VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. Via remote, I'm Marissa Melton.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Sunday that the United States will win the battle over coronavirus and the economy will bounce back.

The president held a news conference Sunday where he said units of the United States National Guard will be traveling to the states of New York, California and Washington to assist with the coronavirus response.

Earlier Sunday, Senator Rand Paul confirmed he has tested positive for COVID-19. He is the first U.S. senator to do so.

A tweet from the Kentucky Republican's account said the senator is feeling fine and is in quarantine.

The senator said he was asymptomatic and had not been in contact with any known carriers of the novel coronavirus but was tested out of an "abundance of caution due to his extensive travel."

Meanwhile, German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced Sunday that she has gone into self quarantine after the doctor who gave her a routine vaccination on Friday tested positive for the virus.

Spanish opera singer Placido Domingo confirmed Sunday that he has tested positive for COVID-19.

In India, hundreds of millions of people stayed indoors Sunday in response to a call by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to observe a voluntary 14-hour lockdown. A surge in coronavirus cases there has deepened worries about the pandemic in the world's second most populous nation.

India also shut down one of the world's busiest rail networks and most public transport including metro trains and suburban train networks as the country steps up the fight against the virus.

Parts of Croatian were rattled by a strong 5.5 magnitude earthquake on Sunday followed by a series of aftershocks, according to local authorities.

Officials say the historic core of the capital, Zagreb, [haf...] suffered heavy damages, but there is no immediate human loss.

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We'll be continuing to bring you as many stories as we can on the [coro...] coronavirus response.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei refused U.S. assistance on Sunday to fight the new coronavirus, citing an unfounded conspiracy theory that the virus could be man-made by America.

The 80-year-old Khamenei alleged without offering any evidence that the virus might be "specifically built for Iran" using Iranians' genetic data.

A Chinese government official also recently cited a rumor that the United States military could be behind the outbreak. The remark prompted the U.S. State Department to summon the Chinese ambassador to complain.

There is no evidence that the United States is behind the outbreak [or has, had] nor have any medical or scientific groups suggested it.

U.S. congressional action stalled Sunday on a massive $1.8 trillion economic aid package to send money to most Americans and many businesses that have been severely impacted by the deadly coronavirus.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told reporters there was no deal yet on the aid package aimed at boosting the U.S. economy - it's the world's largest economy - by sending direct payments to more than 90 percent of Americans and a vast array of U.S. businesses to help them weather the immediate and burgeoning economic effects of the coronavirus.

The top congressional leaders met with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, President Donald Trump's chief negotiator in the aid talks. Earlier this morning, he had voiced optimism in a national television interview that a deal was imminent.

Greek authorities have charged 11 Turkish terror suspects in connection with a massive weapons cache discovered at a secret hideout outside the Greek capital.

Authorities say the suspects are alleged members of Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front. It's a group that's considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union.

The suspects deny any criminal wrongdoing. But authorities in Greece say they were arrested following a tipoff from Interpol.

The suspects have now been charged with terror-related offenses and intelligence officials believe they are just part of a bigger group of members linked to a far-left Turkish terror group.

North Korea is welcoming what it says was a letter from President Trump to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, saying it was a sign of the very "special and very firm personal relations" between the two leaders.

A senior Trump administration official confirmed the president sent Kim a letter and called it "consistent" with the administration's "efforts to engage global leaders during the ongoing pandemic."

In the letter, the North Korean statement said Trump offered Kim help with coronavirus response and said he was impressed by the [efforts to ma...] efforts made by the chairman to defend his people from the epidemic.

North Korea insists that it does not have any coronavirus infections though many suspect it is hiding an outbreak.

Via remote, I'm Marissa Melton, VOA news.