

McMaster Says Potential for War with DPRK "Increasing"

WASHINGTON - U.S. White House National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster said on Saturday that the potential for war with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is "increasing every day" after Pyongyang's latest missile launch.

"I think it's increasing every day, which means that we are in a race, really, we are in a race to be able to solve this problem," said the senior security official addressing an audience at the Reagan National Defense Forum in California.

McMaster's remarks came days after a successful test-fire of a newly developed Intercontinental Ballistic Missile



(ICBM) by the DPRK, which has drawn strong condemnation from countries and international organizations.

The DPRK represents "the greatest immediate threat to the United States," said McMaster, adding that U.S. President Donald Trump remains committed to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The national security adviser also noted that there are non-military ways to deal with the issue. The latest launch by the DPRK came a week after the United States redesignated the DPRK as a "state sponsor of terrorism" and slapped a new round of sanctions against the Asian country. (Xinhua)

Nieghbor News

CPC will Deepen Friendly Cooperation with World Political Parties

BEIJING - The Communist Party of China (CPC) will consolidate and deepen friendly cooperation with political parties worldwide, Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi said Sunday.

Addressing the closing ceremony of the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting in Beijing, Yang, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, called on the CPC and political parties worldwide to contribute to building a community of a shared future for mankind and a better world.

Referring to the keynote speech made by Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, at the opening ceremony on Friday, Yang said it expressed the CPC's determination to work with political parties worldwide to promote global development, share global prosperity and guide the world's future. The international community spoke highly of the keynote speech and the contribution made by the CPC, he said.

Yang pointed out that it is a great cause to work together to build a community of a shared future for mankind and a better world. (Xinhua)

N. Korea Blasts 'Dangerous' US-South Joint Military Drill

SEOUL - North Korea Sunday blasted the United States and South Korea as "warmongers" on the eve of their largest-ever joint air exercise, saying it could trigger a nuclear war.

The comments came as White House National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster warned of the "increasing" possibility of war with the impoverished but nuclear-armed North.

The five-day Vigilant Ace drill - involving some 230 aircraft including F-22 Raptor stealth jet fighters - begins Monday, five days after the North test-fired an inter-

continental ballistic missile believed capable of hitting the US mainland in a fresh challenge to President Donald Trump. "The US and South Korean puppet warmongers would be well advised to bear in mind that their DPRK-targeted military drill will be as foolish as an act precipitating their self-destruction," it said.

The commentary was published a day after Pyongyang's foreign ministry accused the Trump administration of "begging for nuclear war" by staging what it called the reckless air drills. (AFP)

BRUSSELS - The European Commission added to mounting confidence in Brussels that it is set for a Brexit deal with London when it scheduled talks with EU lawmakers ahead of a crunch meeting on Monday with Theresa May.

However, EU officials and diplomats cautioned on Sunday that it was still unclear that a deal would be struck with the British prime minister when she meets the EU executive. Two hours before they sit down for lunch with May in Brussels, Commis-

sion President Jean-Claude Juncker and his Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier will brief Guy Verhofstadt and his European Parliament Brexit team, an official said.

Verhofstadt and his colleagues wrote to the EU negotiators last week [B5N1IL019] to sound an alarm at what they said were "stalled" talks on EU demands that the rights of EU citizens in Britain be guaranteed directly by the European Court of Justice after Brit-

As Brexit Deal Takes Shape, Juncker to Meet MEPs



ain leaves the European Union. They also voiced concern about Northern Ireland. Parliament must ratify any treaty on Britain's withdrawal from the European Union before Brexit in March 2019 in order to create the smooth transition period May wants, and so it will be vital to both sides to keep the legislators on board. (Reuters)

'Only Cooperation will Get Cooperation': Pakistan to Tell US

ISLAMABAD - The civilian-military leadership will adopt a stance of "only cooperation will get cooperation" during the visit of US Defence Secretary James Mattis to Islamabad on Monday.

A leading English daily reported that Islamabad has devised a policy in which the country's response will depend on Washington's actions.

