

# Tillerson Says U.S., Russia Can Settle Problems, Ease Tension

MANILA - U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on Monday he believes Washington and Russia can find a way to ease tensions, saying it wouldn't be useful to cut ties over the single issue of suspected Russian meddling in the U.S. election.

Tillerson said Russia had also expressed some willingness to resume talks about the crisis in Ukraine, where a 2015 ceasefire between Kiev's forces and Russian-backed separatists in the eastern part of the country is regularly violated.

"We should find places we can work together... In places we have differences we're going to have to continue to find ways to address those," Tillerson told



reporters. Tillerson met his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, on the sidelines of an international gathering in Manila on Sunday, where he also asked about Moscow's retaliation against new U.S. sanctions.

Tillerson said he told Lavrov the United States would respond to the Kremlin's order for it to cut about 60 percent of its diplomatic staff in Russia by September 1. "We have not made a decision on how we will respond to Russia's request to remove U.S. diplomatic personnel. I asked several clarifying questions...I told him we would respond by September first," Tillerson said. (Reuters)

## Russia Calls for Avoiding Use of Force on Korean Peninsula

MOSCOW - The Russian Foreign Ministry on Monday called upon all parties involved to avoid using force on the Korean Peninsula issue and resort to diplomatic means in search of a possible solution. "(Russian Foreign Minister) Lavrov called on all parties involved to show the utmost restraint in order to avoid implementation of negative power scenarios on the Korean Peninsula and immediately begin searching a political and diplomatic settlement through a comprehensive solution of the peninsula's problems, including its de-

nuclearization," Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Lavrov held a meeting with Ri Yong Ho, his counterpart of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), on the sidelines of the ministerial meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum on Security held in the Philippine capital Manila on Monday. On Saturday, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted new sanctions on the DPRK over its two test launches of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). (Xinhua)

## Britain Denies Agreeing to Pay Multi-Billion EU Exit Bill

LONDON - The British government denied Monday that it has agreed on the amount of its European Union exit bill, after a report emerged that it plans offer the bloc 36 billion pounds (\$47 billion). Britain's outstanding tab to settle commitments it made as an EU member is one of the biggest issues confronting the divorce talks. The EU says it won't discuss future trade relations with Britain until there is progress on the bill and other key issues. The EU has not put an official number on the size

of the bill, but estimates have ranged as high as 100 billion euros (\$118 billion). Britain voted in a referendum last year to quit the 28-nation bloc and is due to leave in March 2019. EU budget commissioner Guenther Oettinger told Germany's Bild newspaper in comments published Monday that Britain would remain bound by some previous commitments to long-term projects after Brexit and "will therefore have to transfer funds to Brussels at least until 2020."



The size of the bill is a hot political issue in Britain, with some anti-EU politicians insisting the country should pay nothing at all. The Sunday Telegraph reported that British officials have decided to offer 36 billion pounds, or 40 billion euros, in a bid to move talks on to the key issue of trade. (AP)

## Iraq Urges International Coordination to Free Remaining IS-Held Areas



BAGHDAD - Iraqi parliament on Sunday called for further coordination with the U.S.-led international coalition to regain control of the remaining regions still held by the Islamic State (IS) militants.

A statement by the Iraqi parliament said that Salim al-Jubouri, the parliament speaker, had made the remarks while meeting the U.S. ambassador to Iraq Douglas Silliman. "The liberation of the re-

maining areas requires more coordination between Iraq and the international coalition to end the rule of IS over the area, in order to start the reconstruction of the devastated cities and to bring back the displaced people to their homes as soon as possible," the statement quoted Jubouri as saying. The two officials also reviewed local and regional political and security issues, as well as coordination in counter-terrorism file and the war against the IS, according to the statement. For his part,

the U.S. ambassador expressed his country's support to Iraq in its fight against terrorism, stressing that the unity of Iraq confronting the IS group is an important step towards restoring stability and security in all areas of the country. The meeting came after Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi officially declared Mosul's liberation on July 10 from IS after nearly nine months of fierce fighting to dislodge the extremist militants from their last major stronghold in Iraq. (Xinhua)

## Syria Urges UN to Dissolve U.S.-Led Coalition over Crimes against Civilians

DAMASCUS - The Syrian Foreign Ministry on Sunday renewed calls on the UN to dissolve the U.S.-led anti-terror coalition over crimes against civilians in Syria, according to the state news agency SANA.

