

# North Korea Says New U.N. Sanctions an Act of War

BEIJING/SEOUL - The latest U.N. sanctions against North Korea are an act of war and tantamount to a complete economic blockade against it, North Korea's foreign ministry said on Sunday, threatening to punish those who supported the measure.

The U.N. Security Council unanimously imposed new sanctions on North Korea on Friday for its recent intercontinental ballistic missile test, seeking to limit its access to refined petroleum products and crude oil and its earnings from workers abroad.

The U.N. resolution seeks to ban nearly 90 percent of refined petroleum exports to North Korea by capping them



at 500,000 barrels a year and, in a last-minute change, demands the repatriation of North Koreans working abroad within 24 months, instead of 12 months as first proposed.

The U.S.-drafted resolution also caps crude oil supplies to North Korea at 4 million barrels a year and commits the Council to further reductions if it were to conduct another nuclear test or launch another ICBM. In a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency, North Korea's foreign ministry said the United States was terrified by its nuclear force and was getting "more and more frenzied in the moves to impose the harshest-ever sanctions and pressure on our country". (Reuters)

## Swiss President Wants a Vote to Clarify Country's EU Position

ZURICH - A referendum in Switzerland to clarify the country's relationship with the European Union would be helpful, Swiss President Doris Leuthard said on Sunday, after ties between the two sides cooled this week. Switzerland's frictions with the EU, of which it is not a member, arise as Britain negotiates its withdrawal from the bloc following a referendum in June last year and seeks a new trading relationship with its closest neighbors. Talks on securing a new "framework" treaty to

govern the Swiss-EU relationship have been underway for some time, with Brussels wanting to replace the more than 100 bilateral accords which regulate its relationship with Bern. But relations soured this week when the EU granted Swiss stock exchanges only limited access to the bloc, prompting Swiss threats of retaliation for what it called discrimination. "The bilateral path is important," Leuthard told Swiss newspapers Sonntags Blick. (Reuters)

## For Mideast, 2018 Could be a Pivotal Year in War and Peace

CAIRO - Will 2018 dampen the fires that rage across the Middle East? Although skepticism is understandable, there is a glimmer of change. The fight against the Islamic State group is mostly over, and the war in Syria may finally be winding down. The region is transitioning from fighting those wars to dealing with their aftermath - the destruction and dispersal of populations they wrought and the political fallout. Iran's influence

has grown after its proxies were generally successful, and even its nuclear deal with the West remains in place. In rival Saudi Arabia, a youthful new leader is promising long-delayed modernization at home and greater confrontation with Iran in the region. Donald Trump in the White House adds a mercurial element to an exceedingly combustible brew. If pessimism reigns, much can be traced to the failure of the 2010-11 Arab Spring revolts



against despotism. Instead of the democratic tsunami many envisaged, a string of wars has followed. Libya seems doomed to chaos and the war in Yemen is a genuine humanitarian crisis. In many places the old guard remains in place. So spectacular is the wreckage that almost no one refers to the Arab Spring without irony any more. (AP)

## French, Niger Presidents Discuss Migration, Extremism



NIAMEY, Niger - French President Emmanuel Macron promised more than 400 million euros (\$474 million) in aid over four years to Niger during a visit and told the country's president he was ready to

strengthen France's presence in the Sahel. Macron spoke alongside President Issoufou Mahamadou Saturday after the two met to discuss the fight against extremism, migration and development in Niger.

"We are ready to strengthen our presence in the Sahel, because the fight against terrorism is essential," Macron said. Though he emphasized that there were other major issues of concern discussed. "The lasting stabilization of Libya and the fight against migration and human trafficking," he said. African migrants travel through Niger and Libya in the hopes of making it to Europe, and many die in the vast desert. Thousands of West African migrants are being repatriated in recent weeks by their governments amid

outrage over recent video footage in Libya showing a migrant slave auction. Niger President Mahamadou said the root causes of migration are poverty, insecurity and a democratic deficit. He said a development plan is being put in place. "If we manage to respond to this and we succeed in reducing rural poverty...If we manage to fix it in the villages, we could manage to bring a substantive solution to the question of migration and Niger is determined to pursue these efforts," he said. (AP)

## US Agrees to Send Lethal Weapons to Ukraine, Angering Russia

WASHINGTON - The Trump administration has approved a plan to provide lethal weapons to Ukraine, a long-awaited move that deepens America's involvement in the military conflict and may further strain relations with Russia. Moscow responded angrily on Saturday. The new arms include American-made Javelin anti-tank missiles, U.S. officials said late Friday. Ukraine has long sought to boost its defenses against Russian-backed separatists armed with

tanks that have rolled through eastern Ukraine during violence that has killed more than 10,000 since 2014. Previously, the U.S. has provided Ukraine with support equipment and training, and has let private companies sell some small arms like rifles. The move is likely to become another sore point between Washington and Moscow, as President Donald Trump contends with ongoing questions about whether he's too hesitant to confront the Kremlin. (AP)

