VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Christopher Cruise reporting.

The United States and Britain issued a rare and ominous alert Monday charging Russia with ramping up cyber-attacks on American and British companies, including government operations and infrastructure.

The two countries said the widespread, global campaign began in 2015 and could be escalated to launch offensive attacks.

British Prime Minister Theresa May on Monday used the recent poisoning of a former Russian spy and his daughter in Britain to defend her decision to order British warplanes to take part in U.S.-led strikes against Syria last weekend. She did that without first seeking parliamentary approval.

She told a packed House of Commons that it was in the "national interest" to prevent chemical attacks "within Syria, on the streets of the U.K. or elsewhere." And she dismissed critics' arguments that she was obeying American instructions.

President Trump is in the southern state of Florida preparing for two days of talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

VOA White House bureau chief Steve Herman reports.

The two leaders share a pressing concern - North Korea, which has ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs in defiance of international sanctions.

With an unprecedented summit being planned between Trump and Kim Jong Un, the Japanese leader wants face time with the U.S. president before that critical meeting.

Analysts say Abe hopes to convince Trump if he does meet with Kim that he does not make any arrangements that could weaken the security of Japan, which is under America's nuclear umbrella and hosts thousands of U.S. military personnel.

Steve Herman, VOA news, West Palm Beach, Florida.

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The Fox News host and strong President Trump's supporter, Sean Hannity, was named in federal court Monday as one of three clients of the president's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen.

Hannity denied he was a client of Cohen. He said, "Michael Cohen has never represented me in any matter."

Kenya's presidential elections ended in October. But the country's independent electoral commission remains in turmoil.

Correspondent Mohammed Yusuf reports for VOA from Nairobi.

The electoral agency's top officials were divided over how best to conduct the 2017 elections and administrative issues regarding the procurement of voting materials.

Kenya's Supreme Court nullified the presidential election last August, saying the electoral commission did not follow the constitution and the law.

The commission conducted another election in October. President Uhuru Kenyatta won that vote in a landslide after challenger Raila Odinga pulled out of the race.

Mohammed Yusuf, for VOA news, Nairobi.

An American pastor who has been detained for 18 months in Turkey went on trial Monday on terrorism and espionage charges, with prosecutors demanding a 35-year prison sentence.

Fifty-year-old [Richard] Andrew Brunson told the court he rejects the allegations

Local media reports said he broke down in tears after being told by the court in the Aegean city of Izmir that he would have to remain jail.

Seven inmates have died during a riot at a prison in the southern state of South Carolina.

AP correspondent Ben Thomas reports the fighting in the maximum security prison went on for hours.

The Lee County coroner describes the scene at the Lee Correctional Institution as chaotic.

Coroner Larry Logan tells the Associated Press fights appeared to be taking place everywhere. He says most of the seven killed died by stabbing or slashing though some may have been beaten. The coroner says autopsies will be needed to confirm what caused the deaths.

The South Carolina Department of Correction says it took eight hours to quell the riots and secure the prison. But no employees were hurt.

There has been no word on what may have triggered the fighting.

I'm Ben Thomas.

An American woman has won the women's title at the Boston Marathon for the first time since 1985. Desiree Linden, a two-time Olympian, came in second in the 2011 Boston Marathon.

Japanese runner Yuki Kawauchi won the men's title Monday. It was his fourth marathon win this year and the first time a runner from Japan has won the Boston Marathon since 1987.

You can find more on these and other late breaking and developing stories, from around the world, around the clock, at voanews.com and on the VOA news mobile app. From the world headquarters of the Voice of America in Washington, I'm Christopher Cruise, VOA news.

That's the latest world news from VOA.