VOA NEWS

January 8, 2019

... ongoing tariff fight. The meetings are due to last for two days.

Vice President of China Operations for the U.S.-China Business Council Jacob Parker says China has made overtures ahead of trade talks with the U.S.

"We see new purchases of U.S. soybeans. We see commitment from the Chinese government to import more U.S. rice - something that hasn't happened in the past."

Last year, Trump imposed tariff hikes of up to 25 percent on $250 billion of Chinese goods. That move prompted China to respond with its own tariff increases on $110 billion of U.S. goods.

A Syrian Kurdish official told the Associated Press Monday Syria's Kurds are awaiting clarifications from the U.S. over America's plans to pull out its troops.

More from the AP's Matt Small, who reports a top White House aide says troops won't leave until Islamic State militants are defeated and U.S.-allied Kurdish fighters are protected.

That's the word from National Security Adviser John Bolton while on a trip to Israel signaling a pause to a withdrawal announced just less than a month initially expected to be completed within weeks, adding there is no timetable.

But President Trump is reaffirming his commitment to a withdrawal, saying in his words "We won't be fully pulled out until ISIS is gone."

That was the AP's Matt small reporting.

Meanwhile, Islamic State said one of its suicide bombers killed several people when he blew himself up on Monday in a public building in the Syrian city of Raqqa, which is under the control of a U.S. backed Kurdish-led militia.

The ultra hardline jihadist group claimed responsibility for the reported attack in a statement issued by an affiliated news agency.

This is VOA news.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said Monday Britain will set out additional proposals for Northern Ireland and give Parliament a bigger role as the government seeks more assurances from the European Union on her Brexit deal.

The UK Parliament is due to vote next week on the deal May agreed on with the EU. But as things stand, she will likely struggle to win enough support.

Another work week began Monday but not for hundreds of thousands of U.S. federal employees forced to stay home because of the government shutdown.

The AP's Ed Donahue has the latest from President Trump over the weekend.

There was no breakthrough in talks over the weekend. "We're looking at a national emergency because we have a national emergency -- just read the papers."

There were no signs from President Trump. He is budging on his demand for $5 billion for a border wall. "We have a crisis at the border of drugs, of human beings being trafficked all over the world."

The president did make one concession on the wall. "We'll build a steel barrier."

The president says Democrats "don't like concrete." The idea is being panned by Democrats.

Ed Donahue, Washington.

Military vehicles were seen racing down streets of Libreville on Monday as military officers in Gabon staged an apparent military coup attempt.

Early Monday, military officers seized the state radio station and declared their dissatisfaction with President Ali Bongo.

According to a government spokesman, several people have been arrested and the coup has been brought under control.

The UNHCR has launched a $430 million campaign to help displaced people and refugees from the Central African Republic. Over a million CAR residents have been internally displaced or made refugees by years of inter-communal fighting. More than a quarter million of them are living in neighboring Cameroon.

Moki Edwin Kindzeka has a story of 24-year-old Rosine Alzina living in one of the refugee camps.

Alzina says she was raped by armed gangs after her husband was killed in inter-communal fighting.

She says she was traumatized and is not thinking of returning to the Central African Republic. She would not be able to sleep because of the endless gunfire, suffering, and killings, says Alzina. Although she is not sure of where to get her next meal, she says, she prefers to stay where there is peace.

Now it was VOA's Moki Edwin Kindzeka.

The UNHCR says half of CAR's population is dependent on aid.

I'm Liz Parker for VOA news.