acknowledged the request from Israel during a news conference Friday.

Scientists will leave their labs and march on Washington and more than 200 cities around the world Saturday, protesting government policies on issues from climate change to gun violence that they say ignore scientific evidence.

It comes a year after the first ever March for Science, three months into the Trump administration, when researchers feared that science will be pushed aside in the new president's zeal to eliminate government regulations.

I'm Tommie McNeil, VOA news.

That's the latest world news from VOA.