VOA NEWS

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

U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday declared it is time to reopen [in] the country's economy even if it means more people will fall victim to the coronavirus.

"The people of our country are warriors," the president told reporters in the state of Arizona Tuesday. "Will some people be affected badly? Yes. But we have to get our country open."

While visiting a Honeywell factory in Phoenix, Arizona, to highlight the mass production of supplies to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, Trump stated in an interview with ABC News "there will be more death" and predicted the coronavirus "will pass, with or without a vaccine."

At the facility, where N95 respirators are being produced, the president told its workers that they are part of the greatest industrial mobilization since World War Two.

Honeywell has been awarded a $27.4 million contract for 38 million units of N95 masks for delivery within six months.

During the one-day trip, the president also held a roundtable on Native American issues, announcing that the Navajo Nation would get $600 million in federal funds to fight COVID-19.

The Indian territory, which has tribal sovereignty and sprawls across three Southwestern states, has a per capita infection rates 10 times that of Arizona and behind only the states of New York and New Jersey.

President Trump also said the activities of the coronavirus task force headed by Vice President Mike Pence may wind down its activities as the administration moves forward to focus on reopening the economy. During that same visit to Arizona, Mr. Trump told reporters the task force will be replaced by an advisory group of, in his words, "a different form."

Pence told reporters that efforts to manage the coronavirus crisis will eventually shift to more traditional entities such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

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Venezuelan President Nicholás Maduro said two Americans were among so-called "mercenary terrorists" who carried out a failed armed invasion of his country earlier this week.

President Maduro went on state television Tuesday and showed the passports he claimed belonged to Airan Berry and Luke Denman, who were among 13 men captured in the failed raid that took place on Sunday.

Maduro accused Berry and Denman of working for Jordan Goudreau, a U.S. military veteran who runs a private Florida-based security firm called Silvercorp USA.

Goudreau has acknowledged organizing the operation in a video released on social media. He's also acknowledged Berry and Denman as being part of the operation, describing the pair as "my guys" in a telephone interview with the Reuters news agency.

Nevertheless, U.S. President Donald Trump denies the U.S. government was involved in the failed operation.

The Philippine government has ordered a leading television network to cease operations, sparking accusations the move was an assault on independent media.

The National Telecommunications Commission said Tuesday it ordered [ABs...] ABS-CBN Corporation, which frequently criticized President Rodrigo Duterte, to stop operating because its 25-year license expired on the May 4th.

The order came as the country works to [cor...] contain the spread of the coronavirus and people increasingly rely on news [operations] organizations to inform them about the pandemic.

In a statement the network said, "Millions of Filipinos will lose their source of news and entertainment when ABS-CBN is ordered to go off-air on TV and radio tonight when people need crucial and timely information as the nation deals with the COVID-19 pandemic."

Legislators and media watchdogs have also denounced the order. The media giant says it has been given 10 days to respond.

Two pharmaceutical companies said Tuesday their experimental coronavirus vaccine is being delivered in the United States for initial human testing.

U.S. drug maker Pfizer Incorporated and Germany's BioNTech SE said if the trials prove the vaccine is safe and effective, it could be ready for broad distribution in the United States by the year's end.

The vaccine could be among the first vaccines approved for use in the United States, which leads the world in infections and fatalities.

The U.S. biotechnology company, [moder...] Moderna, and the U.S. government are collaborating on the development of a vaccine that uses similar technology. Phase 1 testing is underway and mid-stage trials are scheduled to begin this quarter.

The company said the vaccine uses mRNA technology, which can enable it to be produced more quickly than the typical years-long effort it takes to develop a vaccine.

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