

India Says Committed to 'No First Use' of Nuclear Weapons for Now

NEW DELHI - India has stuck to its commitment of 'no first use' of nuclear weapons but future policy will depend on the situation, the defense minister said on Friday, which analysts said introduced a level of ambiguity in a core national security doctrine.

India declared itself a nuclear weapons power after conducting underground tests in 1998 and long-time rival Pakistan responded with its own tests shortly afterwards. Since then, nuclear experts say the rivals have been developing nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them.

In a visit to Pokhran in western India, the site of the nuclear tests, Defence Minister



Rajnath Singh paid tribute to late former prime minister and revered leader of the ruling Hindu nationalists, Atal Behari Vajpayee, for making India into a nuclear power.

"Pokhran is the area which witnessed Atal Ji's firm resolve to make India a nuclear power and yet remain firmly committed to the doctrine of 'No First Use'."

"India has strictly adhered to this doctrine. What happens in future depends on the circumstances."

At the time of the tests, India said it needed a deterrent against nuclear-armed China but it has also long been concerned about Pakistan's nuclear capabilities. (Reuters)

Neighbor News

Xi Sends Condolences to Tanzanian President over Oil Tanker Explosion

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday sent a message of condolences to his Tanzanian counterpart John Magufuli over an oil tanker explosion, which caused heavy casualties.

In his message, Xi said he was shocked to learn about the explosion in the country's

Morogoro region, which caused heavy casualties.

On behalf of the Chinese government and people, and also in his own name, Xi extended profound condolences to the victims, and conveyed heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved families and the injured. (Xinhua)

Pakistan, Malaysia Have Scope in Investment, Tourism Sectors: President

ISLAMABAD - President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday said Pakistan and Malaysia can explore the scope of their close and fraternal ties, particularly in the fields of investment and tourism.

culture, and cooperation.

The president said Pakistan attached high importance to its relations with Malaysia and urged upon the High Commissioner-designate to make efforts to further strengthen bilateral relations.

He emphasized that efforts should be made to enhance Pakistan's exports through special focus on value added products. (Monitoring Desk)

Talking to High Commissioner-designate to Malaysia Amna Baloch here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President said the relations between the two countries were based on solid foundation of a shared faith,

Israel, UAE Engaged in Secret Talks on Iran Arranged by US

TEHRAN - Israel and the United Arab Emirates have been recently engaged in secret talks, arranged by the US, to share their information and coordinate their efforts against Iran, a report by the Wall Street Journal says.

The report quotes people familiar with the discussions as saying that Hook has worked to bring anti-Iran elements together for secret meetings.

"Hook wants help from Israel and the Emirates in getting other countries in Europe and the Middle East to take a tough stance regarding Tehran," a former US official said.

Quoting US officials familiar with the secret talks, the WSJ says the meetings were arranged by US special representative for Iran, Brian Hook.

The first meeting was held this spring, and the second took place more recently, the report quoted a US official as saying.

"The discussions among US, Israeli and Emirati officials, although still in the preliminary stages, appear to indicate those contacts have gone beyond being symbolic and exploratory to mapping coordination on specific issues," US officials told the WSJ.

According to the report, the secret talks "were intended to increase diplomatic, military and intelligence cooperation in dealing with Iran."

Turkmenistan Establishing Business Ties with Astrakhan Region

ASHGABAT - A meeting of the Turkmen-Astrakhan Council on Entrepreneurship was held in Turkmenbashi city, Trend reports on Aug. 12 referring to a source involved in the talks.

to increase export of building materials to Astrakhan, in particular, cement, petrochemical products, agricultural products and light industry products.

Moreover, Turkmenistan is interested in expanding ferry services in the Caspian Sea. According to the experts, a direct railway-ferry service between the Russian Olya port near Astrakhan and Makhachkala port and Turkmenbashi port could ensure an increase in cargo flows from Turkmenistan to Russia, Georgia, Ukraine and Belarus.