## American Accused of Fighting for IS Must Get Lawyer: Judge

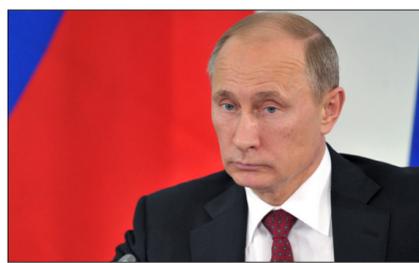
WASHINGTON - A federal judge ruled Saturday that the U.S. military must provide legal counsel to an American citizen who was picked up months ago on the Syrian battlefield and accused of fighting with Islamic State militants. The unidentified American, who has not been charged, surrendered to U.S.-backed fighters in Syria around Sept. 12 and is currently being held in Iraq as an unlawful enemy combatant. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a court petition challenging his detention and asking to act on his behalf to provide him access to legal counsel. Late last month, the U.S. government acknowledged that it has detained an American citizen accused of fighting with IS for months without fulfilling his request to see a lawyer. Responding to a court order, the government said the man picked up on the Syrian battlefield indicated he was willing to talk to FBI agents but "felt he should have an attorney present."

In her ruling, U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan denied the Defense Department's motion to dismiss the matter and ordered the military to let the ACLU "immediate and unmonitored access to the detainee" so that it can determine whether he wants the ACLU to represent him. The judge also ordered the Defense Department not to transfer the detainee until the ACLU tells the court of the detainee's wishes.

"This is a landmark ruling that rejects the Trump administration's unprecedented attempt to block an American citizen from challenging his executive imprisonment," said Jonathan Hafetz, senior staff attorney for the ACLU. (AP)

## Russia Not to Seek Confrontation with Other Countries: Putin

MOSCOW - Russia does not and will not seek confrontation with any other country, President Vladimir Putin said at the 17th congress of the ruling United Russia party Saturday. "We will continue to pursue an open and honest foreign policy ... We are ready to work with all countries -- in the West and in the East -- on the principles of trust and equality," he said in his speech. Putin said Russia will work with its partners to strengthen the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)



and build a "great Eurasian partnership". The EEU, which comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia, is an economic bloc aiming to optimize the flow of goods and services among its

members. Earlier this month, Putin announced his intention to seek a fourth presidential term and contest the election slated for March 18, 2018. He is widely expected to win by a landslide. (Xinhua)

## Russian Opposition Leader Gets Nomination for Presidency

MOSCOW - Hundreds of supporters of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny on Sunday endorsed him for the presidency and prepared to file his nomination with election officials, putting pressure on the Kremlin to allow him to run. President Vladimir Putin's most formidable foe in all his 18 years in power, Navalny is barred from running because of a criminal conviction that is largely viewed as political retribution. He could run if he gets a special dispensation or if the conviction is canceled. Some 800 Navalny supporters on Sunday gathered for a formal endorsement meeting in a giant marquee on the snow-

covered riverside in Moscow. The endorsement was observed by election authorities. Navalny's representative is to file the papers with the Election Commission later on Sunday in the same procedure that Putin, who is also running as an independent, should follow. Even though Russian law requires a candidate to submit an endorsement from just 500 people before he or she is allowed to collect the 1 million signatures required to get a place on the ballot paper, Navalny's supporters put a show of strength on Sunday. Outdoors endorsement gatherings took place in 19 other cities as well, from Vladivostok to St. Petersburg. (AP)

## Storm Leaves 120 Dead, 160 Missing in Southern Philippines

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines - A tropical storm in the southern Philippines unleashed flash floods that swept away people and houses and set off landslides, reportedly leaving more than 120 people dead and 160 others missing, officials said. Most of the deaths from Tropical Storm Tembin, which strengthened into a typhoon Sunday, were in the hard-hit provinces of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur and on the Zamboanga Peninsula, according to an initial government report. It was the latest disaster to hit the Philippines, which is battered by about 20 typhoons and storms each year, making the archipelago that lies on the Pacific typhoon belt one of the world's most disaster-prone countries. A search and rescue operation was underway for more than 30 people swept away by flash floods in the fishing village of Anungan, Mayor Bong Edding of Zamboanga del Norte province's Sibuco town said by phone. Five bodies have been recovered so far in the village. "The floodwaters from the mountain came down so fast and swept away people and houses," Edding said. "It's really sad because Christmas is just a few days away, but these things happen beyond our control." Edding blamed years of logging in the mountains near Anungan for the tragedy that unfolded Friday, adding that he and other officials would move to halt the logging operations. The rest of the deaths were reported in Lanao del Norte, where floodwaters from a mountain also swept away several riverside houses and villagers, and Lanao del Sur, police and officials said. (AP)

