

UN Chief Notified of U.S. Intention to Withdraw from Paris Climate Pact

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres Friday received notification from U.S. delegation on the country's intention to withdraw from the Paris climate pact, his spokesman has confirmed.

The notification came two months after President Donald Trump announced his intention to leave the accord. "The decision by the United States to withdraw from the Paris Agreement is a major disappointment for global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote global security," said UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric in a note sent Friday night to correspondents.



Under article 28 of the Paris Agreement, a party may withdraw at any time after three years from the date on which the agreement has entered into force for that party. The United States accepted the Paris Agreement on Sept. 3, 2016 and the agreement entered into force for it on Nov. 4, 2016.

This means that the United States must stay in the pact until at least 2019. The Secretary General welcomes any effort to reengage in the Paris Agreement by the United States, Dujarric said. "It is crucial that the United States remains a leader on climate and sustainable development," he added. (Xinhua)

Trump Counters Criticism of his National Security Adviser

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. - President Donald Trump has issued a defense of his national security adviser H.R. McMaster against criticism he's not supportive enough of Israel and is stifling conservative viewpoints. Trump came out with a public endorsement late Friday. In a statement, Trump said: "General McMaster and I are working very well together. He is a good man and very pro-Israel. I am grateful for the work he continues to do serving our country." McMaster, an Army lieutenant general, came under attack after the recent

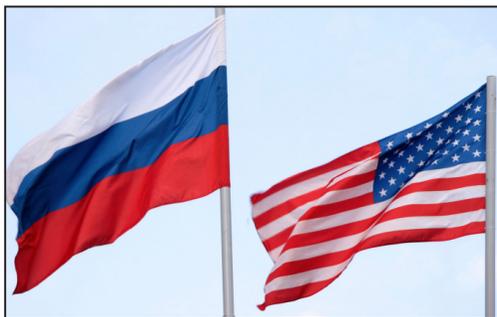
firing of White House intelligence adviser Ezra Cohen-Watnick, who was a protege of Trump's first national security adviser, Michael Flynn. Critics have accused McMaster of trying to remove conservative voices from Trump's national security team. McMaster was also the subject of a widely circulated Facebook post by a Jerusalem Post columnist that called him "deeply hostile to Israel." Trump's statement of support comes after a turbulent period at the White House and a major reshuffling of top staff. (AP)

Frosty U.S.-Russia Relations about to Get Even Colder

WASHINGTON - President Trump came into office hoping to launch a warming in US-Russia relations. Instead, over the last six months, things have gone from cool to icy cold. If in January Secretary of State Rex Tillerson stated that the United States and Russia "are not likely ever to be friends," Congress this month approved veto-proof sanctions legislation that baldly labels Russia America's "adversary." Relations, Mr. Trump says, have deteriorated

where they are now "dangerous."

It's at this rock-bottom point in relations that Mr. Tillerson will meet with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, in Manila this weekend to gauge the prospects of maintaining some level of cooperation in areas of mutual interest. They include Syria, counterterrorism, avoiding a military confrontation in



the Baltic Sea, and space. But even though the two chief diplomats will meet in tropical Manila, heavy coats may be in order to ward off the chill of the deep freeze relations are in - and likely to stay in indefinitely, analysts of US-Russia relations say. (AP)

IOC President Emphasizes Different Approaches in Different Circumstances on Russian Case



LONDON - International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach said that different measures were needed in different circumstances

when dealing with Russian federation's participation in the sporting events here on Friday. "Different issues require different approaches," he

told reporters at a press conference hours ahead of the commencement of the 2017 IAAF World Championships. The entire Russian track and field team were still banned by the IAAF to participate in world events for systematic doping, including the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, before a number of Russian athletes have been given green lights to compete as neutrals by the world's athletics governing body. This time, 19 Russian

athletes were allowed to participate at the worlds as neutrals. "The IAAF is in fact the only international sports organization, which is implicated in the report of Professor McLaren as is the national federation of athletics of Russia. This is different to other international federations. "It's the difference to other international federations," said Bach. "The IAAF was in a special situation and took special measures. (Xinhua)

