

# Trump Must Punish Russia for Election Interference: Graham

MUNICH - A senior U.S. Republican senator on Sunday urged President Donald Trump to take action against Russia over allegations that Moscow interfered in the election that brought him to power.

U.S. intelligence officials have told Trump that Moscow tried to influence voters by hacking Democratic emails and trolling social media sites, but Trump has sought to downplay Russia's role in the election.

Speaking to world leaders, diplomats and defense officials at the Munich Security Conference, South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham said Congress needs to get involved to ensure there are



"consequences" for the alleged hacking.

"2017 is going to be a year of kicking Russia in the ass in Congress," Graham said.

Referring to upcoming elections in France and Germany this year and concerns of outside interference, Graham said "I promise everybody in this room that Congress is going to take a long hard look what Russia did to undermine our elections, so you'll be better prepared when they come your way."

He said he planned to introduce a bipartisan motion for new Russia sanctions and it will get "north of 75 votes."

"My goal is to put it on Trump's desk and I hope he'll embrace... (More on P4)... (18)

## Syrian Opposition Says Ready for Geneva Talks, but Assad Must Go

MUNICH - The Syrian opposition is fully committed to peace talks in Geneva on Feb. 23, a senior official said on Sunday, adding the talks would need to pave the way for a political transition.

"We are fully committed for the Geneva talks," Syrian National Coalition President Anas al-Abdah told delegates at the Munich Security Conference.

"We cannot address the profound security threats ... while Assad remains in power," he said. Brett McGurk, the United States' envoy to the coalition against Islamic State, said the new U.S. administration was still reviewing its Syria position, but that it was seeking a role to reinforce Russian and Turkish efforts to cement a ceasefire in the country. (Reuters)

## China Coherently Backs European Integration: FM

MUNICH, Germany - China has been consistently supporting the European integration and is willing to work with the European side for the world's peace and development, top Chinese diplomat said Saturday. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made the remarks in meeting with his French counterpart Jean-Marc Ayrault on the sidelines of the 53rd Munich Security Conference. Wang began the talk by expressing his appreciation over Ayrault's support to the one-China principle, saying the Sino-French ties have maintained a good momentum of development. Wang said the upcoming official visit of French Prime Minister

Bernard Cazeneuve to China, the first high-level exchange between the two sides this year, testifies to close relations between the two nations.

Cazeneuve's visit, Wang said, will help send a positive signal to the international community about enhanced strategic communication and coordination between the two countries, and between China and Europe, against the backdrop of the current international situation.

For his part, Ayrault said maintaining high-level visits between the two sides and strengthening the strategic dialogue have practical significance. As ... (More on P4)... (19)

## UN and Others Play Down Expectations for Geneva Talks on Syria

MUNICH - The United Nations and other parties to Syrian peace efforts on Sunday softened any expectations of a major breakthrough at U.N.-led talks in Geneva next week, with U.S. policy on the crisis in disarray and its ties with Russia unclear.

U.N. envoy Staffan de Mistura told the Munich Security Conference the lack of a clear U.S. position made resolving the complex issues of the six-year civil war far more complicated than his earlier mediation efforts for Iraq and

Afghanistan. "I can't tell you (if it will succeed), but we have to push with the momentum. Even a ceasefire cannot hold too long if there is no political (solution)," he said, referring to the shaky ceasefire brokered by Russia and Turkey in the Kazakh capital Astana.

Questions abound over Washington's approach to ending the war, even after the first international foray by members of U.S. President Donald Trump's foreign policy team. It remains unclear if



Trump will make good his promise to build closer ties to Russia, especially in the fight against Islamic State. "One thing I'm missing at the moment ... is a clear

U.S. strategy," de Mistura told delegates. "Where are the United States (on a political solution)? I can't tell you, because I don't know." (Reuters)

## UK Parliament's Upper House Likely to Attach Conditions to Brexit Bill: Ex Minister

LONDON - The British parliament's upper chamber is likely to attach conditions to legislation giving Prime Minister Theresa May the power to trigger the country's exit from the European Union, a former minister from the opposition Labour Party said on Sunday. Earlier this month, May won approval for the legislation from parliament's lower chamber, the House of Commons. The unelected upper chamber, the House of Lords, is due to begin debating the bill on Monday. The legislation passed through the

Commons without being amended, but it could face a tougher ride through the Lords, where May's Conservative Party does not have a majority.

