

Trump Underlines Battling Terrorism, Ensuring Foreign Aid Only for America's Friends, in State of Union Address

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday highlighted the anti-terrorism fight and foreign aid policy in his first State of the Union address.

Trump said he had signed an order to reexamine the U.S. military detention policy and to keep open the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay.

"In the past, we have foolishly released hundreds and hundreds of dangerous terrorists, only to meet them again on the battlefield -- including the ISIS leader, (Abu Bakr) al-Baghdadi, who we captured, who we had, who we released," Trump said, referring to the terror group by its other name, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. "So today, I am keeping another promise," he said. The president pledged to continue the anti-terrorism fight until the Islamic State (IS) was defeated. "When

possible, we have no choice but to annihilate them. When necessary, we must be able to detain and question them. But we must be clear: Terrorists are not merely criminals. They are unlawful enemy combatants. And when captured overseas, they should be treated like the terrorists they are," Trump said.

"I am also asking Congress to ensure that in the fight against ISIS and al-Qaida, we continue to have all necessary power to detain terrorists, wherever we chase them down, wherever we find them," he said.

"In many cases, for them, it will now be Guantanamo," Trump said.

Only 41 detainees now remain in the facility after hundreds of inmates were transferred to sites in the United States or sent to their home countries under President Barack Obama, who failed to close the prison center. (Xinhua)



Russia's Putin, Turkey's Erdogan Say Happy with Syria Congress in Sochi



MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke with his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday to discuss the outcome of a Russian-sponsored conference on reaching peace in Syria, held this week in the Black Sea resort town of Sochi. The Russian president's press service said that Putin and Erdogan agreed they were satisfied with the results of the Sochi congress and also discussed their cooperation in maintaining de-escalation zones in Syria. (Reuters)

UN Relief Agency Launches Fundraising Campaign for Palestinian Refugees after U.S. Reduction of Funding

GAZA - The UN relief agency for Palestinian refugees announced Tuesday an emergency fundraising campaign to collect more than 800 million U.S. dollars after the U.S. reduction of funding. The funds to be raised in the campaign will be divided equally to aid Palestinian refugees in both Syria and the Palestinian territories including the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said in a statement. The appeal for donations also covers the assistance to 50,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria who fled to Lebanon and Jordan during the war, it said. The majority of Palestinian refugees living in the occupied Palestinian territories and Syria rely on the agency for the life-saving assistance that includes food, water, housing and medical care, UNRWA Commissioner Pierre Krimbol said in the statement. He said that the chronic financial crisis that UNRWA is facing "threatens its services to the refugees.



In Syria, the UNRWA helps more than 400,000 Palestinian refugees through providing cash and other forms of assistance. (Xinhua)

Eurozone Inflation Falls despite Buoyant Economy



LONDON - The eurozone economy may be enjoying its best growth in a decade and seeing unemployment drop sharply, but there are few signs that is fueling the inflation

that the European Central Bank is looking for. In fact, figures Wednesday from the European Union's statistics agency showed annual consumer price inflation across the

19-country bloc fell to 1.3 percent in January from the previous month's 1.4 percent. The January rate is the lowest since July and suggests the buoyant euro has weighed on prices by lowering import costs. For a variety of reasons, including the eurozone's strong growth, the euro has been hugely in demand. On Wednesday, it was up 0.4 percent at \$1.2448, just shy of the recently struck three-year high near \$1.25. Inflation has been below the European Central Bank's target of just under 2 percent for most of the past few years. While low inflation is good for consumers as it allows their income to go further, it is a sign that workers have little power in getting the wage increases they are striving for from firms that are still operating on relatively tight margins. That is evident in the fact that the core inflation rate, which strips out potentially volatile items like food and energy, remains stubbornly below the headline rate, though it did increase modestly in January to 1 percent from 0.9 percent. (AP)

