

# Int'l Community Should Not Take European Peace for Granted: Guterres

UNITED NATIONS - The international community should not take peace and prosperity in Europe for granted, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said here Tuesday, warning that recent crises in Europe show that the continent remains at risk from new outbreaks of conflict. The secretary-general, while speaking at an open debate of the UN Security Council on conflict in Europe, said that such conflicts are not only a tragedy for those directly involved, but they are also reversing development gains and preventing communities and societies from achieving their full potential and contributing to regional and global prosperity.



The international community should not take European peace and prosperity for granted, the secretary-general warned, stressing that the transition towards a multipolar world is creating greater unpredictability and risk. Referencing the situations in Cyprus, the Balkans, Ukraine as well as other areas, the secretary-general highlighted that no single factor can be blamed for the emergence and continuation of conflicts in Europe. He noted that in many cases, peace agreements are simply not being implemented. "Whatever the causes may be, the inability of regional and international institutions, including... (More on P4)... (25)

## Kremlin Says Not in Talks with U.S. on Timing of Putin-Trump Meeting

MOSCOW - Moscow and Washington are not currently holding talks on possible dates for a first meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said on Wednesday. "Specific dates of such a meeting... are not being considered at all," Ushakov said at a briefing.

Slovenian President Borut Pahor had signaled his readiness to host the bilateral meeting but Russia and the United States have not discussed this possibility, Ushakov said. Ushakov also said that Putin is planning to take part in a meeting of leaders of the G20 countries in Germany in July. (Reuters)

## UN Security Council Pays Tribute to Late Russian UN Ambassador Churkin

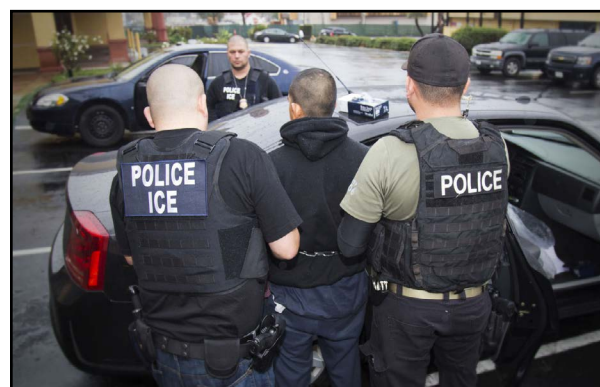
UNITED NATIONS - The UN Security Council on Tuesday paid tribute to the late Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, mourning the veteran diplomat with a series of condolences. Ahead of a meeting held here, diplomats stood for a minute of silence in memory of Churkin. Ambassadors of the 15 council members paid tribute to Churkin with short speeches. Churkin, who became the Russian permanent representative to the United Nations since 2006, reportedly died of an apparent heart attack in New York on Monday morning at the age of 64. He would have turned 65 on Tuesday.

Peter Iliichev, Russia's first deputy permanent representative to the UN, expressed gratefulness for the "warm words and condolences." He said Russia has lost "a striking diplomat" who is a high professional with deep knowledge and talent working at one of the most crucial positions to defend his country. Chinese Ambassador to the UN Liu Jieyi said China is "deeply saddened" by the passing of Churkin, and he expressed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and the government of Russia as well as the Russian mission to the UN. Liu praised Churkin as... (More on P4)... (27)

## Trump Lays out Tougher Approach to Illegal Immigration

WASHINGTON - Donald Trump the presidential candidate made no secret of his desire to crack down on illegal immigration, but once elected, he repeatedly offered varying interpretations of just how tough he would be in the White House. Now a pair of enforcement memos from Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly lay bare exactly what the Trump administration plans to do and how many of the estimated 11 million immigrants living in the United States illegally will

be targeted for deportation. The short answer: a lot. A look at some of what the policy memos say the government will do. A border security memo calls for the use of a long-standing but obscure U.S. law to send some immigrants who have crossed the border illegally back to Mexico even if they are from other countries. The memo and the law it cites don't include details on how or if the U.S. can force the Mexican government to allow foreigners to wait



in that country while U.S. officials decide their fate. Historically, the U.S. has jailed and tried to deport foreigners from countries other than Mexico, while Mexican nationals could be easily and quickly sent back over the border. The proposal is likely to come up in discussions this week in... (More on P4)... (26)

