

# China Slams U.S. Double Standards on Terrorism

BEIJING - China on Wednesday rejected U.S. criticism against its draft law on terrorism and urged Washington to refrain from applying "double standards" in fighting terrorism. "We hope the United States will stop groundless accusations and respect China's law-making processes," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told a regular press briefing. He was responding to a question regarding a statement by the U.S. State Department



expressing concern over the draft. Increasing terrorist attacks have posed serious threats to China's national security and the life and property of its people, China's legislation on terrorism is completely necessary to prevent and crack down on terrorism, Hong said. He stressed that fighting terrorism itself is part of the efforts to protect human rights, and that the Chinese government attaches importance to striking a balance between

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## Neighbor News

### China to Accelerate Developing Nuclear Power: Official

BEIJING - China will further develop nuclear power to fulfill its target of increasing the proportion of non-fossil energy consumption to 20 percent of the total energy consumption by 2030, a climate official said Wednesday. The statement was made by Xie Zhenhua, China's special representative on climate change, during a press conference held by the State Council.

In coastal areas with suitable conditions, some nuclear power plants are already being built and technology is being upgraded. China is also selecting inland sites for nuclear power plants, but it still

requires further argumentation about the time and locations, according to Xie. "Security should be considered the most important factor when developing nuclear power," Xie said, adding China was committed to ensuring equipment, management and location safety. China's nuclear power development was put on hold following the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan in March 2011. Approvals for new nuclear plants were also suspended and a nationwide safety review launched after the incident. Approvals were cautiously resumed in October 2012. (Xinhua)

## France to Revoke Dual Citizenship in Fighting Terrorism

PARIS - As part of a constitutional reform, French government would submit a law aimed at revoking citizenship of all dual nationals, including those who were born in France and convicted on terrorism charges, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls announced on Wednesday. "The government decided to submit to parliament the extension of revoking nationality of all bi-nationals," Valls said after presenting the draft bill on national protection at a weekly cabinet meeting.

"They (the bi-nationals convicted of terrorism) will be prosecuted and convicted in France. At the end of their sentence, they may be expelled," he added. Under French law, currently only naturalized citizens can be stripped of their French citizenship. Valls warned that "(terrorism) has never been higher," which required acts to bring the security situation under control, in a move to defend the controversial bill and silent growing critics in the Left and Right camps which



denounced "a blow for the Republic." Since 2012, six naturalized people with dual citizenship have been stripped of their French

passport, French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said at a joint press meeting with concerned ministers. (Xinhua)

### DPRK Diplomat Expelled from SA for Rhino Horn Trafficking: Official

CAPE TOWN - A high ranking diplomat working for the embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has been expelled from South Africa (SA) for alleged rhino horn trafficking, authorities confirmed on Wednesday. The alleged crime "was committed in Mozambique by the diplomat who was driving a vehicle that had South African diplomatic registration", Nelson Kgwete, spokesperson for the SA Department of International Relations and

Cooperation (DIRCO) told Xinhua. Nelson did not name the diplomat, but local press reports identified him as Park Chol-jun, a political councillor at the embassy. Park had quietly left South Africa on December 11, and the DIRCO was informed by the DPRK embassy that the diplomat had returned to North Korea, according to Nelson. A call to the DPRK Embassy went unanswered. Park was arrested on May..

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### Pakistan Obtains Positive Results from WTO Meeting: Dastagir

ISLAMABAD - Federal Minister for Trade and Commerce Khurram Dastagir on Wednesday apprised the Senate that Pakistan had obtained positive results for its farmers and agriculture sector at ministerial meet-

ing of the World Trade Organization (WTO) held in Kenya. These results were achieved due to vigilant presence, vigorous participation and clear articulation by the Pakistani delegation, he added. (APP)