Amendments aimed at giving EU citizens in Britain guaranteed rights post-Brexit, and calling for parliament to have a vote on the final Brexit deal are expected to attract the most support. Asked during an interview on BBC TV whether it was his view the government could be defeated on these two issues, Peter Mandelson, a Labour member of the House of



Lords said: "I think it is. I think there is a strong body of opinion across party and amongst independent peers as well that both these issues are very serious." May has said she

plans to trigger Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty by the end of March and that she expects to get the legislation through parliament in time to do so. (Reuters)

## US to Hold Russia Accountable, Stand with NATO: Pence

MUNICH - U.S. Vice President Mike Pence on Saturday conveyed a message to jittery partners that the Trump administration will "hold Russia accountable" and maintain steadfast support for NATO, a military alliance the American commander in chief once dismissed as "obsolete."

In his overseas debut as vice president, Pence told the audience at the Munich Security Conference that the U.S. would be "unwavering" in its commitment to NATO and that President Donald Trump would "stand with



Europe." Pence pointed to their shared "noble ideals - freedom, democracy, justice and the rule of law." Addressing the violence in Ukraine, Pence said the U.S. would demand that Russia honor a 2015 deal

to end violence in eastern Ukraine between government forces and Russia-backed separatists. He did not mention findings by U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia interfered in ... (More on P4)... (20)

## Iraq Announces Offensive to Retake Western Mosul from IS Militants

BAGHDAD - Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Sunday announced the start of an offensive to drive the extremist militants of Islamic State (IS) group out of the western side of Mosul.

"We announce the start of a new phase in the operation (We Are Coming Nineveh) to liberate the western side of Mosul," Abadi said in a brief televised address, referring to the province of Nineveh, of which Mosul is the capital city.

"Our main task is to liberate the people before liberating the land," Abadi, who is also the commander-in-chief of the Iraqi forces, said in his address.

Late in January, Abadi declared the liberation of the eastern side of Mosul, locally known as the left bank of the Tigris River which bisects the city, after more than 100 days of fighting... (More on P4)... (21)

## UN Warns of Humanitarian Crisis in Mosul as Military Action Looms

BAGHDAD - The UN aid agencies on Saturday warned that tens of thousands of civilians in Iraq's Mosul are at "extreme risk" with battles to drive out the Islamic State (IS) militants from the western side of the city could break out soon.

"Recent surveys with key informants confirm that food and fuel supplies are dwindling, markets and shops have closed, running water is scarce and electricity in many neighborhoods is either intermittent or cut off," the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a statement posted on its website.

"The situation is distressing. People, right now, are in trouble. We are hearing reports of parents struggling to feed their children and to heat their homes," said the statement by OCHA's humanitarian coordinator for Iraq, Lise Grande. "The battle hasn't started but already there is a humanitarian crisis."

The statement said that few commercial supplies have reached to the besieged part of the city during the past three months after the main road to Syria was cut-off, threatening the lives of between 750,000 and 800,000 civilians living in Mosul's western bank of the Tigris River. "Informants report that nearly half of all food shops have closed. Bakeries throughout the area have run out of fuel and many can no longer afford to purchase costly flour. Prices of kerosene and cooking gas have skyrocketed and many of the most... (More on P4)... (22)

## Nieghbor News

### China, Britain Hold Security Dialogue, Agree to Strengthen Cooperation

LONDON - China and Britain held their second high-level security dialogue here on Friday, with both sides agreeing to strengthen cooperation in security and law enforcement.

The dialogue was co-chaired by Wang Yongqing, secretary-general of the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, and Mark Lyall Grant, national security advisor to the British prime minister.

During the dialogue, the two sides exchanged views on the fight against terrorism, extremism, organized crime and the

protection of cyber security. Chinese and British delegates also discussed international and regional security issues of common concern, and have reached important consensus on cooperation in fields such as fighting terrorist threats, cyber terrorism, human trafficking, telecommunication fraud, financial crimes and pursuing escapes.

The two sides fully recognized the cooperative achievements since the first security dialogue, which was held last June. They agreed that facing the grim and complicated international security situation, China and ... (More on P4)... (24)

### Iranian FM Calls for Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

MUNICH, Germany - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called here on Sunday at the 53rd Munich Security Conference for the abolition of nuclear weapons worldwide.