## EU's Juncker Warns Britain if "Hefty" Brexit Bill

BRUSSELS - European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has chosen a French term to tell Britain it can expect to pay a "salty" price for quitting the European Union. The phrase "salty" roughly translates as meaning "hefty or pricey." Speaking on Tuesday, Juncker said, "Our British friends need to know - and they know it already - that it will not be cut-price or zero-cost. The British will have to respect the commitments which they played a part in agreeing." Juncker's comments, in a

speech to the Flemish parliament in Brussels, come with the Brexit talks expected to be launched next month. It is expected to be two years before Britain actually withdraws from the 28-strong bloc. In view of this, Juncker added, "Therefore the bill will be - to use a rather vulgar term - very salty. It will be necessary for the British to respect commitments which they freely entered into." In his address to Belgian parliamentarians, he also maintained Brussels' position that withdrawal ar-



rangements - including the "exit bill" - must be agreed before moving on to potentially drawn out negotiations over future trade relations. The Commission chief said, "This will be a difficult negotiation, which will take two years to reach agreement on the exit arrangements. To agree on the future architecture of the relations between the UK and EU, it will need years." (Xinhua)

## Oil Prices Rise on High OPEC Compliance with Output Cuts

NEW YORK - Oil prices rose on Tuesday after the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said it has been sticking to an output cut agreement and hoped to see higher compliance in the future. OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo said that January data showed conformity from participating OPEC nations with output curbs had been above 90 percent and that oil inventories would decline further this year, according to media reports. Barkindo said all countries involved re-



mained resolute to achieve higher level of conformity, media reports said. The West Texas Intermediate for March Delivery added 0.66 U.S. dollars to settle at 54.06 dollars a barrel on

the New York Mercantile Exchange, while Brent crude for April delivery increased 0.48 dollars to close at 56.66 dollars a barrel on the London ICE Futures Exchange. (Xinhua)

## EU Parliamentary Chairs to Meet in Bratislava in April

BRATISLAVA - The European heads of parliaments will meet again in Bratislava between April 22-23 in order to exchange information on cooperating with each other, said Slovak Parliamentary Chairman Andrej Danko on Tuesday. According to Danko, the European Union (EU) is at a crossroads at the moment, waiting for the results of various parliamentary and presidential elections across Europe. "The EU and Europe itself are historically destined to become an example of co-existence and tolerance for other nations. However, that doesn't mean that we'll deny our basic historical principle," said Danko, who has been calling for a stronger voice of national parliaments in the EU over the long term. The first informal summit... (More on P4)... (28)

## UNHCR Focuses on Aiding Displaced as Iraqi Offensive Moves to West Mosul

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations refugee agency is focusing efforts on camp construction in and around the Iraqi city of Mosul, where renewed fighting could displace up to 250,000 people, UN officials said here Tuesday. With the predicted exodus of up to a quarter of a million people, it will be impossible to accommodate such large numbers on existing land, the officials said, quoting information from the UN Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). About 217,000 people have fled from the eastern sections of Mosul since the military offensive to oust Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or Da'esh) terrorists began on Oct. 17, 2016. About 160,000 remained displaced while others have returned to their homes in the now government-controlled areas. The UNHCR has eight camps open or completed at present, and one under construction, and it is planning for the start of work at another site in Hamam Al Alil, south of Mosul. The Iraqi government has decided, initially, to transport people displaced from western Mosul to camps in the east while new capacity is being added in the south. The UNHCR has been asked to support a new site at Hamam Al-Alil, 20 km south of Mosul. It is expected that many of those fleeing western Mosul will reach there on foot. This site will provide shelter for up to 60,000 people. (Xinhua)

## NATO Should Enhance Presence in Baltics: Lithuanian President

VILNIUS - Enhancing NATO's capacity to deter and respond to threats in the Baltic States region is crucial, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė said on Tuesday after meeting with visiting U.S. Senator Richard Durbin. "The U.S. troops and military equipment deployed in our region are an important and reliable deterrence ensuring the security of Lithuania and the entire alliance," the president was quoted as saying in a press release issued by her office on Tuesday. The two discussed issues of regional and transatlantic security, defense cooperation between... (More on P4)... (29)

## Increased NATO Presence in Black Sea Escalate Tensions: Bulgarian Politician

SOFIA - An increased military presence of NATO forces in the Black Sea would escalate tensions, said Bulgarian Vice-Speaker of the National Assembly Krasimir Karakachanov on Tuesday. In a statement sent to local media, Karakachanov said NATO's decision to increase air and naval presence in the Black Sea would escalate tensions in the Black Sea region and intensify the confrontation between the NATO and Russia over the Ukraine crisis. "Will the Black Sea NATO members establish a permanent naval group in the region, and will this mean the expansion of the joint air policing on the territory of