German Parties Agree on Pensions as Coalition Talks Progress

BERLIN - Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives agreed with their would-be Social Democrat (SPD) partners on Wednesday to cap pension contributions, a sign of steady progress in coalition talks which both sides aim to conclude within a week. Merkel, weakened after losing votes to the far-right in a Sept. election, is pinning her hopes for a fourth term on a re-run of the 'grand coalition' with the SPD to end four months of political limbo in Europe's biggest economy. After a breakthrough on the con-

tentious issue of family reunions for migrants on Tuesday - although it was overshadowed by a subsequent row over the details - the parties ticked off some other, less tricky, issues. They agreed to cap pension contributions, divided between workers and employers, at 20 percent of an individual's salary to 2025, said party sources. The SPD, which failed to win voters with a campaign focused on social justice, had before the election wanted a cap of 21.8 percent until 2030 from 18.7 percent. (Reuters)

Israel PM Corrects German Minister on Two-State Support

JERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel on Wednesday, publicly correcting him over Israel's stance on a two-state solution to its conflict with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu had snubbed Gabriel in April when the visiting diplomat declined to call off meetings with rights groups critical of Israel's government.

In statements after Wednesday's meeting, the two were cordial, but Netanyahu interrupted Gabriel when he talked about a two-state solution to the conflict.

Gabriel said he was "very thankful to hear that, of course, also the government of Israel wants to have two states" with secure Israeli borders.

Netanyahu, who heads what is seen as the most right-wing government in Israel's history, interjected to reiterate his position that his country would have to maintain security control in the Palestinian territories under any peace arrangement.

"No, that we will control security west of the Jordan (river)... that is I think the first condition," Netanyahu said.

"Whether or not it's defined as a state when we have the military control is another matter, but I'd rather not discuss labels, but substance."

A two-state solution has long been the ultimate goal of international efforts to mediate a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians.

Prominent members of Israel's government openly oppose the creation of a Palestinian state, while some call for much of the West Bank, occupied by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War, to be annexed. (AFP)

Analysts Say Trump Comments Bad News for North Korea

SEOUL - President Donald Trump's fiery comments on North Korea reflected confidence that his campaign of pressure and sanctions on the country is working, South Korean analysts said Wednesday.

The experts said it also means Washington will continue to deny Pyongyang meaningful dialogue unless it's willing to discuss serious changes to its nuclear weapons program and human rights conditions.

In his first State of the Union address, Trump warned that North Ko-



rea would "very soon" threaten the United States with nuclear-tipped missiles. He also warned of the dangers from other "rogue regimes," like Iran, terrorist groups, like the Islamic State, and "rivals" like China and Russia "that challenge our interests, our economy and our values." Calling on Congress to lift budgetary caps and boost spending on the military, Trump said that "unmatched power is the surest means of our defense." (AP)

Gibraltar Says Can Implement Brexit Selectively

LONDON - Gibraltar can choose elements of any Brexit deal Britain agrees with the European Union and avoid those it considers detrimental, the chief minister of the British territory said.

Fabian Picardo told the British newspaper The Independent that Gibraltar's constitution allowed it to decide which parts of any agreement with the European Union it would keep.

"We will be able to determine whether aspects of what is agreed will be imple-

mented in Gibraltar or not," Picardo said. "It is clear that we do have a Brexit veto for Gibraltar, in Gibraltar."

A spokesperson from Britain's Brexit department said the government wanted to involve Gibraltar fully in the process of exiting the EU. "This applies as much to the implementation of those agreements as to the process of negotiating them. We will negotiate as one United Kingdom, and leave as one United Kingdom," the spokesperson said. (Reuters)

EU Urges US Not to Go it Alone with Mideast Peace Efforts

BRUSSELS - The European Union on Wednesday urged the U.S. to not go it alone in any effort to make peace between Israel and the Palestinians and warned that doing so would end in failure. "Any framework for negotiations must be multilateral and must involve all players - all partners - that are essential to this process. A process without one or the other would simply not work, would simply not be realistic," EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said.

"Nothing without the United States, nothing with the United States alone," Mogherini told reporters in Brussels. Her comments came at an emergency meeting of an international committee coordinating Palestinian development aid. Government ministers from Israel and Egypt, as well as the Palestinian prime minister and a U.S. senior official are attending the talks, to be chaired by Norway and scheduled to run for about three hours.

