VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. I'm David Byrd.

Several more witnesses are scheduled to testify Friday in the second public impeachment hearing concerning U.S. President Donald Trump. We get more from AP correspondent Matt Small.

House lawmakers will hear from Marie Yovanovitch, the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine who was ousted back in May at President Trump's direction. In a closed-door deposition last month, she said there was a "concerted campaign" against her as Trump and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani pushed for probes of political opponents, including former Vice President Joe Biden.

Democrats have also scheduled a private deposition with a political counselor at the U.S. embassy in Kyiv, David Holmes. National Security Council official Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman, Trump's European Union Ambassador Gordon Sondland and Fiona Hill, a former Russia adviser to the White House, are among eight witnesses set to testify next week.

Matt Small, Washington.

Two teenagers are dead and the gunman is in grave condition after a shooting at a high school in southern California. AP's Ed Donahue has details.

It happened on the quad at Saugus High School in Santa Clarita.

L.A. County Sheriff's captain Kent Wegener says they've got a surveillance video which shows the gunman "withdraw a handgun from his backpack, shoot and wound five people, and then shoot himself in the head."

Students initially thought the gunshots were popped balloons or musical instruments. "I see people running and Kent, the supervisor, screaming ... get out."

L.A. County Supervisor Kathryn Barger says there are a lot of questions. "Many people are asking why that will come with time right now. Our focus is on supporting the community."

This all happened on the gunman's 16th birthday.

I'm Ed Donahue.

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Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters paralyzed parts of the city for a fourth successive day on Thursday, forcing schools to close and blocking highways as students built campus barricades. David Doyle of Reuters, that is, has more.

On university campuses across Hong Kong, thousands of students dug in on Thursday.

Surrounded by piles of food, bricks, petrol bombs and other homemade weapons, they're waiting for what happens next amid the city's escalating violence.

"Actually we don't know. We need to see how the government responds, see how they respond to our tactics and then we will decide our next step."

People have said they will temporarily avoid direct clashes with what they called "high-spirited rioters" in order to give themselves a breather and avoid injuries. But they have said one institution, the Chinese University, has become a "weapons factory and arsenal" and referred to protests on all campuses as "another step closer to terrorism."

That's David Doyle of Reuters.

The Dutch-led team investigating the 2014 downing of the Malaysian Airlines jet over Ukraine has released new phone intercepts that they say show ties between the Russian military and political officials in eastern Ukraine were much closer than previously known.

Andy Kraag is the head of the Central Criminal Investigation(s) Division with the Dutch police. "Recent analysis of witness statements and other information revealed that Russian influence on the DPR went further the military support. Ties between Russian officials and DPR leaders appear to have been much closer."

Flight MH17 was traveling between Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur when it exploded and crashed in territory in eastern Ukraine held by pro-Russian fighters on July 17, 2014. It killed all 298 people on board.

Investigators have said that a sophisticated anti-aircraft missile system known as a Buk was used in the attack, and that the weapon came from Russia.

A barrage of rockets was fired from Gaza toward Israel early Thursday evening. After hours of calm, sirens warning of incoming rockets went off in Israeli communities around Gaza at 17:25 local time.

This comes after two days of intense fighting that killed at least 34 Palestinians, including three women and eight children, and paralyzed parts of Israel. But a cease-fire between Israel and the Islamic Jihad militants in Gaza appears to be largely holding Thursday despite a sporadic rocket fire.

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