According to the policy, if US adopts parity, Pakistan will also cooperate in a balanced way, but if it continues its policy of demanding "do-more", then Islamabad will reply "no-do-more and no cooperation". As per the coordinated strategy devised by the authorities, no pressure and demand to do-more without any proof or information will be accepted. Pakistan will clarify that there are no militant safe havens or terrorist network on its soil as security institutions have purged the land of terrorists which with their operations will continue till the last terrorist exists.

The government will also make it clear to Mattis that the US should not expect unilateral cooperation from Pakistan. It will not allow any other country to use its soil for operations. If the US provides intelligence-based information about any possible presence of Haqqani group or any terrorist organisation on its soil, Pakistan will review the information and take coordinated operation against them. (Agencies)

Pope Prays that Honduras Peacefully Solves Political Crisis



VATICAN CITY - Pope Francis says he is praying that Honduras can peacefully overcome a violent political crisis.

Deadly protests have erupted in the Central American nation over a delayed vote count in a disputed presidential election. Francis told people in St. Peter's Square on Sunday he was remembering Hondurans in his prayers in a special way so they

"can in a peaceful manner overcome the current difficult moment."

The main opposition candidate on Saturday called for the vote to be held again, after clashes between protesters and troops, and the government imposed a dawn-to-dusk curfew.

Both incumbent President Juan Orlando Hernandez and rival, TV personality Salvador Nasralla, have claimed victory in the Nov. 26 election. At least one person has died in clashes. (AP)

Pentagon Evaluating U.S. West Coast Missile Defense Sites: Officials

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. - The U.S. agency tasked with protecting the country from missile attacks is scouting the West Coast for places to deploy new anti-missile defenses, two Congressmen said on Saturday, as North Korea's missile tests raise concerns about how the United States would defend itself from an attack.

West Coast defenses would likely include Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missiles, similar to those deployed in South Korea to protect against a potential North Korean attack.

The accelerated pace of North Korea's ballistic missile testing program in 2017 and the likelihood the North Korean military could hit the U.S. mainland with a nuclear payload in the next few years has raised the pressure on the United States government to build-up missile defenses.

The funding for the system does not appear in the 2018 defense budget plan indicating potential deployment is further off. (Reuters)

Rouhani Calls for Middle East 'Dialogue'

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Sunday that Middle Eastern countries should solve their problems together without relying on external powers.

"We believe that if there is a problem in the region, it can be solved through dialogue," Rouhani said in a speech at the opening of a port in the southeastern city of Chabahar, broadcast by state television.

"We do not need arms nor the intervention of foreign powers. We can solve our problems ourselves through unity and dialogue." Rouhani's comments follow an escalation in the bitter rivalry between Shiite-ruled Iran and Saudi Arabia's Sunni monarchy.

The two powers back opposing groups throughout the region - notably in Syria and Yemen - and Saudi leaders have lately stepped up efforts to counter Iran's growing influence, raising fears of further conflict.

But Rouhani said recent victories against the Islamic State group opened the way for the Middle East to move past its reputation for "war and conflict between Shiite and Sunni... and the presence and interventions of foreign powers". Saudi Arabia and Iran's critics in the West have accused Tehran of seeking to dominate the region at the expense of its neighbours. (AFP)

Top DPRK Leader Inspects Factory Producing Missile Launch Vehicles' Tires

PYONGYANG - Kim Jong Un, top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), has lately inspected a factory tasked with making tires for missile launch vehicles, official media said Sunday.

Kim gave field guidance to the Amnok-gang Tire Factory in Pyongyang, "which successfully carried out the task for producing tires prioritized by the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK)," said the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in a report.

The products inspected by Kim included "newly developed large-size tires ready for the ballistic rocket self-propelled launching vehicle," added the KCNA report.

Kim thanked workers at the factory for solving "the issue desired by the Party" and "making collective innovations in a drive for building new tires," reported the KCNA.

The report did not specify the date of the event, but usually official media report news events about the top leader one day after it takes place.

Last week, Kim personally guided the test firing of "Hwasong 15," a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile that is capable of hitting the entire territory of the United States, according to the KCNA.