EU Broadens Sanction List against Russia over Siemens Turbines to Crimea

BRUSSELS - The European Union (EU) on Friday added three persons and three companies to a sanction list targeting Russian individuals and entities. The persons and companies will face an asset freeze and a travel ban in the EU for "their responsibility in supplying Crimea with (four) gas turbines from Russia", according to a statement released by the Council of the EU. The gas turbines were originally sold by German company Siemens for use in other parts of Russia, but were then

clandestinely transferred to Crimea, which rejoined Russia in 2014 following a referendum. The EU "didn't recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation", instead it slapped a set of sanctions against Moscow, including a ban of supplying of key equipment for infrastructure projects in Crimea and Sevastopol in important sectors. A total of 153 persons and 40 entities are now on the EU sanction list in the wake of the Council's latest decision. (Xinhua)

Russia's Ex-Ambassador to US Rejects Accusations of Meddling

MOSCOW - The former Russian ambassador to the United States on Saturday strongly denied the accusations of meddling in the U.S. presidential election. Sergei Kislyak, who has just returned from Washington, said on Russian state Rossiya 24 television that he was merely doing his job as a diplomat when he met with members of President Donald Trump's team. He said he also had met with representatives of Hillary Clinton's campaign, but didn't give any names. Kislyak described the U.S. accusations against him as absurd and "shameful" for the U.S., adding that the official acknowledgement that his phone conversations were bugged was "unhealthy." "Any diplomat, Russian or not, works to better understand the policy of a country he's posted to, figure out what the new administration's course is and understand where cooperation is possible," Kislyak said. (AP)

ASEAN Communique Stalls Amid Disagreement on South China Sea Stance

MANILA - Southeast Asian foreign ministers failed to release a customary communique at the end of a high-level meeting on Saturday after what diplomats said was a lack of consensus about how to refer to disputes in the South China Sea. The South China Sea has long been the most thorny issue for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), with different opinions among its 10 members on how to address China's assertiveness and its building and heavy arming of its artificial islands in disputed waters. (AP)

\$1 Billion in N.Korea Exports would be Banned by UN

UNITED NATIONS - A proposed new U.N. sanctions resolution would significantly increase economic pressure on North Korea to return to negotiations on its nuclear and missile programs by banning mineral and seafood exports worth over \$1 billion - a third of its total exports last year, a Security Council diplomat said Friday. The draft resolution, obtained by The Associated Press, would also ban countries from giving any additional permits to North Korean laborers - another source of money for Kim



Jong Un's regime. And it would prohibit all new joint ventures with North Korean companies, and ban new foreign investment in existing joint ventures. Egypt, which holds the Security Council presidency, said a vote on the

draft resolution has been scheduled at 3 p.m. EDT on Saturday. The proposed new sanctions follow North Korea's first successful tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States on July 3 and July 27. (AP)

DPRK Warns U.S. against further Military Pressure over Nuclear Program

PYONGYANG - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Saturday warned the United States against further military and economic pressure over its nuclear program, after Pyongyang successfully test fired its second intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). The official Korean Central News Agency said the United States has thrown "a hysteric fit" after being "taken aback by the DPRK's continued demonstration of nuclear attack capabilities." The United States has

been making repeated military threats against Pyongyang after it launched its second ICBM on July 28, by sending B-1B strategic bombers to the Korean Peninsula and holding joint missile drills with South Korea, said the news agency in a commentary. "The more desperately the U.S. works to realize its ambition for 'nuclear dismantlement of the north' through 'maximum pressure and engagement,' the more dynamically the DPRK has stepped up diversifying and modernizing its nuclear force," it said. (Xinhua)

Irish PM: Unique Solutions Needed for Brexit Border Dilemma

LONDON - Brexit is the challenge of a generation, and "unique solutions" will be needed to prevent it doing major damage, Ireland's prime minister said Friday.

Leo Varadkar said a so-called "hard Brexit," in which Britain leaves the EU single market and customs union, would mean "barriers to commerce and trade" between EU member Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the U.K. Britain voted last year to quit the 28-nation bloc and is due to formally leave the EU in March 2019. The decision has huge implications for Ireland, the only EU country to share a land border with the U.K. At present the border is all but invisible, with goods and people moving freely back and forth.

