

Trump Calls for Greatly Strengthening U.S. Nuclear Capabilities

WASHINGTON - U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Thursday called for the United States to "strengthen and expand" its nuclear capabilities. "The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes," the President-elect tweeted. The United States is expected to spend one trillion dollars over the next 30 years upgrading its nuclear



arsenal, according to a TheHill news daily report. However, it's not immediately clear what prompted Trump's new proposal and what are the details behind. On the presidential campaign trail, Trump, counter to the past and current U.S. stance, proposed that countries such as Saudi Arabia and Japan should acquire nuclear weapons, stirring sharp criticism at home and abroad at the time. (Xinhua)

Russia's Defense Systems More Effective than U.S. Ones: Putin

MOSCOW - Russia's nuclear defense systems are more effective than those of the United States, and the Russian Armed Forces are stronger than any potential aggressor, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday at his annual year-end press conference. Commenting on President-elect Donald Trump's recent tweet on the need to enhance the nuclear capability of the U.S., Putin said he was a bit surprised that some people in the current U.S. administration have been trying to prove that

the U.S. Armed Forces are the most powerful in the world. "Nobody is arguing about that," he said. "If someone is accelerating an arms race, it is not Russia." Putin said Russia will continue to boost its Nuclear Triad, a set of advanced armaments consisting of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, strategic bombers and submarine-launched ballistic missiles, which have played a key role in maintaining the country's security. ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

US Democrats, Republicans Divided over Top Diplomat Nominee's Tax Returns

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senate Democrats and Republicans squabbled on Thursday over whether Secretary of State nominee Rex Tillerson's tax returns should be examined as part of the confirmation process. Apart from routinely submitting financial disclosure forms and ethics documents, Tillerson, chief executive officer of Exxon Moile, should also submit his tax returns, Ben Cardin, top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said on Thursday in a letter to other Democrats

on the committee. "I think it is an important part of vetting this candidate because he has never made public disclosures of this type, as he has worked at Exxon Mobile for his entire career and has never been in public service," said Cardin. "Mr. Tillerson was actively engaged with many foreign governments that could become relevant if confirmed as Secretary of State," he added. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee cannot require nominees to provide ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

British PM Faces Toughest Task Since End of WWII: City of London Policy Chairman

LONDON - Theresa May's government faces the most complex and nationally important international negotiations since the end of World War Two following the Brexit vote, a leading financial expert from the City of London said Friday. Mark Boleat, policy chairman at the City of London Corporation, gave his view in an interview on how the City and Britain's financial and professional services industry has been affected over the six months fol-



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EU Inks 270-Mln-Euro Deal to Boost Educational Infrastructure for Refugees in Turkey

BRUSSELS - The European Union (EU) will invest 270 million euros (283 million U.S. dollars) to build and equip schools for Syrian refugee children in Turkey, according to contracts signed by the European Commission on Thursday. Under these contracts, some 100 schools are to be built and equipped, benefiting over 70,000 Syrian refugee children primarily in Turkey's southern and southeastern provinces, the Commission said in a press

release. The EU funding will also help the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to manage educational infrastructure, the Commission said. "With the contracts signed today ...we will further improve the educational infrastructure on the ground, enabling over 70,000 Syrian refugee children to have access to schooling across the country," said Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement



Negotiations. The largest part of the funding (200 million euros) comes from the EU's Facility for Refugees in Turkey, which is designed to address the most critical needs of Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey today. (Xinhua)

Over 110,000 Civilians Displaced from Iraq's Mosul as Fighting Rages: IOM

GENEVA - According to figures released by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Friday, 110,196 men, women and children have fled Mosul and its adjacent districts since military operations to recapture one of the Islamic State (IS) last strongholds began in October. Up from 99,384 a week ago, IOM data revealed that 18,366 families have been forced to flee their homes as a result of more than two months of fierce fighting in the northern Iraqi city. A total of 77 percent of

the internally displaced have ended up in formal camps, with the rest finding shelter in private settings, emergency sites and critical shelter arrangements. According to IOM, Al-Hamdaniya district in Ninewa governorate is hosting most of the internally displaced people (65 percent), followed by Mosul (32 percent) and Hatra (1.3 percent). Supported by Kurdish Peshmerga fighters,



Iraqi troops kicked off operations on Oct. 17 to recapture the city which fell into the IS hands in June 2014, giving IS militants control of parts of Iraq's northern and western regions. International aircraft as well as Iraqi and U.S.-led coalition artillery units are supporting ground operations there. (Xinhua)

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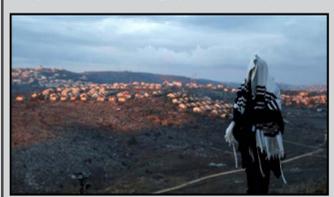


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Trump Urges U.S. to Veto UN Resolution on Settlements

WASHINGTON - U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Thursday urged the United States to veto a UN Security Council resolution seeking to halt Israeli settlement in the occupied Palestinian territory. "As the United States has long maintained, peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians will only come through direct negotiations between the parties, and not through the imposition of terms by the United Nations," Trump said in a statement. "This puts Israel in a very poor negotiating position and is extremely unfair to all Israelis," he added. The 15-member Security Council would vote later on Thursday on the resolution drafted by Egypt which calls for Israel to immediately halt settlement building in the occupied Palestinian...*(More on P4)...(24)*

