VOA NEWS

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I'm David Byrd in Washington.

The U.S. Senate has passed a recommendation that the U.S. military stop taking part in the Saudi war in Yemen.

AP correspondent Warren Levinson has details.

Vermont independent Bernie Sanders says it's the first time the Senate has come together to exercise its authority under the 45-year-old War Powers Act.

"The Senate is sick and tired of abdicating its responsibility, its constitutional responsibility, on matters of war."

Separately, the Senate voted unanimously for a resolution holding Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman responsible for the death of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a direct challenge to both the Saudis and the president who says they are an ally the U.S. cannot afford to offend.

I'm Warren Levinson.

French police shot and killed a gunman suspected of killing three people late Tuesday at a Christmas market in Strasbourg.

As AP's Jackie Quinn reports, more than 700 officers had been hunting Cherif Chekatt since the attack, which also injured 13 people.

The French interior minister says police were using helicopter surveillance and tams on the ground when they spotted a man who matches the description of the 29-year-old gunman.

He says when they tried to stop him, he turned and fired at police who shot back, killing the man.

The suspect, Cherif Chekatt, is described as "radicalized." He allegedly killed three people, opening fire in a Christmas market after shouting out in Arabic "God is great."

I'm Jackie Quinn.

A mixed day on Wall Street, with the Dow Jones Industrials closing up 0.29 percent. The S&P 500 index finished trading off by 0.02 percent. The NASDAQ was down 0.39 percent. European markets were also mixed. Asian markets finished Thursday largely higher.

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U.S. President Donald Trump is arguing that he "never directed" his longtime lawyer Michael Cohen "to break the law."

AP Washington correspondent Sagar Meghani reports from the White House.

Cohen and federal prosecutors say at the president's direction, he arranged hush money payments to conceal Trump's alleged affairs and help his White House bid. The president says he had nothing to do with it.

"I never directed him to do anything wrong."

Telling Fox News channel's "Outnumbered Overtime" with Harris Faulkner, the campaign finance charges Cohen pleaded to are "not criminal."

"They put that on to embarrass me."

The president originally denied even knowing about the payments but later argued they were not campaign contributions and rather private transactions.

The Cohen plea means prosecutors have implicated the president in a crime but not directly accused him.

Sagar Meghani, at the White House.

A Russian woman pleaded guilty Thursday in Washington to acting as a Kremlin agent to conspire to build ties with conservative groups in the United States and to infiltrate the Republican Party.

AP correspondent Mike Balsamo reports that Maria Butina had been accused of working with people suspected of being employed by Russia's intelligence agency.

Maria Butina, who is accused of acting as secret Russian agent, pleaded guilty today to one charge of conspiring to act as a foreign agent in the United States ???unregistered Prosecutors had alleged that Butina attempted to influence American officials set up a back channel to the incoming administration using her connections with the NRA.

While this case is in relation to special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation, it does show how Moscow has an interest in having secret information about how American politics does work.

Butina faces up to five years' imprisonment and remains jailed while awaiting sentencing. She could be deported to her homeland after serving any prison time.

U.S. national security adviser John Bolton says the United States is immediately instituting a new policy for Africa.

As VOA White House bureau chief Steve Herman reports, Bolton made the revelations in a speech at the Heritage Foundation here in Washington.

All U.S. aid to Africa, which has totaled about $8 billion in each of the past two fiscal years, is undergoing a final review, according to Bolton.

"Under our new approach, every decision we make, every policy we pursue, and every dollar of aid we spend will further U.S. priorities in the region."

In his speech, the national security adviser said the policy shift also is meant to counter the rapidly expanding financial and political influence of China and Russia on the African continent.

VOA's Steve Herman.

And Roxy Music, Steve Nix and Def Leppard lead this year's class of inductees into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The Zombies, The Cure, Janet Jackson and Radiohead will also be inducted at ceremonies March 29 in New York.

I'm David Byrd.