

G7 to Send 'Clear Message' to Russia on Syria

LUCCA, Italy - G7 foreign ministers were on Monday to send a "clear and coordinated message" to Russia over its stance on Syria as Washington ratcheted up the pressure following a suspected chemical attack in the war-torn country. Britain's Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson set the tone for the meeting, describing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad as "toxic" and saying it was "time for (Russian President) Vladimir Putin to face the truth about the tyrant he is propping up". Top diplomats from the seven major advanced economies were in Italy for their annual two-day meeting which had initially been expected to focus on talks with new US



Secretary of State Rex Tillerson about hotspots like Libya, Iran and Ukraine. But the agenda is now likely to be dominated by last week's suspected chemical weapons attack on a rebel-held Syrian town that killed at least 87 civilians, and the US cruise missiles fired at a Syrian air base in retaliation. It was the first time Washington has intervened directly against the regime of Assad, who is fighting a civil war with the backing of Russia and Iran, and the G7 ministers will deliberate the West's next steps. Several rounds of UN-backed peace talks have failed to end the conflict, which has killed more than 320,000 people since March 2011. (AFP)

Kremlin, Angry at Syria Missile Strike, Says Putin Won't Meet Tillerson

MOSCOW - The Kremlin said on Monday that U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will not meet President Vladimir Putin when he visits Moscow on Wednesday, a move that could point to tensions over a U.S. missile attack on a Syrian air base last week. John Kerry, Tillerson's predecessor, often met Putin as well as the Russian foreign minister when he visited Moscow, and Putin granted several audiences

to the Texan when he ran oil major Exxon Mobil before taking his current job. Putin even personally awarded Tillerson a top Russian state award -- the Order of Friendship -- in 2013, and it was widely expected that the former oilman would meet Putin on what is his first trip to Russia as secretary of state. But Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, told reporters on Monday that ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Iran Warns Against Further U.S. Strike on Syria

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani warned against further U.S. strikes on Syria, Press TV reported on Monday. Any other strikes by the United States or other Western countries could push the region into a "very dangerous" situation, Rouhani told a news conference on Monday. He said that the U.S. missile strike against a Syrian airbase last week was "basically wrong" which "benefited terrorism." "The United States did this once, but will it go unanswered next time?" he said, stressing that "repetition of such an action could be very dangerous for the region." On Sunday, Iran's

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said that the recent U.S. missile attack on a Syrian air base was a "strategic mistake." "The Americans' action is a strategic mistake, as they are repeating the mistakes of their predecessors," Khamenei's official website quoted him as saying. As Europe is now facing the threat of terrorists, so will be the United States, he added. The United States fired 59 Tomahawk missiles at the Shayrat air base in central Syria at dawn Friday, saying the strike was intended to deter the Syrian government from using chemical weapons. (Xinhua)

IMF, WB, WTO Urge Nations to Advance Open Trade

WASHINGTON - Several global financial institutions on Monday urged economies all over the world to advance open trade in an inclusive way. "The role of trade in the global economy is at a critical juncture," said a joint report released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Increased trade integration has helped to drive economic growth, enhance productivity, lower prices

and improve living standards, said the report. However, trade is leaving many individuals and communities behind, notably in advanced economies, it said. These economies have been incompetent in addressing trade shocks such as job losses, though job losses in certain sectors or regions have resulted from technological changes to a large extent, rather than from trade, said the report. In face of trade shocks and the absence of policies as



countermeasures, the public has become more skeptical about the benefits of open trade, especially in advanced economies, it said. It also noted that the sharp slowdown in global trade in recent years is both a symptom of and a contributor to low economic growth, and that trade openness has slowed down sharply in recent years as trade restrictions in some areas remain high and new restrictions continue to grow since the global financial crisis. (Xinhua)

US to Hold Accountable Those Who Commit Crimes Against 'Innocents'

LUCCA, Italy - The United States will hold responsible anyone who commits crimes against humanity, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on Monday, days after the U.S. military unexpectedly attacked Syria. Tillerson is in Italy for a meeting of foreign ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) major industrialized nations, with his counterparts from Europe and Japan eager for clarity from Washington on numerous diplomatic issues, especially Syria. Before the April 7 missile strikes on a Syrian airbase,

