

EU, U.S. Ink Military Deal to Bolster Logistical Support

BRUSSELS - The European Union (EU) and the United States on Tuesday inked a military deal to enhance cooperation on logistical assistance. EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry signed the EU-U.S. Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) in Brussels. "The signing of the ACSA marks a major milestone in EU-U.S. military cooperation in enabling crisis response and promoting security around the world," the European Union External Action



Service(EEAS) said in a press release. "The agreement fulfills a 2014 EU-U.S. Summit pledge to enhance practical EU-U.S. security and crisis response management cooperation," the EEAS added. The ACSA will facilitate reciprocal provision of reimbursable logistic support, supplies, and services between the EU and the U.S. during military deployments and operations, the EEAS explained. "The ACSA will also help to reinforce the strategic ... (More on P4)...(23)

UNHCR Calls for Far-Reaching Reform of European Asylum System

UNITED NATIONS - The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has presented a paper to the European Union (EU), calling for far-reaching reform of Europe's global refugee policies, including its asylum system, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said here Monday. "UNHCR says more strategic and targeted support needs to be provided to countries of origin and that Europe needs to invest more in the integration of arriving refugees, including housing, employment and language training," Dujarric said at a daily news briefing here. The paper, titled "Better Protecting Refugees in the EU and Globally,"

also called on European countries to review contingency preparations to respond to large refugee and migrant arrivals and to put in place a more efficient and better-managed asylum system. In the paper, UNHCR also urged Europe to improve support, preparations, and response aspects of its engagement with the refugees. The UN high commissioner for refugees, Filippo Grandi, stressed in a speech to the European Policy Centre in Brussels that last year Europe failed to implement a collective response to help over a million refugees and migrants. In ... (More on P4)...(24)

UNSC Fails to Adopt Resolution on Aleppo Truce

UNITED NATIONS - The UN Security Council on Monday failed to adopt a resolution on humanitarian situation in Syria's northern city of Aleppo as Russia and China vetoed it. Before the vote, Russian Ambassador to the UN Vitaly Churkin said that putting the draft resolution into vote violates the Security Council's work-

ing procedure since the document can only be put into vote on Tuesday morning under the council's rule. Churkin said the council needs more time to take into account new circumstances in Syria and to reach consensus on a resolution that can contribute to improving humanitarian in Syria, particularly in Aleppo. (Xinhua)

U.S. Asia-Pacific Strategy Should not Jeopardize Regional Peace, Stability

BEIJING - The U.S. strategy on the Asia-Pacific under whichever administration should not be contemplated to the detriment of the interests of other countries, and any miscalculation thereof could lead to regional instability. U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter, who is scheduled to step down in January, started Monday a tour in Asia that takes him to Japan and India. The tour, which seems to reassure America's Asia allies amid anxieties

caused by Donald Trump's election, also brings a big question mark over the Trump administration's future policies on the Asia-Pacific. During U.S. President Barack Obama's nearly-eight-year tenure, Washington has shifted its foreign policy focus from the Mideast war quagmire to the Asia-Pacific, which many believe is aimed at containing a rising China. Tensions on the Korean



Peninsula have escalated after the United States decided to deploy an anti-ballistic missile system in South Korea. The South China Sea issue emerged as a hot topic after the United States hyped the concept of ... (More on P4)...(25)

French President Appoints New PM

PARIS - French President Francois Hollande on Tuesday appointed incumbent Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve the new prime minister to replace Manuel Valls, as the latter has decided to quit the job, according to the Elysee. Hollande has picked Cazeneuve to succeed Valls as the prime minister until the end of the Socialist Party's five year term next May, the Elysee said in a statement. The newly-named prime minister is charged with forming a cabinet which will be unveiled later on Tuesday, it added.

