VOA NEWS

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David Byrd in Washington.

President Donald Trump is on his way back to Washington after cutting short his second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

As AP's Warren Levinson reports, Trump said the North Koreans wanted all sanctions removed in exchange for dismantling only part of their nuclear program.

The president says the talks fell apart over Kim's insistence on full sanctions relief in exchange for partial denuclearization. "We couldn't give up all of the sanctions for that."

North Korea's foreign minister says that's not so. "If the United States removes partial sanctions," Ri Yong Ho spoke through a translator, "we will permanently and completely dismantle all the nuclear material production facilities in the Yongbyon area."

Ri said at a hastily scheduled news conference that the North is also ready to offer a permanent halt to nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile testing, and that that opportunity may not come again.

I'm Warren Levinson.

Meanwhile here in Washington, two critics are praising President Trump for walking away from that deal at the Vietnam summit.

AP's Washington correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

You don't often hear top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer say this. "President Trump did the right thing."

Former CIA Korea expert Bruce Klingner agrees. No deal's better than a bad one. "I think the president did the right thing."

And while Klinger says it appears the two leaders left things on good terms, "I don't think we're gonna have to return to the 'fire and fury' the concerns of imminent hostilities at least for the foreseeable future."

The Arms Control Association's Daryl Kimball says the North Korean threat's not going away. "It still is there and we still must deal with it."

Sagar Meghani, Washington

The United States won a World Trade Organization ruling Thursday that China subsidized its wheat and rice producers too much in recent years.

The U.S. claimed that Beijing paid its farmers nearly $100 billion more than WTO rules allow.

The ruling can be appealed.

This is VOA news.

Israel's attorney general announced Thursday that he intends to indict Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on multiple corruption charges.

As Linda Gradstein reports, that's a development that could end Netanyahu's political career.

After two years of investigations, Israel's attorney general recommended that the prime minister be charged with bribery in one case and breach of trust in two others, subject to a hearing.

Netanyahu hit back hard at the attorney general and what he called the leftist media, accusing them of trying to make sure he loses the upcoming election.

He said that he is 4,000 percent sure that all of the accusations against him will be proved false, and that he will continue to be prime minister for many years to come.

Netanyahu insists that he will not step down unless he is convicted. Even a final decision on indicting him after the hearing could take months.

Linda Gradstein, for VOA news, Jerusalem.

Pakistan has pledged to release a captive Indian fighter [paio] pilot, that is, following a major upsurge in hostilities between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.

AP correspondent Charles De Ledesma has details.

Prime Minister Imran Khan says his country would release the pilot the following day, a move that could help defuse the most serious confrontation in two decades over Kashmir.

Khan made the announcement in an address to both houses of the Pakistani parliament, saying he tried to reach his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, on Wednesday with a message that he wants to de-escalate tensions.

However, an Indian government official warned that even if the pilot is returned home, New Delhi would not hesitate to strike its neighbor first if it feared a similar militant attack was looming.

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

U.S. economic growth dropped 2.6 percent in the final quarter of 2018.

As AP's Mike Hempen tells us the partial government shutdown had something to do with that.

The Commerce Department says growth in the gross domestic product of the final three months of the year was 2.6 percent, the slowest pace since the beginning of the year. The government shutdown played a role

With slower consumer spending cited as the biggest factor, the 35-day shutdown shaved an estimated one tenth of a point from fourth quarter growth.

For all of 2018, GDP growth came in just under 3 percent, the best showing since 2015.

However, economists think that could be the high point for some time.

Mike Hempen, Washington.

And acclaimed conductor, composer and pianist André Previn, a versatile musician, who won four Academy Awards for film scores and led some of the world's great orchestras, has died.

He was 89.

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