



## Metro News Update with Dustin Alexander-Pérez for Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019

ANCHOR: Metro News Update; how do you do ladies and gentlemen? I'm Dustin Alexander-Pérez at the anchor desk in Los Angeles reporting with the resources of VOA News.

Afghan officials say a truck bomb has exploded near a high security compound in Kabul, killing at least four people and wounding more than 40 others.

An Interior Ministry spokesman confirmed the attack. It happened near the capital city's so-called Green Village, which houses offices of foreign companies and charities. He said the explosion caused civilian casualties and that at least 10 children were among those injured.

The fledgling U.S.-initiated dialogue with the Taliban aimed at ending the war in Afghanistan has come to a halt. That word from an insurgent spokesperson who spoke to VOA on Monday.

The senior Taliban official privy to the developments confirmed that, "The process has halted for now so the venue and the date for a future meeting are not known." The insurgent official declined to share reasons behind the suspension of negotiations.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is trying to explain President Trump's tweet threat, against NATO ally Turkey as he wraps up a trip aimed at easing concerns about the U.S. withdrawal from Syria.

Associated Press correspondent Ben Thomas reports.

REPORTER: "We apply sanctions in many places around the world. I assume he's speaking about those kinds of things but you would have to ask him."

That was Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's response when reporters asked him to clarify President Trump's tweet threatening to "devastate Turkey economically if they hit the Kurds." Just two days earlier, Pompeo had a lengthy conversation with his Turkish counterpart, after which he expressed confidence that an agreement could be reached to protect Kurdish forces who have been fighting with the U.S. against the Islamic State group.

He says Trump's call for a 20-mile safe zone between Turkish forces and the Kurds is consistent with what the U.S. is trying to achieve.

"It just demarks the importance that we place on this."

ANCHOR: This is Metro News.

President Trump is urging farmers feeling the pinch from his policies to stick with him. Associated Press Washington correspondent Sagar Meghani reports from the White House.

REPORTER: The China trade war has slammed many farmers and the partial government shutdown's kept some from getting federal aid meant to offset the losses.

The president's asking them to hold tight.

"No one understands better than our great farmers that the tough choices we make today reap rewards for centuries to come."

The president spent the bulk of his speech at a farmers' convention in New Orleans, defending his demands for a border wall and said eventual immigration reform will help farmers get the workers they need for their fields.

ANCHOR: A majority of Americans blame President Trump for the prolonged partial government shutdown. Six major polls show that half or more Americans hold the president and his Republican Party responsible and 63 percent of American voters supported Democratic proposal to reopen parts of the government that do not involve border security while negotiating funding for a border wall. That from a Quinnipiac University National Poll released on Monday.

A Chinese court has sentenced a Canadian man to death on drug trafficking charges, leading Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to accuse China of using the death penalty arbitrarily.

Hundreds of Zimbabweans took to the streets of the capital, Harare, on Monday, protesting an increase in the price of fuel.

Correspondent Columbus Mavhunga reports for VOA that many Zimbabweans are growing tired of chronic economic hardship.

REPORTER: On Monday, the army and police deployed in Harare after protesters started blocking roads. Other protests took place in the country's second-largest city, Bulawayo. Police in both places fired tear gas to disperse demonstrators.

The government says it is aware that prices have been escalating, forcing many people to slide into poverty.

Energy Mutodi, Zimbabwe's junior minister of information, said the government is doing all it can. He also said the government cannot increase salaries for public workers like doctors and school teachers.

ANCHOR: Tens of thousands of teachers in Los Angeles went on strike Monday after contentious contract negotiations failed in the nation's second-largest school district.

Schools will stay open because the district which has 640,000 students has hired hundreds of substitutes to replace teachers and others who [leave] left for picket lines. The union has 35,000 members.

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