"It is time to abolish nuclear weapons worldwide," said Zarif during his speech, adding that his country will never build a nuclear weapon. Zarif told the audience that it is easy to make all Muslims "the culprit for our problems", but it

does not help solve anything.

Instead, he suggested the problems should be redefined for a collective solution in a "neutrally acceptable way."

In addition, Zarif also proposed a new modest regional dialogue forum based on generally recognized principles which could promote understandings, encourage practical cooperation and lead to a security agreement for the region. (Xinhua)

### WB to Continue Support Reforms in Economy of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD - Country Director of World Bank (WB) for Pakistan, Patchamuthu Illangovan (Illango) Sunday said that World Bank would continue to support and assist reforms in various sectors of economy of country as it supported the process during last many years.

Patchamuthu Illangovan (Illango) accompanied by members of his team met here with the Finance Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, said a press release.

Finance Minister discussed with the delegation, the progress of various economic reforms undertaken by the gov-

ernment. He said that after completed the home grown reform agenda with the assistance of the IMF, the government remained committed to continue reform agenda that it had promised in PML-N's election manifesto in 2013.

Dar said that Pakistan was benefiting from the reforms carried out so far and the government would ensure that the process of reforms which continued with the same zeal during the remaining part of the tenure.

Illangovan also on the occasion updated the Minister about the status of different World Bank ... (More on P4)... (25)

### Maktoum Receives Deputy PM of Uzbekistan

ABU DHABI - Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, has received

Rustam Azimov, Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, at the Ministry of Defence during the International Defence Exhibition Conference (IDEX) 2017.

Azimov conveyed the regards and wishes of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the UAE Vice President and people of the UAE.

They exchanged views on ways to strengthen the friendship and co-operation between the UAE and the Republic of Uzbekistan in the best interest of both countries. (AP)

### Turkmenistan Eyes to Develop Market Economy

ASHGABAT - Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov during his inauguration ceremony held in Rukhiyet Palace in Ashgabat Feb. 17 named the support and development of entrepreneurship and market relations in different sectors of the country's economy as one of the main objectives, Turkmenistan State News Agency reported.

A presidential election was held on Feb. 12 in Turkmenistan. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who has been the president since 2007, was re-elected

for a third term with 97.69 percent of votes. Nine candidates took part in the presidential election. At the inauguration ceremony, Berdimuhamedov defined the steps to transform Turkmenistan into an advanced industrialized country. "Deep processing of hydrocarbon resources based on modern technologies will be carried out, and such high-quality products as gasoline, polypropylene, polyethylene and liquefied natural gas will be produced," the Turkmen president said. (Trend)

### Turkey Eyes Strong Trump Alliance, Despite Splits

ANKARA - Turning a blind eye to multiple policy differences, Turkey is seeking a tighter alliance with Washington under President Donald Trump but the road to a rapprochement may not be easy.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's relationship with the White House worsened drastically in the final months of the Barack Obama administration, mired in rows on issues from Syria to the extradition of the preacher Fethullah Gulen, the Turkish leader's arch-foe.

But Turkish officials repeated none of the gloom that some EU leaders expressed after Trump's election, ... (More on P4)... (23)

### 350,000 Children Trapped in West Mosul: Save the Children

LONDON - Around 350,000 children are trapped in western Mosul, Save the Children warned on Sunday as Iraqi forces launched a fresh offensive on jihadists defending the strategic city.

"Iraqi forces and their allies, including the US and UK, must do everything in their power to protect children and their families from harm, and avoid civilian buildings like schools and hospitals as they push deeper into the city," said the London-based charity's Iraq country director, Maurizio Crivallero.

He warned that escape is not an option for most families, who risk summary execution by fighters from the Islamic State

group, sniper fire and landmines - but they are also running out of food, water and medicine.

"This is the grim choice for children in western Mosul right now: bombs, crossfire and hunger if they stay - or execution and snipers if they try to run," Crivallero said in a statement.

He added: "Safe escape routes for civilians must also be established as soon as possible." The offensive to retake Mosul's west bank that began on Sunday could be the most brutal fighting yet in a four-month-old operation on Iraq's second city, where the leader of the Islamic State group declared a "caliphate" in 2014. (AFP)