Speaking in Belfast, Varadkar said there will have to be "unique solutions if we are to preserve all that we've gained" since the Northern Ireland peace process was cemented two decades ago and border barriers were dismantled. The 38-year-old politician, who became Ireland's youngest-ever leader in June, said he did not want to see a return to a hard border. He said the onus was on supporters of Brexit "to come up with proposals for such a border" and persuade people it was a good idea. "They've already had 14 months to do so," he said. "If they cannot - and I believe they cannot - we can then talk meaningfully about solutions that might work for all of us. (AP)

Nieghbor News

Chinese, British Foreign Policy Chiefs Discuss Korean Peninsula Issue by Phone

BEIJING - Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held a phone conversation as requested Friday with British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and they exchanged views on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue.

Johnson highly praised the positive role China has played in the issue, but at the same time, he expressed great concern about the continuous escalation of the situation, hoping to find an effective solution through negotiation as soon as possible.

Wang expounded on China's principles and position, and stressed that China has made enormous efforts in safe-

guarding the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and will comprehensively and strictly implement the UN Security Council's resolutions regarding the Korean Peninsula.

The Chinese foreign minister urged each relevant party to undertake their due responsibility. The "suspension for suspension" initiative proposed by China is conducive to de-escalation of the situation and is helpful for seeking a breakthrough in the resumption of talks, Wang said, hoping that each party could seriously consider it and respond positively. (Xinhua)

Nawaz Sharif to be Accorded Warm Welcome in Lahore

LAHORE - Federal Minister Pervaiz Malik, provincial ministers Rana Mashhood and Zaem Qadri have said that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif will be accorded a historical reception upon his arrival in Lahore. They were addressing a press conference at Lahore Press Club on Saturday.

Pervaiz Malik, who is also PML-N Lahore president, said that the Panama case verdict was a very strange decision. He said that civil society, legal experts and the PML-N expressed their reservations on the decision. He said we have the right to go for review of the decision.

Pervaiz Malik said that people of Lahore would set a new record of public

gathering upon arrival of Nawaz Sharif in the city.

He said that Nawaz Sharif left no stone unturned to serve the people of Pakistan. He served the nation and worked for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and launched the war against terrorism.

He said: "I urged people to ensure joining the event in maximum numbers." Zaem Qadri said that the PML-N had implemented the Panama decision. "We have left this verdict to the history to judge its credibility," he said. He said Nawaz Sharif lives in the hearts of people.

"He is a leader of the nation and we will render him an honour for his services," he added. (APP)

Iran's Rouhani Sworn in as Tensions Simmer over Nuclear Deal

TEHRAN - Iran's President Hassan Rouhani warned the US against tearing up the nuclear deal as he was inaugurated for a second term Saturday, but he also faces challenges closer to home amid accusations he is rolling over to conservatives.

Rouhani met with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini before the ceremony and called for greater efforts to safeguard the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers in the face of new US sanctions. "Iran will not be the first to violate the nuclear deal... but nor will it stay silent when the United States fails to respect its commitments," he told

the packed parliament hall.

"Iran has proved that it will respond to respect with respect, and to sanctions and threats with an appropriate response and with resistance," he added.

Some of Iran's older friends, including Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, also attended the ceremony which came two days after Rouhani was officially sworn in by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The emir of Qatar, which has fallen out with its Gulf allies in part over ties to Iran, was notably absent, despite attending Rouhani's last inauguration in 2013. (AFP)

Turkmenistan Building TAPI Pipeline in Line with Schedule

ASHGABAT - Construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline is going on in line with the schedule, the local Turkmenistan TV channel reported Aug. 5.

During a government meeting, Turkmenistan's Deputy Prime Minister Maksat Babayev gave information about the project's implementation. TAPI will make it possible to deliver gas from Turkmenistan, which ranks fourth in the world for its gas reserves, to large and promising markets of South and Southeast Asia. The pipeline will run from Galkynysh - the largest gas field in Turkmenistan - through

the Afghan cities of Herat and Kandahar, and finally reach the Fazilka settlement located near the India-Pakistan border.

Annual capacity of the gas pipeline will be 33 billion cubic meters. Total length of the TAPI will be 1,814 kilometers. The project's preliminary cost is estimated at \$10 billion. The Turkmen government said earlier that the state concern Turkmengas would be the main investor for the TAPI project. Turkmenistan started constructing its TAPI section in December 2015 and the construction is expected to take three years. Time frame of the Afghan and Pakistani sections' construction has not been determined yet. (Trend)