

## Common Interests between China, U.S. Outweigh Differences: Chinese Diplomat

ANN ARBOR, the United States - Although great changes have taken place in the China-U.S. relationship in the past 40 years since the two countries forged diplomatic ties, the fact that the common interests between the two countries far outweigh their differences has not changed, a Chinese diplomat said here Saturday.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the two-day 2019 Michigan China Forum in Ann Arbor in the U.S. state of Michigan, Chinese Consul General in Chicago Zhao Jian said that China and the United States have different national conditions and levels of development, as well as different cultures, histories and ideologies, but "we have shared responsibility and broad common inter-



ests in maintaining regional and global peace and prosperity." "The China-U.S. relations are not a zero-sum

game. We both stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation." The China-U.S. relationship is between the

largest developing and developed countries, Zhao said. "It not only directly affects the welfare of our two peoples but also bears on the global peace, stability and prosperity. A sound China-U.S. relationship serves the fundamental interests of our people and meets the expectations of the wider international community."

"The development of China-U.S. relations has brought real benefits to the people of the two countries," Zhao stressed. "China's ever-growing development and ever-opening market will provide new cooperation opportunities for both countries."

"The good will and friendship between the Chinese and American people and their aspiration ... (More on P4)... (17)

### It's Sad to See US Diplomacy Reduced to Ultimatums and Sanctions - Lavrov

MOSCOW - Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov lamented the adversarial style of the current US policy towards Moscow, saying Washington shows no intent of seeking compromise contrary to what diplomacy is supposed to be about.

"I don't see anything coming from the US diplomatic corps except ultimatums and threats to impose sanctions unless the demands are met. All other tools have vanished from the arsenal of American diplomacy, and that is sad," the Russian minister

said in an interview for an upcoming documentary, which was partially published by the ministry. The sentiment came in response to the latest threats coming from Washington over Russian policies in Ukraine and Venezuela. Lavrov said US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tones down his rhetoric when speaking directly to him, compared to his public statements on Russia, but the essence remains the same.

"When we talk on the phone... he speaks in a correct manner. (RT)

### Israel Says Brazil Opens 'diplomatic office' in Jerusalem



JERUSALEM - Israel said on Sunday that Brazil had opened a "diplomatic office" in Jerusalem as Bra-

zilian President Jair Bolsonaro began a visit to the country. "Obrigado for opening a

diplomatic office in Jerusalem!" acting Foreign Minister Israel Katz said in a Twitter post that included

a photograph of himself shaking hands with Brazilian counterpart Ernesto Araujo. (Reuters)

### Netanyahu's Spokesman Under Fire for Calling Niqab-Clad Gaza Protesters 'ISIS Women'



JERUSALEM - The Israeli PM's spokesman has faced a fiery backlash, including accusations of racism, after he

mischaracterized female flag-waving Palestine protesters, calling them "ISIS women." Hamas is in a state of war with the

'caliphate'. Ofir Gendelman, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Arab media spokesman, sparked a Twitter storm after he captioned an image with four veiled female protesters in the foreground as "ISIS women also participate today in the Hamas' led riots on the Gaza border." He then piled on another highly dubious claim: "That's no surprise because Hamas IS the Gazan branch of ISIS." Gendelman was keel-hauled by commenters

who pointed out that there is no way an ISIS woman would be waving a Palestinian flag, which is considered to be secular blasphemy by the group, let alone the fact that Hamas is at war with the Sinai branch of Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS). Since Gendelman appeared to be basing his branding of the women as terrorists solely on the fact they were wearing the niqab full-face veil, he was called out as racist and Islamophobic. ... (More on P4)... (18)

### Saudi Arabia 'Absolutely Rejects' Any Steps Impacting Syrian Sovereignty over Golan Heights

RIYADH - Saudi King Salman said he "absolutely rejects" any steps that would undermine Syrian sovereignty over the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights, after US President Donald Trump recognized the area as Israeli territory. Speaking at an Arab League event in Tunisia on Sunday, Salman also reiterated his support for a 'two-state solution' for Israel and Palestine, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state. His remarks came

as a strong rebuff to US President Donald Trump, who signed a declaration last week officially recognizing the Golan Heights as part of Israel. The strategic area was captured from Syria during the Six-Day War in 1967, and has since remained under Israeli control. In 1981, the UN Security Council unanimously voted to declare the Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights illegal and demanded that Tel Aviv "rescind" it. (RT)

### NATO Fetes 70 Years, But Trump Not Partying

WASHINGTON - Seventy years after it was formed to counter the Soviet Union, Russia has returned to the top of the agenda for NATO. But the alliance faces another, more unlikely problem - criticism from the US president.

The 29-nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization is celebrating its 70th anniversary with talks among foreign ministers Wednesday and Thursday in Washington, where, in a Cold War redux, the resurgent power of Russia will be the chief item.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the ministers will work "to make sure that NATO is around for the next 70 years" and take aim at Russia over its 2014 takeover of the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine. Pompeo told a congressional hearing he was hopeful "we will be able to announce another series of actions that we will jointly take together to push back against what Russia is doing there in Crimea."

But if countering Russia is a familiar role for NATO, its new internal dynamics are not, with President Donald Trump repeatedly suggesting that the allies are free-loaders.

The businessman-turned-president, who berated allies at a NATO summit last year at the group's Brussels headquarters, is pressing member states to meet the alliance's goal set in 2014 of spending two percent of GDP on defense. Trump has even derisively asked whether it is worth defending small NATO states such as Montenegro.

