VOA NEWS

June 17, 2020

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

Amid sustained nationwide street protests, U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed an executive order outlining some police reforms.

"Reducing crime and raising standards are not opposite goals," Mr. Trump said in the White House Rose Garden before signing the document, which was titled "Safe Policing for Safe Communities."

The order will encourage "police departments nationwide to adopt the highest professional standards to serve their communities," he said. The measure also calls for certification bodies to train officers on de-escalation techniques and use of force standards.

Trump did not address the linkage of systemic racism to police brutality, an issue cited by demonstrators across the country.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi lost little time in responding to the president's order with the critique. She called the order weak and said it "falls sadly and seriously short of what is required" to fight racial injustice and police brutality that, in her words, "is murdering hundreds of Black Americans."

An investigation conducted on behalf of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, has found that agency leaders violated the agency's own scientific integrity policy in releasing a statement last year that supported a false claim made by President Trump.

The president had tweeted last year that the state of Alabama would be hard hit by Hurricane Dorian while NOAA forecasters in Alabama said the state was in no danger. Indeed, the storm did not strike Alabama at all.

The next week, on September 4 during a White House news briefing, the president displayed a forecast map which appeared to have been altered with a marker to show Alabama in the path of the hurricane. Two days later, NOAA issued a statement confirming the president's words and contradicting its Alabama forecasters.

From Washington D.C., you're listening to VOA news.

British scientists announced Tuesday a major coronavirus breakthrough, saying a cheap, readily-available steroid can prevent deaths from COVID-19.

Scientists from Britain's University of Oxford say in a trial the drug dexamethasone reduced death rates by 35 percent for patients on ventilators, and by 20 percent for less critical patients who needed oxygen.

Peter Horby, the academic leading the trial, told a Downing Street press conference, "what we saw was really quite remarkable."

Standing by his side, [Prime mini...] Prime Minister Boris Johnson called it the "biggest breakthrough yet" in treating COVID-19.

Dexamethasone is a generic steroid that's been used for 60 years to treat inflammation from a range of other conditions, including arthritis and asthma. In many parts of the world, it costs only about a dollar for a course of treatment.

*The Washington Post* is reporting the Justice Department has filed suit to block the publication of a memoir by former [whi...] White House national security adviser John Bolton. The suit alleges that Bolton's work contains classified material.

President Trump has already criticized Bolton for writing the memoir and hinted that it might contain falsehoods.

Bolton's publisher has said that the book contains allegations of what he called "Ukraine-like transgressions" in foreign policy decisions by the Trump administration. Bolton's publisher says Bolton spent months going over the manuscript at the request of the White House.

His attorney says the book [does not con..., does contain, rather, does...] does not contain, rather, any classified material.

Let me read that again, Bolton's attorney says the book does not contain any classified material.

The book has already been shipped to distribution centers and is set to go on sale June 23 ... under the title "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir."

Media agencies say Burundi will swear in president-elect Evariste Ndayishimiye on Thursday, a week after the sudden death of outgoing President Pierre Nkurunziza.

The Constitutional Court ruled last week that the president-elect be sworn in as soon as possible.

Ndayishimiye was originally planned to be sworn in August. He'll take the oath of office Thursday in the Burundian capital, Gitega.

He was handpicked by the ruling party to succeed Nkurunziza and he went on to secure more than 60 percent of the vote in the May election that was unsuccessfully contested by the opposition over allegations of fraud.

India said Tuesday that 20 of its soldiers were killed in a clash with Chinese troops along the disputed border of the two nuclear-armed nations, the first military casualties between those two countries in 45 years.

The Indian Army said a "violent faceoff" occurred in Galwan Valley [on the] in the western Himalayas Monday night and that there were "casualties on both sides."

China did not provide any numbers of casualties.

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