VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. I'm David Byrd.

Syria said Thursday that Turkish forces and their allies had attacked Syrian forces in the northeastern part of the country. The clashes occurred outside the town of Tal Tamar.

Separately, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said three of its fighters were killed in fighting with Turkish-backed forces.

Meanwhile in Brussels, U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper lashed out at Ankara for its invasion of northern Syria.

AP's Sagar Meghani reports.

Yesterday, President Trump said he is lifting sanctions on Turkey after it agreed to a cease-fire.

"Turkey has done what we've asked them to do."

Today in Brussels, Esper took a different tone.

"Turkey put us in a very terrible situation," calling it an "unwarranted" invasion that jeopardizes gains made against Islamic State fighters.

Ahead of meeting with his Turkish counterpart at NATO headquarters, Esper said Turkey's moving in the wrong direction.

"We see them spinning closer to Russia's orbit than in the Western orbit" and says it needs to again become a responsible ally.

Sagar Meghani, at the Pentagon.

The United Nations said Thursday almost 180,000 people have been displaced since the start of the Turkish incursion into Syria.

Ursula Mueller, the assistant secretary-general for Humanitarian Affairs, told the Security Council that thousands of children are among those who have fled the border area.

"In the last two weeks, almost 180,000 people, including close to 80,000 children, have fled south from the border areas between Turkey and Syria."

All sides have said that they are abiding by a cease-fire as they implement a Russian-Turkish agreement that divides up the border region.

However, on Thursday, one U.S. defense official said the U.S. would be increasing its forces in the area.

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One of President Donald Trump's key allies in the Senate, South Carolina's Lindsey Graham, has introduced a resolution to condemn House Democrats for the impeachment proceedings against the president.

Graham said that 41 Republican members of the Senate are co-sponsors of his bill and the current proceedings are a danger to the presidency.

"... 41 Republican senators and growing is a strong signal to our House colleagues that you're off script here. There's a way to do it, a right way and a wrong way and you've chosen the wrong way."

The non-binding resolution calls on the House to hold a vote to open an official impeachment inquiry. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had said that such a vote is not necessary.

The inquiry centers on President Trump's decision to withhold $391 million in military aid to Ukraine for several months while he and some of his aides pushed Kyiv to open investigations that would benefit Trump politically.

It is against U.S. law to solicit help from foreign governments to interfere in a U.S. election.

Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Thursday the only way to break Britain's Brexit impasse is a general election and he will ask Parliament to approve a national poll.

AP's ??? reports.

Johnson said he would ask lawmakers to vote on Monday on a motion calling for an early election.

Johnson has been mulling his next move since Tuesday, when lawmakers blocked his attempt to fast-track an EU divorce bill through Parliament in a matter of days.

Lawmakers said they needed more time to scrutinize the legislation, making it all but impossible for Britain to leave the EU on the scheduled date of October the 31st with a deal.

The British government has been awaiting the EU's decision on whether to postpone the U.K.'s departure to prevent a chaotic no-deal exit.

???, London.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence criticized China as well as U.S. corporations and the NBA [on a] in a speech at the Wilson Center in Washington.

Pence said that Nike Corporation and the National Basketball Association were "kowtowing" to Beijing and "muzzling" criticism of China.

The vice president said Nike had caved to pressure when Houston Rockets General Manager Daryl Morey tweeted support for Hong Kong protesters.

"Nike stores in China actually removed their Houston Rockets merchandise from their shelves to join the Chinese government in protest against the Rockets general manager's seven-word tweet which read 'Fight for Freedom, stand with Hong Kong.'"

Vice President Pence's speech came one day before Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin meets with Chinese officials to try to end an ongoing trade war.

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