VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. Via remote, I'm Diane Roberts.

Excerpts of an explosive new book claiming U.S. President Donald Trump pleaded with China's leader Xi Jinping for help to win reelection in 2020 were published Wednesday.

Mr. Trump's former aide John Bolton writes in a new book the president met with Xi at a summit last June when he (quote) "stunningly, turned the conversation to the coming U.S. presidential election, alluding to China's economic capability" to affect the ongoing campaigns, "pleading with Xi to ensure he'd win." (end quote)

The former national security adviser claims in his [coming] upcoming tell-all book that the president told Xi purchasing more American farm products could impact the electoral outcome in the United States.

President Trump signed legislation Wednesday that seeks to punish China for a crackdown on ethnic minorities. This as the aforementioned book claims Mr. Trump expressed support for the brutal campaign in a private conversation with his Chinese counterpart.

The Uighur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 passed with overwhelming support from Republicans and Democrats in Congress. The president signed it with no ceremony, issuing a statement in which he said a sanctions provision intruded on executive authority and he would regard it as non-binding.

The bill is expected to further inflame already tense relations with China amid the Trump administration's criticism of Beijing's responsibility to the outbreak of the coronavirus. It includes sanctions on Chinese officials directly involved in the crackdown.

The police officer fired for fatally shooting a black man in the back in the U.S. city of Atlanta, Georgia, now faces felony murder charges.

Authorities say Garrett Rolfe shot and Killed Rayshard Brooks in the parking lot a fast food restaurant after a struggle over a taser.

Wednesday, District Attorney Paul Howard announced we concluded that at the time Mr. Books was not an immediate threat.

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Police reform in the United States was the topic of debate on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. Wednesday.

Senate Republicans have offered their legislation promoting police accountability for their actions while House of Representative Democrats are moving to advance their more far-reaching measure to curb abuse of conduct.

It comes after national and worldwide protests following the death of George Floyd, a black man who died in police custody three weeks ago when a white officer [kneel] knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes. That officer Derek Chauvin faces 40 years in prison on charges of second-degree murder, third-degree murder and manslaughter.

These two cases illustrate the call for an urgent debate at the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva Wednesday. George Floyd's brother spoke with the council by video and urged the United Nations to investigate U.S. police brutality and racial discrimination.

Philonise Floyd also wants to see the creation of an independent commission to investigate American police killings of black people and violence used against peaceful protesters.

The urgent debate is scheduled to continue Thursday.

The new coronavirus has caused more than 445,000 deaths worldwide from nearly 8.3 million infections. The United States has the most deaths, more than 117,000, and infections. That's 2.1 million.

The number of people infected and those who have died from the coronavirus in Brazil are second only to that of the United States. Brazil's economy is also tumbling during the pandemic. The World Bank forecasts a decline 8 percent this year for Latin America's biggest economy, which would be its worst annual recession on record.

Group of 7 foreign ministers Wednesday urged China to reconsider its proposed security law for Hong Kong in a statement in the amidst of top level U.S.-China talks. (quote) "We strongly urge the government of China to reconsider this decision," (end quote) the G7 ministers said in a statement shortly before Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was due to open talks with a senior Chinese official.

They said they had "grave concerns" about the law which China has vowed to draft for Hong Kong, which was promised autonomy by Beijing before Britain handed over the financial hub in 1997.

The security law would ban subversion and other perceived offenses in the city, which saw major pro-democracy protests last year.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced Wednesday the latest round of U.S. sanctions against Syria. The U.S. is tightening pressure on President Bashar al-Assad and his government amid concerns the war-torn country's population will suffer.

The sanctions target Assad's family, Syrian government officials and third-party entities aiding the Assad government.

Via remote, I'm Diane Roberts, VOA news.