U.S. President Donald Trump had indicated he would be less interventionist than his predecessors and willing to overlook human rights abuses if it was in U.S. interests. But Tillerson said the United States would not let such crimes go unchallenged. "We rededicate ourselves to holding to account any and all who commit crimes against the innocents anywhere in the world," he told reporters while commemorating a 1944 German Nazi massacre in Sant'Anna di Stazze. Trump ordered his military to strike Syria



in retaliation for what the United States said was a chemical weapons attack by President Bashar al-Assad's forces which killed scores of civilians, including many children. European ministers are eager to hear whether Washington is now committed to overthrowing Mr. Assad, who is backed by Russia. They also want the US to put pressure on Moscow to distance itself from Assad. (Reuters)

Russia to Carry out Observation Flights over U.S., Canada

MOSCOW - Russian experts are going to carry out observation flights on Tu-154M LK-1 aircraft over the United States and Canada, a senior official of the Russian Defense Ministry said on Monday. Sergei Ryzhkov, head of the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center, said that within the framework of the international Treaty on Open Skies, Russian aircraft will conduct observation flights over the United States on April 10-15 from Open Skies airfield Write-Patterson and over Canada on April 18-22 from Iqaluit



of Canada. Ryzhkov said the Russian aircraft will follow an agreed route, and U.S. and Canadian specialists will be on board to ensure the observation equipment

will be used in compliance with the Treaty. The Treaty on Open Skies was signed on March 1992 and became one of the major confidence-building ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

UNHCR Urges EU Not to Return Migrants to Hungary

GENEVA - The U.N. refugee agency on Monday took the rare step of urging European Union members to suspend returns of asylum-seekers to their partner, Hungary, faulting its new policy of systematically placing migrants in containers and expelling any migrants not holding the proper papers. UNHCR says that since a tough new law took effect on March 28, Hungary's government has detained 110 people -- including children -- in "shipping containers surrounded by high razor fences at the border" while their asylum cases are reviewed. Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said the situation for asylum-seekers in Hungary was already a concern before the measures, and "has only gotten worse since the new law introducing ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

DPRK Accuses U.S. of Trying to 'Maintain Colonial Rule' in South Korea

PYONGYANG - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Monday accused the United States of trying to "maintain its colonial rule" in South Korea by helping the conservative forces remain in power. Rodong Sinmun, the official daily of the ruling Korean Workers' Party, said the United States is "displeased with the ever increasing possibility of the collapse of the conservative regime and regime change by the progressive pro-reform forces in South Korea." "The reality is clear that the U.S. remains unchanged in its wild ambition for maintaining its colonial rule over South Korea and gets ever more sly and vicious in its methods to quench the South Korean people's growing desire for independence," said the newspaper in a commentary. Whenever South Korea faced a serious political crisis, "the U.S. maintained its colonial rule by replacing its lackeys with others and setting up a new puppet regime," according to the newspaper. "The colonial rule that divided the territory of Korea and the homogeneous Korean nation into two and inflicted unbearable pain upon the Koreans is bound to collapse under the united struggle of the Koreans in the north and the south and abroad," it said. The situation on the Korean peninsula is getting tense as the United States is sending an aircraft carrier combat group to the waters near the DPRK. Washington says the deployment is in reaction to "provocations" by the DPRK. (Xinhua)

Tillerson, Turkish FM, Discuss Assad's Future

ANKARA, Turkey - A Turkish official says the country's foreign minister has held a telephone conversation with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, during which the future of Syrian President Bashar Assad was discussed. The Turkish Foreign Ministry official said Mevlut Cavusoglu and Tillerson on Monday also talked about the fight against the Islamic State group. The official, who cannot be named under government regulations, did not provide further details. Their discussion comes days after U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to punish Assad for his alleged use of chemical weapons by launching cruise missiles at ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

China Calls for Upholding Hard-Won Process of Syrian Issue's Political Settlement