"The U.S. systematic massacres against Syrian civilians constitutes a flagrant violation of the International law," the ministry said, urging for "the immediate dismantling of the coalition that has been formed without the request of the Syrian government and outside the

framework of the UN." The ministry referred to several incidents where civilian casualties were caused by the airstrikes of the U.S.-led coalition, saying the U.S. has used white phosphorus in its attacks on civilians in the northern city of Raqqa. It also said the attacks destroyed houses and hospitals in Raqqa, the de facto capital of the Islamic State (IS) group. The ministry noted that the coalition's "crimes" were repeated in the provinces of Hasakah, Aleppo and Deir al-Zour. (Xinhua)

## Neighbor News

### ASEAN, China, S. Korea, Japan Vow to Deepen Cooperation

MANILA - Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Monday that ASEAN and its three dialogue partners - China, Japan and South Korea (10+3) - could deepen their cooperation against the backdrop of rising protectionism. Wang said in the group meeting that China is and will always be an active participant and promoter in the cooperation between the 10-member ASEAN and their three East Asian dialogue partners.

He said that this year marks the 20th anniversary of the start-up of the 10+3 mechanism and the practical cooperation in the group has made new progress since last year. The Chinese top diplomat suggested the 10+3 mechanism should act as the main channel in deepening practical cooperation, so as to push the group's cooperation to a higher level.

Wang, who is in Manila attending the East Asia

Summit foreign ministers' meeting and other related meetings, indicated that the 13 countries could deepen cooperation in six aspects. The first is to pay more attention to planning and guideline for the group's sustainable development, Wang said.

"We can draw from the successful experience of ASEAN and build a platform for East Asia cooperation, following the example of ASEAN Community Blueprint," he said. Wang pointed out that the second important thing is to promote the cooperation in ensuring food security and support exchanges and cooperation in agricultural sector. "Thirdly, we should strengthen cooperation in sustainable development, enhance cooperation in poverty reduction and small- and medium-sized enterprises, and narrow the gap between the poor and rich," Wang said. (Xinhua)

### National Security to be Ensured at all Cost: PM

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Monday said that national security would be ensured at all cost in consultation with all the stakeholders.

The Prime Minister stated this while talking to Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal, who called on him at the PM Office. The Minister briefed the Prime Minister on pro-

gress on National Action Plan (NAP) and said that it would be implemented with full vigor, and active liaison would be maintained with all the provinces during the implementation process.

The Interior Minister also briefed the Prime Minister on the implementation status of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). (APP)

### Iran Regards Pakistan Security as Extension of its Own: Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says security is currently the most important issue in the region, stressing that the Islamic Republic regards Pakistan's security as extension of its own.

In a meeting with Pakistan's Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani in Tehran on Monday, the Iranian president added that terrorism poses the main threat to the countries in the region.

"All regional countries must cooperate with each other to fight and eliminate terrorism," he said.

He added that Tehran and Islamabad had the potential to cooperate and hold consultation on the fight against terrorism and the development of regional security.

Rouhani emphasized that Iran and Pakistan were strategically important to one another and expressed the Islamic Republic's deter-

mination to expand relations with Islamabad in various sectors such as science and technology, culture and energy.

Iran, Pakistan share close stance on regional, global issues: Rabbani. The Pakistani Senate chairman, for his part, said relations between the two countries were based on religious, historical and cultural commonalities.

Rabbani, who had traveled to Iran to attend Rouhani's inauguration for a second term, added that Tehran and Islamabad enjoyed a common stance on regional and international issues.

He stressed the importance of bolstering cooperation in economic, security, parliamentary and energy fields as well as in the campaign against terrorism based on common interests.

Pakistan would spare no effort to promote relations with Tehran, the top senator pointed out. (Presstv)

### Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan Recognized Terrorist by RATS SCO

DUSHANBE - KabiriThe national news agency of Tajikistan Khovar said the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization included the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan in the list of terrorist and separatist organizations. The SCO consisting of 8 countries with the total territory of 3.4 million sq km and more than 3.3 billion people recognized the IRPT as terror-

ist, Khovar reports. The General Prosecutor's Office of Tajikistan opened a criminal case against the leader of the IRPT on September 18, 2015 for terrorism, organization of the criminal community, raising national, racial, parochial or religious hatred, armed coup and fraud. Muhiddin Kabiri, the IRPT leader, is internationally wanted since September 21, 2015. (AKI)