Hollande has also accepted the resignation of Valls who launched a bid to seek for the Left nomination to book a ticket for presidential race, it added. In a cabinet reshuffle in 2014, Cazeneuve, then a deputy minister in charge of budget, was nominated interior minister to replace Valls who was named chief of the Socialist government. "Cazeneuve has the ex-



perience of the State. He knows very well the issues of security and the fight against terrorism, which is one of the government's priorities," a source close to the presidential office was quoted as saying by the local broadcaster Europe 1. (Xinhua)

Terrorists Refusing to Leave Aleppo to be Destroyed: Russian FM

MOSCOW - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday that terrorists refusing to leave the contested Syrian city of Aleppo will be eliminated. "If someone refuses to leave on good terms, he will be eliminated as I understand. There is no other way out," Lavrov said at a press conference. The United States "unexpectedly" notified Russia that a previously scheduled meeting in Geneva to decide the route and timetable of the militants' withdrawal from eastern Aleppo could not begin on Wednesday, and Washington is preparing for a new one. This looks like an attempt



"to buy time with the aim of allowing militants to take a breath and replenish supplies," Lavrov said. He said Russia would help the ... (More on P4)...(26)

Syria Says it Rejects Aleppo Ceasefire if Rebels Remain: State Media

BEIRUT - Syria rejects any ceasefire negotiated by any party in rebel-held eastern Aleppo unless what it describes as terrorist groups there depart, its Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday in a statement carried by state media. Moscow said on Monday that Russian and U.S. officials would meet this week to discuss a possible rebel withdrawal from Aleppo. A U.S. official told Reuters that Washington would embrace that as a step to save lives. The Syrian government describes all the rebel groups fighting to bring down President Bashar al-Assad as terrorists. The insurgents include groups backed by the United States, Turkey and Gulf monarchies, as well as jihadist militants. Russia and China vetoed a United Nations Security Council ... (More on P4)...(27)

British PM Has Power to Trigger Brexit, Supreme Court Told

LONDON - British Prime Minister Theresa May's government has the power to start the process to take Britain out of the European Union, the Supreme Court in London was told Monday. In what was called the battle for Brexit, the highest court in Britain has been asked to decide whether May's government or politicians in Parliament has the power to start the process of leaving the EU. The British public voted to leave the EU in a referendum in June by a 52-48 margin, with the process of how the exit process should be triggered becoming a battleground between May and her team and the politicians in the Houses of Parliament. The decision has been left to the 11 Supreme Court judges after the High Court ruled against the government and said parliament had to be involved in the process. Attorney General Jeremy Wright, a law barrister as well as a Conservative MP, made the opening shots in what is one of the most important cases in British legal history. Wright, representing Theresa May and her government, said the case had a great constitutional significance, generating interest both inside and outside the courtroom. Wright said the June 23 referendum was conducted in the universal expectation, including in Parliament, that the government would implement its result. (Xinhua)

Merkel Launches Election Bid with Tough Line on Immigration

ESSEN, GERMANY - Chancellor Angela Merkel Tuesday lashed populists trying to exploit fears over Germany's refugee influx but set out a tough line on integration, including a ban on the veil, as she launched into election campaign mode. Outlining her strategy to counter a wave of populism that has consumed key allies abroad, Merkel vowed there would not be a repeat of last year's record refugee influx. She also stressed it was legitimate for Germany to expect newcomers to integrate, and this included rejection of the niqab full-face veil. "The full veil must be banned wherever it is legally possible," she told the annual gathering ... (More on P4)...(28)

US, NATO Stress 'Unity' Amid Trump Fears

BRUSSELS - Top US and NATO officials stressed the importance of preserving transatlantic security ties on Tuesday amid doubts raised by Donald Trump's election as president. Trump stoked concerns that Washington's near 70-year European defence guarantee might no longer hold when he said on the campaign trail he would think twice about helping NATO allies who did not pay their defence dues. US Secretary of State John Kerry, attending his final meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels, said that keeping unity was essential. Ministers would discuss "how we need to come together to



make sure that there's a stronger Europe, a stronger NATO, and the interests that we all share we are continuing to work on together. "And I think the unity is very very important." NATO head Jens Stoltenberg meanwhile said strengthening EU-NATO cooperation was the ... (More on P4)...(29)