The parties are discussing the launch of flights among Astrakhan, Turkmenbashi and Ashgabat.

Earlier, the interest was expressed in opening a wholesale and logistics center in the Astrakhan region to promote the Turkmen goods in the Russian market. (Trend)

This structure was established upon the decision of the Turkmen-Russian intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation. The corresponding documents are planned to be signed with the Turkmen side.

Earlier this week, Clinton urged the world to "stand in solidarity" with the Hong Kong protesters as they "speak out for democracy."

Beijing has repeatedly accused Washington of playing an active role in demonstrations that have rocked Hong Kong since March. On Thursday, China's Foreign Ministry office in Hong Kong accused the US of "conspiring with radical criminal elements and are insanely involved in anti-Chinese criminal cases" in the semi-autonomous territory. (RT)

Indonesia President Proposes to Move Capital to Borneo

JAKARTA - Indonesia's president on Friday proposed to move the capital from Jakarta, a crowded, polluted city of 10 million people, to the island of Borneo, though he left Indonesians guessing as to the exact location.

President Joko Widodo suggested a new capital in Kalimantan, on the Indonesian side of the island shared with Malaysia and Brunei, in a speech to parliament, a day before the country's independence day holiday.

"I hereby request your permission to move our

national capital to Kalimantan," said Widodo, who will be sworn in for a second term in October after winning an election in April.

"A capital city is not just a symbol of national identity, but also a representation of the progress of the nation. This is for the realization of economic equality and justice," he added.

He did not give the exact site of the new city in a region known for rain forests, coal mines, orangutans and home to just over 16 million people. (Reuters)

Issues on Strengthening Strategic Cooperation with EU Discussed in Kazakhstan

NUR-SULTAN - President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and EU Special Representative for Central Asia Peter Burian have discussed a wide range of issues on strengthening strategic cooperation between Kazakhstan and EU within the framework of Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and in the light of the new EU Strategy on Central Asia, Trend reports with reference to the press office of the president.

The discussion took

place during the bilateral meeting in Kazakhstan.

"Kazakhstan considers important the development of comprehensive and multidimensional cooperation with European Union, which is the main foreign economic and investments partner of our country," Tokayev said.

Tokayev also expressed confidence that frank and trusted dialogue with the new leadership of EU will support further activation of the political and economic



cooperation of the parties.

"The EU is very supportive of Kazakhstan's reforms and modernization processes and

appreciates its commitment to regional cooperation and international engagement, including with Syria, Iran and Afghanistan. (Trend)

Putin-Macron Held Talks before Russian Bank's French Executive Released from Custody



MOSCOW - A Russian court's decision to release Baring Vostok executive Philippe Del-

pai from custody and put him under house arrest followed talks between Russian presi-

dent Vladimir Putin and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron, the Kremlin said

on Friday.

Delpal, a French national, was ordered to be released from custody and placed under house arrest by a Moscow court on Thursday.

Delpal was one of several executives at private equity group Baring Vostok, including U.S. citizen Michael Calvey, who were detained in February on suspicion of embezzlement.

Putin will visit France later this month. (Reuters)

Amid Crises, Frayed U.S. Ties Give China's Xi Political Cover at Home

BEIJING - To the outside world, China's ruling Communist Party - faced with an expanding trade war crimping an already slowing economy and spiraling protests in Hong Kong - is confronting some of its strongest political and economic headwinds in decades.

But at home, where China's elite leaders prepare for the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic this October, there are few indications that President Xi Jinping is

politically embattled.

Many in Beijing believe U.S. President Donald Trump's approach to the trade war, and the Chinese government's effort to use Washington as a scapegoat for the Hong Kong unrest, provides Xi with convenient and effective short-term political cover.

This time last year, as Xi and other top officials held secretive talks at the seaside resort of Beidaihe, there was an unusual surge of ... (More on P4)... (16)

PM Hariri: Saudi, UAE Want to Invest in Lebanon

BEIRUT - Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are looking to invest in infrastructure projects in Lebanon after ties have recovered, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri said in comments from his office on Friday.

