VOA NEWS

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

U.S. President Donald Trump accuses former FBI Director James Comey of ruining former national security adviser Michael Flynn's life while profiting financially at Flynn's expense with a newly published book about Russian meddling and more.

The memos had already been seen by special counsel Robert Mueller and select members of Congress before the Justice Department released them to Congress on Thursday.

Comey previously said he began keeping the memos early on in the Trump administration because of the tone of his meetings with the president and other administration figures.

Comey wrote that during a private White House dinner in January of last year, Trump asked him for his loyalty but also expressing concern about then national security adviser Michael Flynn's judgment.

???Tim Gwire, Washington.

To mark the anniversary of the Columbine massacre in 1999 where two school students went through the halls of their school killing others and eventually themselves, students from the February 14 mass shooting in Florida of this year helped organize national protests.

The Parkland, Florida massacre triggered a national grassroots campaign for more restrictive gun control laws that include recent [march in Washington] marches in Washington and other cities.

Students from more than 2,600 high schools and other institutions across the country walked out of class for protest.

The U.N. refugee agency has reported the first group of 53 Sudanese refugees living in Chad now returning to their homes, the same ones that fled North Darfur more than a decade ago.

The U.N. refugee agency says it hopes that this is the first repatriation of Sudanese refugees that will trigger the voluntary return of thousands more.

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Ahead of [an upcoming meeting] upcoming meetings between U.S. President Donald Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in, Moon says North Korea is not imposing conditions on summits.

Moon met with South Korean media executives in Seoul Thursday to discuss the upcoming summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. He told the executives that North Koreans have not attached any conditions to the talks that the U.S. cannot accept, including a withdrawal of American troops from South Korea.

He also indicated that North Korea was open to discussing ending its nuclear program.

Moon said the dialogue between the two Koreas must continue after the April 27 summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and the North Korea-U.S. summit, for which no date has been set.

The two Koreas opened hotline telephone connection between their leaders Friday a week before the summit between Kim and Moon in the demilitarized zone.

Martin Seacrest, VOA news.

A Reuters source says some rebels from the Damascus suburbs will be evacuated to eastern Syria as President Bashar al-Assad accelerates efforts on the remaining holdouts.

Matthew Larotonda reports.

A Reuters source familiar with negotiations between the insurgents and government said some fighters will be transported out. Some will go to eastern Syria where Islamic State still holds some territory and others to rebel enclaves in the northwest.

One thing that is clear: those missile and airstrikes by Britain, France and the United States against Assad last Saturday have had no effect in stopping him from accelerating efforts against the last rebel holdouts.

Meanwhile, the international inspectors sent to investigate the suspected chemical attack that triggered the Western counterstrike are still yet to reach the site.

A roadside bomb blast in Afghanistan eastern Nangarhar province killed at least five civilians and wounded more than 10 others.

The victims were traveling to the district from the provincial capital, Jalalabad, when their passenger vehicle struck the bomb.

The Taliban insurgents and militants linked to the Afghan branch of the Islamic State terrorist group operate in Haska Meena and several other districts there. The province borders Pakistan.

Cities and nations are looking at banning plastic straws and stirrers in hopes of addressing the world's plastic pollution problem. The problem is so large, though, that scientists say that it's not nearly enough.

Australian scientists, Denise Hardesty and Chris Wilcox, estimate using trash collected on U.S. coastlines during cleanups over five years, there are 7.5 million plastic straws lying around America's shorelines alone.

I'm Tommie McNeil, VOA news.

That's the latest world news from VOA.