VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. I'm Marissa Melton.

Syrian government forces will deploy along [the kir...] the Turkish border to help repel the Turkish military incursion against Syrian Kurds. That's according to Kurdish officials announcing Sunday.

The extraordinary deal between the Kurds, Syria and Russia - Syria's main ally - comes four days after Turkish forces moved against the Kurds in northern Syria after nearly all U.S. forces pulled out.

Turkey regards the Kurdish Syrian [diplomatic] Democratic Forces as terrorists aligned with separatists inside Turkey.

Observers say in just last four days as many as 60 civilians have been killed, with thousands of others fleeing.

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper says U.S. President [Tru...] Donald Trump has ordered all U.S. troops in [northern U...] northern Syria to move south, but not leave the country.

AP correspondent Julie Walker reports.

Esper tells CBS' "Face the Nation" that the conflict between Turkish forces and U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters had become "untenable" for the U.S. military.

That led Trump to direct what Esper calls a "deliberate" withdrawal of American troops from the north. Esper says the forces were not ordered to leave Syria entirely.

Esper isn't saying how many U.S. troops will leave the north, but he does say they represent most of the 1,000 troops in Syria.

Esper also says the U.S. believes the Kurds are about to "cut a deal" with the Syrian army and Russia to enable a counterattack against Turkey and its Syrian proxy forces.

I'm Julie Walker.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan held talks Sunday with leaders in Iran to formally begin a diplomatic offensive he says is aimed at defusing the escalating tensions with Saudi Arabia and the United States.

Khan told a joint news conference after his meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani that Islamabad will do its utmost to prevent a conflict between the two Islamic countries.

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A U.S. ambassador reportedly will testify that President Trump told him there was no [pre...] quid pro quo arrangement with Ukraine.

AP correspondent Mike Hempen has more.

European Union Ambassador Gordon Sondland is expected to tell Congress that a text message he sent to another envoy saying there was no quid pro quo in the Ukraine interactions was based on what President Trump told him.

A person familiar with Sondland's testimony this Thursday before House committees says he'll also say his text was not based on any direct knowledge and that he didn't know the company being discussed for an investigation was tied to Joe Biden's son.

Mike Hempen, Washington.

President Trump is standing behind his personal attorney [Rud...] Rudy Giuliani. He is one of the highest-profile and most vocal defenders of the U.S. president.

*The New York Times* reports federal prosecutors are eyeing him for possible lobbying violations.

Behind the scenes, however, many of Trump's closest aides and advisers inside and outside the White House quietly suggest the president should cut ties with Giuliani.

Giuliani was a force in Mr. Trump's defense during the lengthy Russia investigation by the special counsel. Yet the effort to undermine special counsel Robert Mueller led Giuliani to Ukraine, which now entangles the former federal prosecutor and mayor in legal jeopardy.

Hong Kong's protesters have placed a Lady Liberty statue on a peak overlooking Hong Kong as clashes with riot police cause chaos.

David Doyle has more.

In the dead of night, several dozen Hong Kong protesters scaled the city's Lion peak early on Sunday, carrying with them their version of Lady Liberty.

The 3-meter statue represents an injured protester believed by activists to have been shot in the eye by a police projectile and holds a banner saying "Revolution of our time, Liberate Hong Kong."

Hong Kong's Lady Liberty can be seen from the city below, where on Sunday she watched over protesters and riot police clashing in chaotic scenes.

Several rallies were held in shopping centers against what is seen as Beijing's tightening grip on the city.

Police made numerous arrests and deployed tear gas after hardcore activists trashed shops and metro stations and erected road blocks.

That's Reuters David Doyle reporting.

And Japan has deployed thousands of troops and rescue workers after one of the strongest storms in years.

AP correspondent Charles De Ledesma.

Japan authorities say over 20,000 military troops as well as numerous helicopters and boats have been deployed in a massive relief operation aimed at rescuing people stranded in flooded homes.

The death toll from a ferocious typhoon has hit double figures with more missing. One woman is reported to have fallen to her death from a rescue helicopter.

I'm Marissa Melton. You're listening to VOA news.