VOA NEWS

August 27, 2020

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

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence will speak to the Republican National Convention Wednesday night from Maryland's Fort Kellyanne, site of the 1814 battle that inspired what is now the U.S. national anthem.

Pence is expected to give a robust defense of President Donald Trump in his speech.

It should also provide a contrast with former Vice President Joe Biden and Senator Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominees for the November 3 election.

Biden and Harris were spotlighted at their own party convention last week, warning the country against returning President Trump to the White House.

Pence's wife, Karen Pence, and White House counselor Kellyanne Conway will also speak Wednesday. Protests are expected.

Police in the Midwestern state of Illinois say they've arrested a 17-year-old young man for murder after two people were shot and killed during protests in nearby Kenosha, Wisconsin, overnight.

Wisconsin police say it happened during the third straight night of demonstrations over the shooting of a Black man by a white police officer Sunday.

Protests are not confined to the streets. NBA playoff games in the United States are called off amid player protest against racial injustice. Mike Gracia reports.

On the fourth anniversary of Colin Kaepernick's first kneel-down during "The Star-Spangled Banner" before an NFL preseason game, the three NBA playoff games scheduled Wednesday were postponed as players chose to boycott to protest racial injustice.

The Milwaukee Bucks were the first to act, failing to take the floor for their afternoon game against the Orlando Magic. Games between Houston and Oklahoma City and the Los Angeles Lakers and Portland were also postponed.

All games would have been played in the NBA Bubble in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

NBA players had been discussing boycotting games after last weekend's shooting of Jacob Blake by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

I'm mike Gracia.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he was going to send law enforcement to help in Kenosha.

This is VOA news.

Greece and its European Union allies held war games in the Mediterranean Wednesday while Turkey conducted drills with the U.S. navy nearby. This as the dispute between the two neighbors over gas and maritime borders ratcheted up another notch.

The convergence of a growing number of warships on an energy-rich but disputed patch of the sea between Cyprus and Crete came as NATO and a host of European officials called for cooler heads to prevail.

A small number of U.S. troops were injured during an incident with Russian forces in Syria, two U.S. officials told Reuters Wednesday.

While such interactions between American and Russian forces are not rare, the incident highlights the risks of troops from both countries operating in close proximity in northern Syria and the potential for an escalation in tensions.

One of the officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the injuries were a result of a collision and not any exchange of fire.

French President Emmanuel Macron has sent a road map to Lebanese politicians outlining political and financial reforms needed to unlock foreign aid and rescue the country from multiple crises including an economic meltdown.

The two-page (quote) "concept paper" (end quote) delivered by the French ambassador to Beirut and seen by Reuters laid out detailed measures, many of them long demanded by foreign donors.

They include an audit of the central bank, appointment of an interim government capable of enacting urgent reforms and early legislative elections within a year.

The government resigned over this month's huge Beirut port explosion that killed at least 180 people, injured some 6,000 and destroyed entire neighborhoods.

Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Hassan Diab said Wednesday the country is at risk of losing control over the coronavirus outbreak after a rise in cases following the August 4 explosion in Beirut.

Kenya's president extended a nationwide curfew for another 30 days as coronavirus cases rise outside the capital, Nairobi.

European Union nations, Britain and EU partners have agreed on a blueprint for a COVID-19 vaccination plan predicting inoculation of at least 40 percent of their populations, a step that may set back the World Health Organization's own vaccine blueprint.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said this week that people who were exposed to COVID-19 but are not symptomatic may not need to be tested, sparking outcry among officials and experts who fear the changed guidance was politically motivated.

The advice marks a reversal of the agency's previous position recommending testing for all close contacts of people diagnosed with COVID-19, narrowing the scope of instances where the CDC recommends testing.

And Dirk Mudge, a white Namibian who began his political life for the pro-Apartheid National Party has died after contracting COVID-19. Mudge was later lobbied for Namibia's independence from South African white-minority rule. He was 92.