VOA NEWS

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

U.S. President Donald Trump is curbing immigration visas for many categories of foreign workers for the rest of the year, citing the economic damage done by the coronavirus pandemic, including the job losses of American workers.

The freeze applies to work visas that many technology and landscaping companies use, called H-1B, as well as J-1 visas for exchange students and L-1 visas for managers of multinational corporations.

The temporary ban also applies to H-2B visas for nonagricultural seasonal workers although there are exceptions, including food processing workers, health care workers and au pairs who work as child-care providers. Agricultural [lad...] laborers are also exempt.

White House officials say the move is necessary to protect U.S. workers following heavy job losses during the coronavirus pandemic and will prevent foreign workers from filling 525,000 jobs. In all, 45.5 million workers have filed for unemployment compensation since mid-March, more than a quarter of the U.S. labor force of 164.6 million.

The United States has designated four more Chinese state-run outlets as "foreign missions." That's a move that U.S. officials say will "not prevent them from reporting legitimate news" but instead will "increase transparency" relating to the Chinese Communist Party and Beijing government's media activities in the United States.

This comes as the CCP is said to assert "even more direct control" over China's state media outlets.

On Monday, the State Department announced the U.S. operations of China Central Television, China News Service, the People's Daily and the Global Times are designated now as foreign missions.

China has not immediately responded to the additional designations.

From Washington D.C., this is VOA news.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday he will only meet with Venezuelan President Nicholás Maduro to discuss Maduro's departure from power after an interview in which he suggested otherwise.

The news site, Axios, published an interview with Trump in which he said he would be open to meeting with Maduro. That statement left him appearing to waver in his support for opposition leader Juan Guaidó, whom the United States and a number of other countries had formally recognized as interim president after contested elections in Venezuela in [twenty si...] 2018.

On Monday, Trump tweeted "My administration has always stood on the side of FREEDOM and LIBERTY and against the oppressive Maduro regime!"

Guaidó met with Trump in February as a guest for the State of the Union address in an attempt to rekindle his campaign to depose Maduro. In a statement about his visit, the White House said it would continue to work to "confront the illegitimate dictatorship" in Venezuela.

The United States and other countries blame Maduro's socialist policies for a political and economic crisis threatening regional stability, while recognizing Guaidó as Venezuela's legitimate interim leader.

Delegations from the United States and Russia are meeting in Vienna today and tomorrow to discuss their nuclear arsenals. President Trump has abandoned several U.S. treaties with Russia, including ones on overflights and on intermediate-range nuclear forces.

Trump has said China should be involved in the talks on New START, [argu...] arguing that up until now Beijing has done as it liked in developing its weapon systems.

The Chinese government has refused the invitation with its Foreign Ministry saying earlier this month that "the time is not yet ripe for China to participate in nuclear disarmament negotiations."

The U.S.-Russia New START treaty agreed upon in 2010 limits each side to 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads. The expires in February of next year.

Arms experts say [there are] there isn't enough time to renew the complex deal between the United States and Russia, let alone negotiate and craft a new treaty involving China, with the U.S. presidential election so quickly approaching. Ah, the U.S. voters go to the polls to elect a new president in November of this year.

Afghanistan's security forces have suffered their bloodiest week so far in the 19-year-old Afghan war - 291 members of the Afghan Army killed and 550 others wounded in multiple attacks by the Taliban.

Afghanistan's National Security Council said "The Taliban carried out 422 attacks in 32 provinces." That news came into light in a tweet on Monday.

The NSC statement also said at least 42 civilians were killed in that violence.

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