The meeting is the first of its kind since President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, breaking with an international consensus that the holy city's status should be resolved in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soeride, who chaired the talks, said participants agreed to support any initiatives that would re-launch talks on resolving final status issues, including borders, security for Israel, the rights of Palestinian refugees and Jerusalem. (AP)

Neighbor News

China Will Not Block America's Pursuit of a "New Moment"

BEIJING - When U.S. President Donald Trump named China as a rival to challenge the United States, in his first State of the Union address Tuesday, he ought to have been aware of how the growing reciprocity between the two economies could help illuminate his "new American moment."

In one of the longest State of the Union addresses in recent memory, Trump touted a strong U.S. economy with rising wages, falling unemployment and returning manufacturers. "There has never been a better time to start living the American dream," he said.

He singled out China and Russia as rivals of the United States that challenged U.S. interests, economy and values. He indicated that

"fair and reciprocal" trade was necessary.

The words hardly come as a surprise from a man who promised in his inaugural address a year ago to protect America from other countries making products, stealing their companies and jobs.

It is important not to forget the different economic development stages and growing complementarity in economic structures between China and the United States. This lays a solid foundation for cooperation, from which both can gain.

It is better for the United States to see China as a partner, rather than a rival, with a joint future rather than a divided one. China contributed to the American dream, rather than destabilized it. (Xinhua)

Nawaz Sharif to Arrive in Karachi on Thursday on a Two Day Visit

ISLAMABAD - President Pakistan Muslim League (N) Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will arrive on a two day visit to Karachi on Thursday morning, the party sources said.

During the visit, the former prime minister will meet the provincial leadership of the party and discuss the prevailing

political situation. He will also hold discussion on the upcoming Senate elections, general elections and the ongoing development projects in the Sindh province.

The leaders and workers of party's Sindh chapter will welcome Nawaz Sharif at the airport. (Monitoring desk)

President Stresses upon Enhanced Cooperation Among ECO Members

ISLAMABAD - President Mamnoon Hussain Wednesday said the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) members needed to strengthen transport and communication infrastructure, facilitate trade and investment and identify its important sectoral priorities for the development and growth in the region.

The president was talking to a delegation of attorneys/prosecutors general of ECO countries led by secretary general Halil Ibrahim Akca who called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, a press release said.

He pointed out that economic complementarities held the promise of expanding both inter-regional and intra-regional trade and cooperation within the ECO frame-

work. The ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) was the organization's major initiative towards trade liberalization in the ECO region, he added.

The president stressed that an effective judicial cooperation would contribute to the security, stability and economic uplift of the region.

He said the ECO region, located at the crossroads, had both the potential and the capacity to function as a bridge between North and South, Europe and Asia.

He further stressed the importance of combating transnational crimes including laundering and drug trafficking and reiterated the significance of judicial cooperation between the ECO member states. (Monitoring Desk)

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan Activate Bilateral Trade and Economic Relations

DUSHANBE - Leaders of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will exchange views on enhancing cooperation in the trade and economic sphere, chief of the foreign policy department of the President's Office Aizada Subakozhoeva told during a briefing on the official visit of President Sooronbay Jeenbekov to Dushanbe on Feb. 1-2, Kabar reports.

She said that the trade turnover between the two countries is growing, but it still does not correspond to the existing potential and does not reflect the real state of affairs. In this regard, the sides developed a plan to intensify cooperation in the economic sphere.

"For 11 months of 2017, the trade turnover between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan amounted to \$ 30 million, which is 29% higher than in the same period in 2016. On trade and economic cooperation, the Ministry of Economy conducts relevant work. We will offer the Tajik side to think about using the potential of free economic zones in Kyrgyzstan, as well as to consider the possibilities for establishing joint production lines for the supply of products to the market of the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as for the European Union market, taking into account the GSP+ status," Subakozhoeva said. (Trend)