U.N. Security Council to Vote Friday on End to Israeli Settlements



UNITED NATIONS - The U.N. Security Council will vote on Friday on a resolution demanding an end to Israeli settlements after four council members again put forward the measure a day after Egypt withdrew it under pressure from Israel and U.S. President-elect Donald Trump. New Zealand, Malaysia, Venezuela and Senegal, who were co-sponsors of the draft resolution, have requested the vote, which diplomats said was likely to take place at 3 p.m. (1600 EDT). The 15-member council had been due to vote on Thursday afternoon and Western officials said the United States had intended to allow the draft resolution to be adopted, a major reversal of U.S. practice of protecting Israel from action. New Zealand, Malaysia, Venezuela and Senegal told Egypt on Thursday night that if Cairo did not clarify its position, then they reserved the right to "proceed to put it to vote ASAP." Security Council member Egypt then officially withdrew the text, which it had worked on with the Palestinians, allowing those four countries to call for a vote, diplomats said. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Trump had both called for the United States to veto the draft resolution. (Reuters)

Putin Says Assad, Iran, Turkey Agree on Astana as Venue for Syria Talks

MOSCOW - President Vladimir Putin said on Friday that Russia, Iran, Turkey and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad had all agreed that the Kazakh capital of Astana should be the venue for new Syrian peace talks. Russia, Iran and Turkey held talks in Moscow on Tuesday after which they said they were ready to help broker a Syrian peace deal. Putin has proposed holding the negotiations in Kazakhstan, a close Russian ally. On Friday, Putin said that the evacuation of Aleppo would not have been possible without the help of Russia, Iran and Turkey or the good will ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

Syrian Army Declares Liberation of Eastern Aleppo

ALEPPO, Syria - The Syrian army declared on Thursday the liberation of eastern Aleppo city in northern Syria, as the last batch of rebels left the city, making Aleppo city completely under the government control. The Syrian army declared the restoration of security and stability to all of Aleppo city, following the evacuation of the last rebel convoy from the eastern part of the city on Thursday evening. "This victory constitutes a strategic turn in the war on terror, and deals a strong blow to the terrorist project and its backers," said the army in a statement. "The victory constitutes the launching of a new stage in bat-



tling terrorism on all Syrian territories," the statement added. The statement stressed that the victory in Aleppo will motivate the Syrian army to carry out its battles on the terrorists across Syria. (Xinhua)

Nieghbor News

China Urges U.S. to Cut Nuclear Arsenal after Trump Tweet

BEIJING - China on Friday called on the United States to take the lead in cutting nuclear weapons after U.S. President-elect Donald Trump used Twitter to propose the expansion of his country's nuclear capabilities. "The world's largest nuclear stockpile country should take the lead in making substantial cuts to its nuclear arsenal so as to create conditions for total elimination of nuclear weapons," foreign ministry spokesman Hua Chunying said Friday in response to Trump's tweet. (Xinhua)

Trump tweeted Thursday that the United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capabilities until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes. Hua said that the United States, as the country with the world's largest nuclear stockpile, bears special and primary responsibilities in nuclear disarmament. China always stands for and advocates complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, she said. (Xinhua)

Kyrgyzstan, Iran Agree to Strengthen Cooperation in Fighting Terrorism

BISHKEK - Kyrgyzstan and Iran have agreed to strengthen cooperation in fighting terrorism and extremism, according to the press service of the Kyrgyz President on Friday. The agreement was reached after a meeting between Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who arrived in Bishkek on Thursday for a two-day official visit. The two presidents said in a joint statement that the two countries strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and will

not allow any attempt to equate terrorism with any nation, culture or religion. Meanwhile, they expressed their concern about the spread of terrorist and extremist groups like the Islamic State, al-Qaeda and others in the Middle East region, and condemned their inhuman crimes in Syria and Iraq. The two leaders agreed that they would instruct the relevant departments of their respective countries to intensify contacts in fighting terrorism, extremism, organized ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

Pakistan Proposes Business Council with Uzbekistan

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Commerce Minister Khurram Dastgir Khan said on Thursday the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Joint Business Council will be established to increase cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries. The minister said this while chairing a meeting with an Uzbek delegation headed by Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ulugbek Rozukulov. The minister underscored the need for the two countries to explore

investment opportunities in agricultural, pharmaceutical, textile and sports goods sectors. The minister informed the visiting delegation that the Ministry of Commerce has chalked out a comprehensive plan for trade promotion exclusively focused on Central Asia. The minister said the visit will be helpful in promoting trade and economic relations between the two countries. Mr Khan informed the delegation tremendous ...*(More on P4)...(27)*

Foreign Ministers of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan Meet in Tashkent

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov on Friday received Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov, who arrived in Tashkent on working visit, the press service of the Uzbek Foreign Ministry reported. The two discussed bilateral relations of the countries, agreements reached during Uzbek-Kazakh high level events and other issues. The diplomats paid spe-

cial attention to the ministerial cooperation in the framework of the regional and international organizations considering Kazakhstan's election as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018. The sides confirmed mutual interests in further deepening of the dialogue in various fields. Ambassador of Kazakhstan Erik Utembayev also participated at the meeting. (AKI Press)

Russia Declares About Termination of Air Communication with Tajikistan

ALMATY - Russia has terminated the flights of Somon Air company of Tajikistan to the Russian regions since 00.00 on Friday, reports the TASS news agency with a reference to the official representative of the Ministry of Transport of Russia. The Ministry said the restriction concerns the flights to all the cities of Russia except Moscow and St. Petersburg. The interlocutor said the negotiations of the air authorities of Russia and

Tajikistan completed on Thursday. "The Tajik side in violation of air communication agreement between the states and the protocol dated November 7 2016 did not agree the flights from Zhukovskiy airport of Yamal air company appointed by Russia," he said adding that the flights ban for Somon Air is a response measure. On Thursday Somon Air cancelled the flight from Hudjan (Tajikistan) to Yekaterinburg. (Agencies)