The move, which violated relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions, caused worldwide concerns and prompted calls for more sanctions on the Northeast Asian country. (Xinhua)

Unclear if EU, UK can Agree Wording on Border Issue by Monday: Ireland

DUBLIN - It is not yet clear if Britain and the European Union will be able to agree on written assurances to avoid a hard Northern Ireland border in time for a Monday deadline, Ireland's foreign minister Simon Coveney said on Sunday.

But he said he was hopeful a meeting between British Prime Minister Theresa May and European Council President Donald Tusk on Monday would create momentum toward a deal in time for a Dec. 14-15 EU summit to allow Britain to move on to talks on its future trading



relations with the bloc.

"The hope is that those [Monday] meetings will result in a momentum that can be carried in to the leaders' summit the week after ... and can allow this Brexit negotiation process to open up to phase two of discussions," Coveney told RTE radio.

Asked if he expected an agreed text of written British assurances on the issue by Monday morning, Coveney said: "Let's not run before we can walk here. Obviously, we would like that to be the case." (Reuters)

UK Anti-Poverty Adviser Quits, Says Brexit Impeding Progress

LONDON - The board of a commission set up to help improve the chances of Britain's poor has resigned, its chief said Sunday, accusing the government of being too preoccupied by Brexit to work for a fairer society.

The news is a blow to Prime Minister Theresa May, who has promised to make tackling social injustice a priority for her Conservative government.

On her first day in office in July 2016, May vowed to "do everything we can to help anybody, whatever your background, to go as far as your talents will take you." But since then much of the government's time and energy has been spent on divorce negotiations with the European Union and preparing for Brexit in March 2019.

Former Labour government minister Alan Milburn and three fellow commissioners have all resigned from the Social Mobility Commission. They include Gillian Shephard, a former Conservative government minister.

In a resignation letter, Milburn said that the focus on Brexit means the government "does not have the necessary bandwidth to ensure the rhetoric of healing social division is matched with the reality." "There's only so much you can do to push water up a hill," Milburn told Sky News on Sunday.

In a report released last week, the commission said that stagnating real wages and a growing gap between the prosperous London region and the rest of the country were a recipe for anger and "a breeding ground for populism." (AP)

European Parliament Not Moving from Strasbourg: France

PARIS - France won't let the official base of the European Union's parliament be moved from Strasbourg to Brussels, the country's European affairs minister Nathalie Loiseau said on Sunday.

"Strasbourg must remain the seat of European democracy. It's also the symbol of Franco-German reconciliation," she said on France 3 television.

"It is often said that Europe comes down to the Brussels bubble. Europe needs to be closer to its regions," she added.

Members of the European Parliament

(MEPs) convene in Strasbourg for one week every month and in Brussels for the remainder. The monthly upheaval costs the bloc 114 million euros (\$124 million) a year, EU auditors say. Critics have long called for the arrangement to be scrapped, but it has stayed in place largely because France would have vetoed any attempt to make the required amendment to the EU treaty. Some lawmakers had hoped the election victory of pro-EU President Emmanuel Macron could help plans to close the base in the French city. (Reuters)

Turkmenistan Gets Ready for Moscow Meeting on Caspian Sea Legal Status

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov will attend a meeting of foreign ministers of the Caspian littoral states in Moscow on Dec. 4-5, the Turkmen Dovlat Habarlary state news agency reported Sunday.

The report on preparations for this meeting was presented at the session of the Government of Turkmenistan.

Meredov informed that the meeting will cover issues related to the agenda of the 5th Summit of the Heads of Caspian Littoral States that is scheduled for 2018 in Kazakhstan.

In this regard, the foreign ministers of the Caspian states will pay a particular attention to the draft Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea. They will also continue discussions and consultations on draft pentilateral agreements dealing with various areas of cooperation in the Caspian Sea, including Agreements on Cooperation in Trade, Economics and Transport.

The Caspian littoral states - Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan and Iran - signed the Framework Convention for Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea in November of 2003. (Trend)