Bulgaria and outside the country's territorial waters," questioned Karakachanov, who is also leader of Bulgarian National Movement in the parliament. "Who benefits from the involvement of Bulgaria in the escalation of tensions in the Black Sea region?" said Karakachanov, "The Bulgarian people deserve to know the truth." Bulgaria, a Balkan country with a long coastline along the Black Sea, joined in NATO in 2004. On Feb. 16, the Council of Defense Ministers of NATO member countries decided to increase air and naval presence in the Black Sea. The... (More on P4)... (30)

## Neighbor News

### China, Italy Pledge Stronger Ties

BEIJING - President Xi Jinping and his Italian counterpart Sergio Mattarella held talks Wednesday, pledging to enhance bilateral ties. The two heads of state agreed to develop bilateral relations from a strategic and long-term perspective and advance the relationship to a higher level. Xi called on the two countries to maintain high-level exchanges and close cooperation between their governments, legislative institutions and political parties. China and Italy should synergize their development strategies and innovate cooperation patterns, Xi told Mattarella, who is on a state visit to China from Feb. 21 to 26. "China welcomes Italy to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative," Xi said.

Xi called for more cooperation in technological and industrial innovation and in the field of cultural heritage, promoting the building of culture centers and language teaching in respective country. The president also stressed that China was willing to work with Italy to maintain world peace, development and stability through close communication on global economic governance, multilateralism and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the UN and G20. "China supports European integration and hopes both sides foster China-Europe partnerships that feature peace, growth, reform and civilization, and build a peaceful, open, inclusive and prosperous world," Xi said. (Xinhua)

### Pakistan Army Launches 'Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad' Across the Country

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan Army on Wednesday launched 'Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad' across the country, Inter-Services Public Relations, the army's media wing, said in a statement. Radd-ul-Fasaad - which translates roughly to 'elimination of discord' - will aim at indiscriminately eliminating the "residual/latent threat of terrorism", consolidating the gains made in other

military operations, and further ensuring the security of Pakistan's borders, read the statement. Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Navy, Civil Armed Forces (CAF) and other security and law enforcing agencies (LEAs) will actively participate in and 'intimately support' the armed forces' efforts to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country, the statement added. (Monitoring Desk)

### Iran to Stand by Syria Until Ultimate Victory: Rouhani

TEHRAN - President Hassan Rouhani has reassured Syria of Iran's steadfast support for the Arab nation both on the battlefield against terrorists and the diplomatic front. "Iran's support for the Syrian people will last until ultimate victory," he told top Syrian parliamentarian Hadiya Khalaf Abbas in Tehran on Wednesday. Rouhani said "Iran will stand by the Syrian people against terrorism and support the upcoming talks" between Damascus and opposition groups, which will be held under the United Nations auspices in Ge-

neva on February 23. The Iranian president further hailed the Syrian government's advances against terrorist groups. The gains, he said, have even worked to positively affect foreign governments' view of the developments in Syria, adding that they now feel that they must accept the realities on the ground in the Arab state. At Damascus' request, Iran has been lending military advisory support to the Syrian Army in its efforts to combat Takfiri terrorists. The Islamic Republic has also been providing the country with humanitarian... (More on P4)... (31)

### Putin to Visit Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin will pay a visit to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on February 27-28, RIA Novosti quoted presidential aide Yuri Ushakov as saying. All the three visits will be on the occasion of celebration of the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and these countries, Ushakov

told reporters. He noted that in a meeting with his Kazakh counterpart Nursultan Nazarbayev in the city of Almaty, Putin plans to discuss international problems and the Syrian conflict's settlement. According to presidential aide, the issue of further deployment of the 201st Russian military base in Tajikistan will be... (More on P4)... (32)

### Turkmenistan to Further Consider Joining WTO

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan will further consider the prospects of joining the World Trade Organization (WTO), the 'Neutral Turkmenistan' newspaper quoted President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov as saying. President Berdimuhamedov made the remarks at a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers. According to the news-

paper, the president addressed the meeting and outlined the priorities of Turkmenistan's foreign policy for the next seven years. At present, cooperation with international financial and economic organizations is of great importance for Turkmenistan, the president said. "In this aspect, we will... (More on P4)... (33)