VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. I'm Liz Parker.

U.S. President Donald Trump telling CBS news in an interview Wednesday he holds Russian President Vladimir Putin responsible for meddling in the U.S. presidential election. This comes after the White House said it believes Russia is continuing to target the United States with cyberattacks related to the upcoming November compressional elections.

Trump's spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders: "We believe that the threat still exists, which is why we are taking steps to prevent it. Again, you wouldn't go through that lengthy process if you weren't."

Earlier in the day, Trump appeared to contradict an assessment last week by his director of national intelligence.

AP Washington correspondent Sagar Meghani has more.

Asked by a reporter today whether Russia still targeting the U.S., the president flatly said "No" without elaborating that sharply at odds with the warnings from his top intelligence chief who just last week said warning lights about overall cyber threats to the U.S. were "blinking red."

At his summit with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, the president publicly questioned intelligence findings that Moscow interfered in the 2016 election before walking back some of those comments yesterday.

Today, he was again on the defensive, promising big results from the meeting and saying he is not giving Russia a free pass.

"There has never been a president as tough on Russia as I have been."

Sagar Meghani, at the White House.

The 12 boys and their soccer coach who were rescued from a flooded cave in northern Thailand recounted the drama of their ordeal for reporters on Wednesday.

When British divers found them, one of the boys recalled that they do not think it was real. He said "I was shocked."

Rescuers found six bodies while digging through a mound of rubble after the collapse of two multistory buildings east of New Delhi, India, police said on Wednesday.

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On Wednesday, a federal judge ordered accused Russian agent Maria Butina jailed until her trial.

U.S. prosecutors argued she has ties to Russian intelligence and poses a serious flight risk.

Butina's attorney, Robert Driscoll, has said she is not a Russian agent and does not pose a flight risk after she was arrested on Sunday without warning.

"We remain confident that she will prevail in this case. She's not an agent of the Russian government, Russian Federation. She's innocent of the charges brought against her. Most importantly, she's a young student seeking to make her way in America."

Butina has been accused of working with a high-powered Russian official and two unidentified U.S. citizens, trying to infiltrate a pro-gun rights organization and influence the U.S.'s foreign policy toward Russia.

Car makers, suppliers and dealers will be on Capitol Hill in Washington Thursday as President Trump gets ready for a new trade fight - tariffs on imported cars and car parts.

The AP's Ed Donahue reports.

The president says tariffs could help American workers. He meets next week with leaders of the European Union.

"... then we have tremendous retribution, which we don't want to use, but we have tremendous powers."

The president is focusing on the biggest big-ticket item.

"Cars is the big one, and you know what we're talking about with respect to cars and tariffs on cars."

Tennessee Republican Senator Lamar Alexander says tariffs raise car prices. "More expensive cars mean fewer people in the United States buy those cars, and fewer people overseas buy those cars, the cars that we make."

General Motors warns "increased import tariffs could lead to a smaller General Motors."

Ed Donahue, Washington.

A Nigerian police official says authorities have arrested 22 Boko Haram extremist leaders and fighters. Those arrested are said to be responsible for the mass kidnapping of schoolgirls in Chibok and more than 50 suicide bombings.

The Borno State Police commissioner says police seized the coordinators of suicide bombings in Borno and the coordinator and participants in the Chibok abductions in 2014.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Abba Kyari says the men confessed two more attacks.

"Those confessed attacks on Bama, Gwoza, Mubi and ???, so ??? eight of them confessed ...."

Boko Haram has killed more than 20,000 people during its nine-year insurgency.

Dozens of the Chibok schoolgirls have been freed but more than 100 have never returned.

Ethiopia's main airline has resumed commercial flights to neighboring Eritrea, the latest sign of normalized ties between the longtime foes.

Two Ethiopian Airlines planes landed in the Eritrean capital on Wednesday.

I'm Liz Parker for VOA news.