Hariri, on a visit to Washington, also said there were negotiations "over financial and economic aid" with the United States, the Lebanese military's biggest foreign backer. He did not elaborate.

After years of backsliding, heavily indebted Lebanon faces financial crisis without reforms to put public spending on a sustainable footing.

Launching long-stalled reforms would help Lebanon unlock more than \$11 billion pledged at the "Cedre" donor conference in ... (More on P4)... (17)

Pyongyang Fires 2 Missiles Towards Sea of Japan, Seoul Says

PYONGYANG - North Korea has reportedly launched two projectiles into sea off its eastern coast, Yonhap reported, citing South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff. This follows a series of short-range missile tests by Pyongyang in recent weeks.

The missiles were reportedly fired from a launch site in Kangwon Province on Friday morning local time.

The missiles flew for around 230 kilometers at an altitude of around 30 kilometers before falling into the sea, the JSC said.

"Our military is monitoring the situation in case of additional launches while maintaining a readiness posture," the South Korean military said, without providing any details as to the makeup or type of the two projectiles. (RT)

Poland May Join U.S.-Led Mission in Strait of Hormuz

WARSAW - Poland is considering supporting a U.S.-led mission to protect the Strait of Hormuz, but has not made a formal decision yet.

"From our point of view actions to stabilize this region would be justified," a spokeswoman at Poland's foreign ministry told Reuters in a statement.

"We have to wait to work out whether, and if so, in what form Poland could join such an initiative," she added.

It's unclear when Poland, which has sought to strengthen ties with the U.S. since the Law and Justice (PiS) party



came to power in 2015, will make a decision on the matter.

Poland's Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz first made the comments to German news agency dpa on Friday.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has re-

iterated that Germany will not take part in a U.S.-led naval mission in the Strait of Hormuz and would instead prefer to form a European mission.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on ... (More on P4)... (15)

Lawyer Says India Promises to Ease Kashmir Lockdown in Days

NEW DELHI - India's government assured the Supreme Court on Friday that the situation in disputed Kashmir is being reviewed daily and unprecedented security restrictions will be removed over the next few days, an attorney said after the court heard challenges to India's moves.

A senior Indian official in Kashmir, B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, confirmed there would be loosening, telling reporters in Srinagar city that landline phone services would be restored gradually beginning Friday

night and schools reopened from Monday.

He didn't announce any immediate restoration of mobile phone service, which he said could be misused by terrorist groups.

A heavy troop presence and restrictions including a near-constant curfew and a news blackout remained in place for a 12th day. The government imposed the lockdown to avoid a violent reaction to its decision on Aug. 5 to downgrade Muslim-majority Kashmir's autonomy. (AP)

What Happened When She 'Supported' Libya? Chinese Media Roasts Hillary Clinton Over Hong Kong

BEIJING - A newspaper operated by China's Communist Party pulled no punches on Hillary Clinton's support for Hong Kong protesters, noting her role in past foreign policy debacles ranging from the Iraq War to US intervention in Libya.

"@HillaryClinton has called for support of the rioters in Hong Kong. Let's see what happened when she 'supported' Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq," the People's Daily tweeted.

The accompanying video shows clips of Hillary Clinton throughout her tumultuous political career, advocating for wars and foreign policy positions that have led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people across the Middle East and North Africa.

The video ends with a photograph of a US Consulate official meeting with Hong Kong activists, and video footage showing demonstrators waving American flags. Washington is now attempting to "intervene" in Hong Kong, the video claims.

Earlier this week, Clinton urged the world to "stand in solidarity" with the Hong Kong protesters as they "speak out for democracy."

Beijing has repeatedly accused Washington of playing an active role in demonstrations that have rocked Hong Kong since March. On Thursday, China's Foreign Ministry office in Hong Kong accused the US of "conspiring with radical criminal elements and are insanely involved in anti-Chinese criminal cases" in the semi-autonomous territory. (RT)