VOA NEWS

January 25, 2020

This is VOA news. I'm David Byrd.

Democratic impeachment managers are in the final hours of presenting their case in President Donald Trump's impeachment trial before the U.S. Senate.

The managers are focusing on President Trump's alleged attempts to cover up an abuse of power that was withholding military aid from Ukraine until it started investigating a political rival.

California Congressman Adam Schiff, the lead House impeachment manager, says Trump had no intention of changing his behavior.

"Merely exposing the president's scheme has not stopped him from continuing this destructive pattern of behavior that has brought us to this somber moment. He is who he is. That will not change and nor will the danger associated with him."

Trump denies any wrongdoing and his Republican defenders have said that his actions do not rise to the level of an impeachable offence.

The president's legal team begins presenting their opening statements on Saturday morning.

President Trump became the first sitting chief executive to attend the annual March for Life in Washington. Its aim is to make abortion illegal in the United States. AP's Sagar Meghani reports.

The president called it his "profound honor," telling anti-abortion supporters on the National Mall here in Washington he backs their fight.

"Unborn children have never had a stronger defender in the White House."

His visit was another bid to enlist white evangelical voters and conservative activists to help him win another term. Past presidents who also opposed to abortion stayed away from the march to avoid being too closely tied to demonstrators pushing to outlaw the procedure.

He himself was a late convert to the cause. Donald Trump once said in a 1999 interview, "I am pro-choice in every respect."

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

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China has reported 15 more deaths and 180 new cases of the coronavirus. According to the health department of Hubei province, the report came after China locked down ten cities out of concern about the spread of the disease. Reuters Michelle Hennessy reports.

China has now suspended public transport in 10 cities and shut temples as measures are stepped up to contain the virus.

Wuhan is in virtual lockdown. The sprawling metropolis, home to 11 million people, is surrounded by checkpoints, with travel in and out of the city tightly controlled.

Inside, the government is building a brand new hospital over a weekend.

Local media said bulldozers and diggers arrived Thursday night to begin construction but the aim to have a 1,000-bed facility functioning by Monday.

It's mirroring the outbreak of SARS in 2003 when Beijing built a hospital in just one week to cope with the virus that went on to kill nearly 800 people worldwide.

That's Reuters' Michelle Hennessy.

A powerful earthquake struck eastern Turkey on Friday, killing at least 14 people and collapsing buildings near the epicenter of the temblor.

The European Mediterranean Seismological Center said the magnitude 6.8 quake hit Elazig province about 550 kilometers east of the capital Ankara.

Several aftershocks followed the initial jolt.

Turkey's disaster and emergency management authorities said eight people died in Elazig and six more in the neighboring province of Malatya. Regional governors said hundreds of people were injured.

Turkey has a history of powerful earthquakes. Official counts say more than 17,000 people died in 1999 when a 7.6 magnitude quake struck the city of Ízmit. At least 523 people died in 2011 in an earthquake in the eastern part of the country.

The Pentagon says dozens of U.S. troops have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries from an Iranian missile strike. AP's Ben Thomas reports.

Many of the U.S. troops at Ain al-Asad air base were already in bunkers when nearly a dozen Iranian ballistic missiles exploded. While no U.S. troops were killed, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman says, "34 total members have been diagnosed with concussions."

Half of those returned to military duties but 17 of the 34 are still under medical observation or treatment including eight who have now arrived back in the U.S.

"We want to make sure that they're getting the treatment that they need."

President Trump initially said he was told no troops have been injured in the Iranian strike.

Ben Thomas, Washington.

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