## Neighbor News

### Chinese, Japanese Officials, Entrepreneurs Discuss Cooperation on Energy Saving, Environmental Protection

TOKYO - Officials, entrepreneurs, experts and scholars from China and Japan discussed cooperation and inked agreements on 23 cooperation projects on Sunday at the 11th China-Japan Comprehensive Forum on Energy Saving and Environmental Protection held here in Tokyo. Some 800 people attended the forum co-organized by China's National Development and Reform Commission, China's Ministry of Commerce, Chinese embassy in Japan, and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and Japan-China Economic Association. Deputy head of China's National Development and Reform Commission Zhang Yong briefed the attendants about China's

achievements in recent years in energy saving, emission reduction, and development of environment-friendly industries, as well as the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and the party's policies on ecological civilization construction. He said that both China and Japan have a lot of advanced ideas, technologies and products in energy saving and environmental protection, and enhancing cooperation is in the interests of both sides and has great prospects. The two sides should bring into full play their complementary advantages and further enhance the level of practical cooperation on energy saving and environmental protection, he said. (Xinhua)

### Iran Can Join China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

TEHRAN - A Chinese expert believes that Iran's capabilities, especially in the energy sector, can serve the objectives of the joint Chinese-Pakistani Economic Corridor. Wang Yiwei, professor of the School of International Studies at Renmin University of China, told Iranian news media in Islamabad on Saturday that the Pakistan-China economic plan can also serve other countries in the region. The university professor added the Islamic Republic of Iran, with its huge oil and gas resources, can meet the long-term goals of their plan with Pakistan, and the Chinese government wants Iran to participate in the plan. He further referred to the

construction of the "New Silk Road" in the region, and said, "this plan can easily connect each country in the region through business connections, based on a win-win approach." Wang Yiwei also pointed to the importance of Gwadar and Chabahar ports in the north of the Indian Ocean, saying that those two ports can meet many of the requirements of the region, adding that the cooperation between these two ports is very necessary. He rejected the claims that the Iranian and Pakistani ports are rivals and said "both ports have the capability to increase trade and the living standards of the people in the region." (MNA)

### Terrorism Not Local Phenomenon but Caused by Foreign Powers' Interference: Mamnoon

ISLAMABAD - President Mamnoon Hussain Sunday said that terrorism was not a local phenomenon rather it was caused by interference of the foreign powers. Addressing the inaugural session of the First Speakers Conference hosted by the National Assembly of Pakistan and attended by the parliamentary heads from six regional countries here, the president said Pakistan had been dragged into the war-quagmire after the tragic 9/11 incident. The conference was attended by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Aaz Sadiq, Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani, Speaker of the Wolisi Jirga of Afghanistan Abdul Rauf Ibraheemi, Speaker of the Shooraa-Islami of Iran Dr. Ali Larejani, Chairman of the State Duma of the Fed-

eral Assembly of Russia Volodin Vyacheslav Viktorovich, Speaker of Grand Turkish Assembly Ismail Kehrman and Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress of China Zhang Ping. Among the audience were also Minister of State for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb, President Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, Pakistan Muslim League's Mushahid Hussain Sayed, parliamentarians and delegates from different countries. He said the terrorism had created immense problems in several countries of the region with Pakistan being the most affected during the last few years, more than 70,000 Pakistanis had lost their lives in acts of terrorism besides bearing a financial loss of more than 120 billion dollars. (Monitoring Desk)

### Uzbekistan Intends to Develop Aerospace Activity

TASHKENT - Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has proposed to establish a state agency for aerospace activities, which will allow solving all issues of development in this sphere. "Little attention has been recently paid to the introduction of strategic aerospace technologies in the leading sectors of the country's economy," President Mirziyoyev said in his message to the Senate and Oliy Majlis of

the country (the upper and lower chambers of the parliament), in which he summed up the results of the activity in 2017 and determined the main tasks for 2018. "Foreign investors should be involved in the implementation of projects based on public-private partnership to develop this progressive sphere," the president said. "The potential of research institutes must be strengthened." (Trend)