### US, Australia, Japan Want Coercive Acts at Sea to be Stopped

MANILA, Philippines - The U.S., Australian and Japanese foreign ministers called Monday for a halt to land reclamation and military actions in the South China Sea and compliance with an arbitration ruling that invalidated China's vast claims to the disputed waters. U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and Japan's new top diplomat, Taro Kono, also called on their Southeast Asian counterparts to rapidly negotiate a legally binding maritime code with China aimed at preventing an escalation of conflicts in one of the world's busiest waterways. In a joint statement, the three expressed serious concerns over the long-seething sea disputes and "voiced their strong opposition to coercive unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions." (AP)

### Qatar, Turkey Wrap up Joint Military Exercise

DOHA - Qatar, Turkey sealed the joint military exercise aimed at supporting counter-terrorism efforts, the official Qatar News Agency reported Monday. The "Iron Shield" exercise, which ended on Sunday, included training of leaders to assess and control the situation on the ground, as well as strengthening coordination between the two sides, said Hadi Rashid Al Shahwani, commander of the exercise, according to the report. The exercises, held under the patronage of Minister of State for Defence Affairs Khalid bin Mohamed al-Attiyah, are considered as part of a mutual agreement aimed at strengthening the defence capabilities of both countries. Turkey has been the foremost supporter of Qatar since the Saudi-led siege began on June 5. (Xinhua)

### Trump, Moon Agree Korean Peninsula Nuclear Issue Poses Growing Threat: White House

WASHINGTON - The White House said Sunday that U.S. President Donald Trump and his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in agreed that the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is a grave and growing direct threat.

The pair also "welcomed the new United Nations Security Council resolution that unanimously passed 15-0," said a statement by the White House, adding that they called for fully implementing all relevant resolutions.



The UN Security Council, in an exceptional session on Saturday, unanimously adopted a new resolution to impose new sanctions on the DPRK for ignoring previous resolutions and its recent intercontinental ballistic

missile (ICBM) tests. Resolution 2371 (2017), drafted by the United States, bans DPRK's exports of coal (DPRK's largest source of external revenue), iron, iron ore, lead, lead ore and seafood. (Xinhua)

### B&R Initiative Benefits Long-Term Development of ASEAN Nations: Economist

KUALA LUMPUR - The importance of the Belt and Road Initiative for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries is evident as infrastructure is a key to boost the competitiveness of the region, said an economist. "ASEAN developing countries need to invest heavily in infrastructure development in order to boost their competitiveness, so the Belt and Road Initiative helps to provide additional infrastructure financing to accelerate economic development," IHS Markit's Asia-Pacific Chief Economist Rajiv Biswas told Xinhua in an email interview.

Biswas believes it has many positive benefits for the long-term development of ASEAN countries, as the weak infrastructure is a key economic development hurdle for many ASEAN countries. A recent report by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development showed that ASEAN would need infrastructure investment of 60 billion to 146 billion U.S. dollars per annum up until 2025. China is providing assistance in rail infrastructure projects to many ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, the Philippines and Laos. (Xinhua)

### Moscow to cut Dependence on U.S. Payment Systems: RIA

MOSCOW - Russia will speed up work on reducing dependency on U.S. payment systems and the dollar as a settling currency, RIA news agency cited Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying on Monday.

It is a response to the new sanctions against Russia reluctantly signed into law last week by U.S. President Donald Trump. The sanctions targeted Russia's energy sector, with new limits on U.S. investment in Russian companies.

"We will of course intensify work related to import substitution, reduction of dependence on U.S. payment systems, on the dollar as a settling currency and so on. It is becoming a vital need," Ryabkov was quoted as saying. "(Otherwise) we will always sit on their hook, exactly what they need," he said, referring to the United States.

Russia has already introduced a new national payment system to cut reliance on Western systems, such as Visa and MasterCard. Those operators stopped providing services to clients of one Russian bank after Washington imposed sanctions over Moscow's role in the Ukraine crisis, including its annexation of Crimea from Kiev and support of pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. The Russian payment system is called Mir, which translates as "World" or "Peace". "Your card is free from external factors. Created in Russia," runs an advertisement for Mir cards. To date, more than 13.9 million Mir cards have been issued in Russia, according to the Russian National System of Payment Cards (NSPK), or about 10 percent of the country's population. (Reuters)