Neighbor News

China, U.S. to Hold Third High-Level Dialogue on Fighting Cyber Crimes

BEIJING - China and the United States will hold their third high-level dialogue on cyber crimes and related matters this week in the United States. China's State Councilor and Minister of Public Security Guo Shengkun will leave for the U.S. to co-chair the dialogue this Tuesday, and remain there until Friday, accord-

ing to a press release from the foreign ministry. The first China-U.S. high-level dialogue on cyber crimes, co-chaired by Guo with U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch and Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, was held in Washington last December and the second was held in Beijing this June. (Xinhua)

Pakistan to Take Part in Amritsar Trade Expo

ISLAMABAD - A Pakistani delegation has confirmed its participation in the 11th edition of the Punjab International Trade Expo (PITEX) in Amritsar along with participants of other SAARC countries. "We have confirmation that 54 Pakistani traders will participate in the PITEX," said Progress Harmony Development (PHD) chamber Regional Director Dr Parveen Rathee who is organising the event. Pakistani participation in the annual PITEX has been a regular feature of the event for the last 10 years. This year, it will be held from December 8 to 12 amid a spike

in tension. "All SAARC countries will participate in PITEX. Pakistan will also participate with the other member countries," said Rathee, stating that there has been nothing so far to suggest that Pakistani traders would not take part this year. "The response from Pakistan traders was the same as it was in previous years," he added. An Indian trader said as India-Pakistan trade across the Attari-Wagah border has continued without interruption since the Uri attack, there was no reason why a trade delegation should not visit India. (Monitoring Desk)

Iran Committee to Decide on ISA Ratification: Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says a committee tasked with monitoring the implementation of a nuclear agreement with six world powers will on Wednesday decide on how to respond to the US Congress' recent extension of a piece of anti-Iran legislation. President Rouhani made the announcement during an address on the occasion of the Students' Day at the Tehran University on Tuesday.

The deal, dubbed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), involves a total of seven sides, namely Iran, the US, the UK, France, Germany, Russia, and China. It was reached in July 2015. The deal stipulates that nuclear-related sanctions against Iran be terminated and no such sanctions be imposed as long as Iran meets its side of the bargain, including certain limits to its nuclear program. Numerous ... (More on P4)...(30)

Attack on Reporting Reaches Urgent Pitch: Turkmenistan

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan's routine harassment of reporters is taking on harsher and increasingly systematic qualities as authorities seek to clamp down on news of the country's economic crisis from trickling out. In the latest example of such pressure, RFE/RL reported on December 6 that police in Turkmenistan arrested one of its contributors on suspicion of possessing dipping tobacco. RFE/RL said Khudayberdy Allashov was detained at his home in the Dashoguz Province on December 3. Armed po-

licemen also beat him and rounded up his mother and wife, the broadcaster said. Nasvai, a popular and mildly intoxicating form of tobacco, is deemed illegal in Turkmenistan but is consumed widely all the same. RFE/RL quoted Allashov's wife as saying her husband had confessed under duress to possessing 11 kilograms of the tobacco, a charge reportedly punishable by up to seven years in jail. "We believe these charges are part of a targeted campaign intended to silence our Turkmen Service... (More on P4)...(31)

China and Russia in Military Competition in Tajikistan

DUSHANBEH - In a major change in policy, China is becoming more militarily active in the Central Asian republic of Tajikistan. Tajikistan, which was one of the republics of the Soviet Union, is usually thought to be in Russia's exclusive sphere of influence. As we have reported in the past, China has been very economically aggressive in Tajikistan. It is thought that there are now 150,000 Chinese working in Tajikistan, and China has been buying up industries and huge amounts of farm-

land. In 2011, Tajikistan agreed to hand over around 1% of its territory to China in exchange for having some of its debts forgiven. Unexpectedly, China's military activity in Tajikistan has also expanded substantially. In September 2016, Beijing offered to build 11 new border checkpoints and a new military facility along the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border, according to The Diplomat. On October 20-24, a combined 10,000 military personnel from the National Army of ... (More on P4)...(32)