### Tajikistan Expected to Ratify Six Agreements on CASA 1000 Project



DUSHANBE - Issues related to ratification of six agreements on the landmark regional electricity transmission project, known as CASA 1000 (1000 Electricity Transmission and Trade Project for Central Asia and South Asia) have been tabled to the agenda of a regular sitting of the second session of Tajikistan's lower house (Majlisi Namoyandagon) of parliament that will take place on December 24. An official source at Majlisi Namoyandagon says the following agreements are expected to be ratified: 1) a guarantee agreement between Tajikistan and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) on CASA 1000; 2) a loan agreement between Barqi Tojik and

the EBRD on CASA 1000; 3) a financing agreement between Tajikistan and the International Development Association (IDA) on CASA 1000; 4) an agreement between Barqi Tojik and the IDA on CASA 1000; 5) a loan agreement between Tajikistan and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) on Tajikistan's share in CASA 1000; and 6) a loan agreement between Tajikistan and the European Investment Bank on CASA 1000. In all, about 314 million U.S. dollars are reportedly needed for construction of the Tajik section of the regional power transmission line, which will bring electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Asia-Plus)

### Georgia's PM to Address Nation as Coalition Discusses Replacement

TBILISI - Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili was set to address the nation on Wednesday as a lawmaker confirmed his replacement was being discussed by the struggling pro-Western ruling coalition. Asked to comment on media reports that Garibashvili would be replaced, Giorgi Volzki, the influential head of parliamentary faction of ruling Georgian Dream coalition, said: "There are discussions on the matter, but nothing has been decided so far." Media reports tipped deputy prime minister and foreign minister

Giorgi Kvirikashvili to replace Garibashvili. Garibashvili's spokeswoman, Manana Tokmajishvili, told AFP that he was to "address the nation with an emergency statement later in the evening," but declined to give further details. Garibashvili, now 33, became the youngest head of government in Europe when he was appointed to the job in November 2013. He was a political unknown before former prime minister and billionaire tycoon Bidzina Ivanishvili named him interior minister in October... (More on P4)...(23)

## After Paris Accord, most U.S. Republicans back Action on Climate

WASHINGTON - A majority of U.S. Republicans who had heard of the international climate deal in Paris said they support working with other countries to curb global warming and were willing to take steps to do so, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll on Tuesday. The desire for action is notable for an issue that has barely made a ripple on the campaign trail among 2016 Republican presidential candidates. Few of the Republican White House contenders have said much at all about the United Nations summit in Paris this month,

though Democratic candidates, such as Hillary Clinton, have welcomed it. More than half, or 58 percent, of Republicans surveyed said they approved of U.S. efforts to work with other nations to limit global warming, the poll showed. Forty percent said they would support a presidential candidate who did so. Sixty-eight percent, meanwhile, said they either somewhat or strongly agree that they are willing to take individual steps to help the environment, such as cutting down on air-conditioning or buying a



more efficient car. Republicans surveyed were split on whether they would support a candidate who believes climate change is primarily man-made,

with 30 percent saying they would vote for such a candidate and 27 percent saying they would not. Republicans were... (More on P4)...(24)

### Kenya Charges Four Women with Recruiting for Islamist Militants

NAIROBI - Three Kenyan women and one Tanzanian have been charged with conspiring to recruit Kenyans for the Islamist group al Shabaab, a charge sheet issued by a courthouse in Mombasa showed on Wednesday. The Islamist group has sought to overthrow Somalia's Western-backed government and regularly launches attacks in neighboring Kenya in retaliation for Kenya contributing troops to an African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia. It has carried out numerous attacks in Kenya including the storming of a university in the northeastern city of Garissa that left 148 people dead. The four women, who were arrested in March and charged for attempting to cross into Somalia, were brought to the courthouse on Wednesday to hear the additional charges. They have been held in custody since the initial charges, which they deny. "The accused persons are jointly charged with arranging meetings in support of terrorism groups contrary to section 25 of the prevention of terrorism act," the charge sheet issued by a Mombasa courthouse read. Police sealed all gates to the courthouse and restricted... (More on P4)...(25)

