VOA NEWS

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

The North Korean dictator, Kim Jong Un, plans to invite experts and reporters from the United States and South Korea to watch as North Korea shuts down its nuclear test site in May.

This week, President Trump said three sites are being considered for a possible meeting with Kim in May or June.

America's new top diplomat has made his first foreign visit to the Middle East.

Correspondent Robert Berger reports he is talking with America's allies in the region about Iran.

Iran topped the agenda as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited key U.S. allies in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Israel and Jordan. His first stop was the Saudi capital, Riyadh.

"Iran destabilizes this entire region. It supports proxy militias and terrorist groups. It is an arms dealer to the Houthi rebels in Yemen. And it supports the murderous Assad regime as well."

Pompeo said it is unlikely that the United States will remain in the nuclear agreement between the world powers and Iran, which comes up for renewal on May 12.

Correspondent Robert Berger.

Syrian state television reports the Syrian army briefly captured four villages east of the Euphrates River from the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces before the territory was regained.

The report said the Russia-backed Syrian army captured the villages that had been held by the SDF, which is largely led by the Kurdish YPG militia, near the provincial capital Deir el-Zour.

The SDF forces said Sunday they launched a counterattack against the Syrian troops, driving them out of the villages.

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A court in Baghdad has sentenced 19 Russian women to life in prison for joining the Islamic State terrorist group. Six women from Azerbaijan and four from Tajikistan were also sentenced to life in prison on Sunday on the same charge.

Most of the defendants told the court they had been brought to Iraq against their will from Turkey by IS fighters.

Experts estimate that Iraq is holding 20,000 people in jail over suspected IS membership.

Pakistani police said a U.S. embassy vehicle driven by a diplomat Sunday night hit and injured two motorcyclists in Islamabad. It's the second such accident in three weeks involving an American official.

Police identified the diplomat as second secretary Chad Rex Ausburn. They said he was detained along with his vehicle and that an investigation is underway.

The motorcyclist and another person on the bike received multiple injuries, but doctors say their condition is stable.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari is to meet with President Trump in Washington on Monday.

They are expected to talk about the threat of terrorism as well as economic growth in Nigeria, which is Africa's most populous country. Almost 200 million people live there.

Nigeria has been plagued by the extremist group Boko Haram, which launched an insurgency nine years ago with the goal of creating an Islamic State.

Five buses carrying hundreds of Central American migrants have arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border. The group is expected to walk a mile to the border and then attempt to cross into the U.S. later Sunday.

President Trump and members of his cabinet have been tracking the migrants, calling them a threat to the United States.

U.S. immigration lawyers warn them they face possible separation from their children and detention for many months.

The super-hero move, "Avengers: Infinity War," sold $250 million worth of tickets in the U.S. over the weekend, passing "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" to set the highest opening weekend of all time.

"The entire time I knew him, he only ever had one goal."

The movie also set a new global opening record with $630 million even though it's yet to open in China, the world's second largest movie market. It opens there May 11.

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That's the latest world news from VOA.