BEIJING - A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson on Monday underscored the urgency of preventing the situation in Syria from deteriorating. Spokesperson Hua Chunying made the comments in response to remarks by British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon. Fallon on Sunday accused Russia of being "responsible" by proxy for the deaths of civilians last week in a suspected chemical weapons attack. The United States accused the Syrian Army of being behind the attack on Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib province, an allegation denied by Damas-

cus. In response to the chemical attacks, the United States on Friday struck a Syrian air base in Homs with 59 Tomahawk missiles. Hua said China opposes the use of chemical weapons by any country, organization or person for any purpose and under any circumstance. China supports an independent and comprehensive investigation by UN agencies into the suspected use of chemical weapons, Hua said. Relevant countries, as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, should play ...*(More on P4)...(27)*

Nieghbor News

China, ASEAN Keen to Deepen Cooperation after 25 Years of Being Dialogue Partners

JAKARTA - Marking the excellence of 25 years of being dialogue partners, China and ASEAN countries will further enhance the strategic partnership by enhancing mutual respect, understanding, trust, support and pragmatic cooperation. The commitment was made at the 18th China-ASEAN Joint Cooperation Committee (ACJCC) meeting held in ASEAN Secretariat here on Monday, attended by officials from the two sides.

The meeting was co-chaired by Chinese Ambassador to ASEAN Xu Bu and Chen Han-cheng, Permanent Representative of Singapore to ASEAN, China-ASEAN Coordinators, Permanent representatives of the ten ASEAN countries, senior officials of the ASEAN Secretariat and representatives from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Tourism Administration. Addressing the meeting, Xu Bu said that two-way trade has soared to

452.2 billion U.S. dollars last year. China has become ASEAN's largest trading partner, while ASEAN is China's third largest trading partner, the fourth largest export market and the second largest source of imports. In the meantime, people-to-people exchanges have been greatly enhanced thanks to rapid expansion of direct flights serving China and ASEAN countries, with around 2,700 flights per week, he said.

Xu said that ASEAN remains a priority in China's neighborhood diplomacy, adding that China has been a staunch, steady and sincere friend and partner for ASEAN as they move towards more competitive, inclusive and integrating region. "Therefore we will continue this firm support to ASEAN centrality in regional cooperation and support ASEAN's greater role in international and regional affairs," he added. (Xinhua)

Rouhani Defends Economic Record Ahead of Election

TEHRAN - Iran's President Hassan Rouhani defended his economic record in a press conference on Monday but stopped short of formally announcing his candidacy for next month's presidential election. Rouhani rejected criticism from conservatives over his economic performance, saying he had overseen measurable improvements in agriculture, health care, energy and internet coverage. He also focused on his key achievement, a nuclear deal with world powers that ended some sanctions in return for curbs on Iran's atomic programme. "In every aspect that you consider, figures tell us that after the (nuclear deal), there is more space

for movement and progress," he said. Pointing to deals signed by Iranian airlines to buy planes from Airbus and Boeing, he said the some \$4 billion (3.8 billion euros) that Iranians spend on tickets to fly abroad would now go to domestic carriers. Rouhani is expected to run for a second term on May 19, but said this press conference was "not about elections". "We need to wait two or three more days," he said. Hopefuls in the election have from Tuesday until Saturday evening to register their candidacy. Sitting presidents in Iran are expected to be modest about their ambitions and to refrain from using state television as a campaigning platform. (AFP)

PAF Role in Safeguarding Air Frontiers Laudable: Sharif

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif applauded the role of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) in safeguarding the air frontiers of the country and said Pakistan's air force has invariably played a crucial role in the national defense. Sharif said the government would ensure provision of all necessary

resources for further advancement of the Pakistan Air Force. Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman called on Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad on Monday. Meanwhile the Air Chief briefed the prime minister regarding the professional and operational preparedness of PAF. (Daily Times)

Russia, Turkmenistan Reach Level of Strategic Partnership: Putin

ASHGABAT - Russian President Vladimir Putin has sent a congratulatory letter to Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on the 25th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries, the Turkmen government said in a message Apr. 10. Over the past period, Russian-Turkmen relations have reached the level of strategic partnership, the letter said. The two countries have established political dialogue at various levels, as well as fruitful coop-

eration in trade and economic, energy, scientific and technical, humanitarian and other fields, Putin said in his letter. The constructive interaction of Moscow and Ashgabat is an important factor for ensuring stability and security in the region of Central Asia and the Caspian Sea, said the letter. Vladimir Putin expressed confidence that Russia and Turkmenistan will join efforts to further expand the entire range of mutually beneficial partnership relations. (Trend)