## 70% of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Live in 'Extreme Poverty': UN

BEIRUT - More than two-thirds of Syrian refugees in Lebanon live in extreme poverty, according to a United Nations study published Wednesday. Up nearly 50 percent from last year. Based on an assessment of more than 4,000 refugee households, the report found that an estimated 70 percent of them are living below the Lebanese extreme poverty line of \$3.84 (3.52 euros) per day. "This is a striking increase from 49 per cent in 2014," said Mireille Girard, head of the UN refugee agency's Lebanon office. The inter-agency study was



conducted by the World Food Programme, the refugee agency and the UN's children's fund. Refugees are facing a dire situation as their savings dry up, work opportunities are increasingly rare

and humanitarian aid packages grow smaller. According to the study, the refugees are borrowing to cover even their most basic needs, including rent, food, and healthcare... (More on P4)...(26)

### Iraqi Troops Expected to Drive ISIS from Ramadi in Days

BAGHDAD - Iraq's army chief was quoted on Wednesday as saying he needed only days to drive Islamic State from the city of Ramadi, whose fall in May exposed the weakness of the Baghdad government and dampened hopes of restoring control in the north and west. Iraqi troops began advancing on Tuesday in an offensive complicated by rivalries and suspicions harbored by local Sunni tribes and by Shia militia backed by Iran. U.S. officials, concerned also by militant operations over the border in Syria, have expressed frustration at delays in seizing back the city.

"In the coming days will be announced the good news of the complete liberation of Ramadi," Iraqia TV cited army chief of staff Lt. General Othman al-Ghanemi as saying. Government troops are now concentrating on the last district held by the militants in the center of Ramadi, a Sunni Muslim city on the river Euphrates some 100 km (60 miles) west of Baghdad and capital of Anbar province. If it is captured, it will be the second major city after Tikrit to be retaken from Islamic State in Iraq. It would provide a major psychological boost to Iraqi security forces after the militant group seized a third of Iraq, a major OPEC oil producer and U.S. ally, in a sweeping advance last year. Progress has been slow because the government wants to rely entirely on its own troops and not use Shi'ite militias in order to avoid rights abuses such as occurred after the recapture of Tikrit from the militants in April. (Reuters)

## Drone Strike Kills Four Al Qaeda Suspects in Yemen

ADEN - A presumed United States (US) drone strike has killed four suspected members of Al Qaeda in central Yemen, a security official said on Wednesday. The raid targeted their vehicle on Tuesday evening near the border of Baida and Shabwa provinces, the official said. The US is the only country known to operate armed drones over Yemen. It has kept up strikes on militants during months of fighting between pro-

government forces and Shia Huthi rebels who control the capital. Yemen, home to what the US considers Al Qaeda's most dangerous affiliate, has been convulsed by unrest since the Houthis seized Sanaa in September last year. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has exploited the turmoil to tighten its grip on parts of southeast Yemen, including Mukalla, the capital of Hadramawt province, imposing a strict form of Islamic law. (Agencies)

### Russia's Air Force Hit 1,093 IS Targets in Syria Between Dec. 18-23: Ministry

MOSCOW - Russia's air force carried out 302 sorties in Syria between Dec. 18 and 23, hitting 1,093 Islamic State targets, Russia's Defense Ministry said on Wednesday. The destroyed targets included a training camp where there were recruits from Turkey and countries of the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States, a Defense Ministry spokesman said. (Reuters)

### U.S. Visa Waiver Restrictions may Endanger JCPOA Implementation: Iran

TEHRAN - Iran's foreign minister said Wednesday that recent move by the U.S. Congress to practice visa restrictions on people who have travelled to Iran may endanger the implementation of the nuclear deal between Iran and the world powers. U.S. Congress has recently passed a new legislation to tighten the Visa Waiver Program to make it difficult for the potential suspects with terrorist intentions to legally enter the United States. The congressmen have appealed for increasing restrictions on the individuals who have travelled to certain countries, including Iran, from bypassing security checks upon entering the United States. If the U.S. clamp

restrictions on the international economic activists, who have been to Iran, to travel to the United States, "this would be the violation of the terms of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)", Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a joint press conference with his visiting counterpart from Mongolia. However, in the recent letter from the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, the Americans have assured that "they would not allow the new legislation to obstruct the implementation of JCPOA", Zarif said. The U.S. internal policies should not hamper the fulfillment of the international obligations of the United States, he stressed. (Xinhua)