Pompeo said he will discuss spending and again pointed to Germany, which plans for defense spending well below two percent and declining by 2023. (AFP)

### Ukrainians Head to Polling Stations to Elect Next President

KIEV - Voting for Ukraine's next president is underway, five years after mass protests resulted in a radical change in the country's course. There are a record 39 names on the ballot in this year's race. Unlike the previous election in 2014, which billionaire former minister Petro Poroshenko won by a landslide following the Maidan protests, this vote sees several major candidates almost neck in neck ahead of the polls, which means the election might not end in the first round. Should that be the case, the two candidates



with the most votes received on Sunday will have a face-off three weeks later, on April 21. Opinion polls earlier this week put comedian Vladimir Zelensky as the front-runner. He is a newcomer in politics, campaigning on an anti-corruption plat-

form and the image of a character (Ukrainian president) he played in a popular satirical TV show 'Servant of the People.' Critics say he is just a figurehead for tycoon Igor Kolomoisky, an allegation that both strongly deny. ... (More on P4)... (19)

### 'Grave Terrorist Attack': North Korea Seeks Probe into Mysterious Raid on Its Mission in Spain

PYONGYANG - North Korea called on Spain to conduct a thorough investigation into a raid on its mission in Madrid, which was said to be done by FBI-linked dissidents, now hiding in the US. Pyongyang asked Spain to investigate the "grave terrorist attack" and "flagrant violation of international law," state-run KCNA news agency reported. "This kind of act should never be tolerated," the statement read.

It was the first time North Korean officials have commented on the mysterious break-in at its mission in Madrid on February 22. A group of intruders subdued and tied up the staff before stealing a number of electronic devices and a trove of documents from the building. They also reportedly tried to persuade a North Korean attaché to defect. A video, allegedly filmed during the break-in, shows ... (More on P4)... (20)

## Neighbor News

### China's BRI Creates Tremendous Opportunities for Cooperation, Expert Says

TASHKENT - China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) creates tremendous opportunities for cooperation, which should be seized in a timely and productive manner, an Uzbek expert has said.

The BRI has a global scale and is of crucial importance in the further development of international relations, Alisher Matyakubov, vice rector of Uzbekistan's University of Journalism and Mass Communications, told Xinhua in a recent exclusive interview.

"China seeks to expand the boundaries of the Belt and Road Initiative through the maxi-

mum possible number of projects implemented in partner countries, deliberately giving them the initiative of comprehending and developing investment proposals by themselves," Matyakubov said.

Chinese enterprises' non-financial investments in 56 countries along the Belt and Road routes amounted to 15.64 billion U.S. dollars in 2018, up 8.9 percent year on year and accounting for 13 percent of the total outbound investment during the period, according to China's Ministry of Commerce. (Xinhua)

### Family Says Pakistani Journalist Taken from Home

KARACHI, Pakistan - The family of a Pakistani journalist says he was forcibly taken by masked men in private and police vehicles and has been unreachable for more than 24 hours. Minhaj Musavi says armed men took his brother, Matloob Musavi, from his home in the city of Karachi early Saturday.

The Karachi Union of Journalists condemned in a statement the incident and demanded the immediate release

of Musavi. Musavi works as a reporter for a local daily in Karachi.

Karachi Press Club officials Intiaz Faran and Atman Sabir said security forces entering homes without identifying themselves was a "deplorable act."

Several journalists and bloggers say they have been detained or threatened in recent months after writing critically about security agencies. (Fox News)

### ICJ Sets Mid-May as Deadline for US to Explain Measures on Iran Bans Removal

TEHRAN - Iran says the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has set May 15 as the deadline for the US to give detailed accounts of its measures to lift sanctions on humanitarian supplies to the country. The ICJ has informed the US of the deadline in a letter, Iranian legal representative at the ICJ Mohsen Mohebbi told IRNA on Saturday.

Washington is required to report to the Court about measures it was supposed to carry out regarding the ICJ's orders with respect to the removal of Iran bans, Mohebbi said. Back in October 2018, the ICJ ordered the United States to halt the unilateral sanctions it had imposed on "humanitarian" supplies to Iran. The Hague-based court,

which is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, announced its ruling on October 3 regarding the July 2018 lawsuit brought by Tehran against Washington's decision to re-impose unilateral sanctions following the US exit from a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers. The decisions of the ICJ - which rules on disputes between UN member states - are legally binding.

The ruling requires Washington to allow supply of medicine and medical devices, food and agricultural goods and airplane parts, which directly deal with human lives, according to Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Bahram Qassem. (Press TV)

### Iran's Gov't Agrees to Grant Financial Assistance to Flood-Hit People

TEHRAN - Iran's cabinet in a meeting on Sunday agreed to granting loans and financial help to people in the flood-hit provinces across the country.

During the meeting, the ministers were briefed by the executive bodies on addressing issues caused by the recent floods in some provinces.

During the meeting that was chaired by President Hassan Rouhani field reports and measures taken in flood-stricken areas were presented to the cabinet.

The cabinet appreciated people for their cooperation and helping address the flood-related issues. The Council of Ministers also agreed to provide grants and loans to the people who are hit by the floods in some provinces.

Flash floods caused by heavy rain across Iran,

specially in Northern Golestan and Mazandaran provinces and Shiraz in the Southwestern part of the country, claiming over 40 lives and causing a lot of damages to people's houses and properties. Iranian authorities announced on Saturday that the death toll from flash floods across the country had risen to 42, as more rain showers are expected.

"Totally 42 people have been killed in floods and the resulting accidents," Head of Iran's Forensics Organization Ahmad Shojayee told FNA. He added that 5 people in Mazandaran province were killed in floods, 2 in North Khorasan, 1 in Mashhad, 1 in Malayer, 1 in Sarpol Zohab, 7 in Golestan, 2 in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, 2 in Lorestan, 19 in Shiraz, 1 in Khuzestan and 1 in Semnan. (FNA)