

France's Macron Suggests EU Partnership with Turkey

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron suggested Friday that the European Union develop a partnership with Turkey after its leader said he was “seriously tired” of waiting for the bloc to decide if it wants Turkey as a member.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was in Paris for talks with Macron, part of efforts to improve his government's strained relationship with Europe. Macron confirmed that Turkey's wait for EU membership was far from over and suggested a partnership instead in the meantime.

The current process “does



not allow for an outcome in the coming years,” Macron said during a joint news conference with Erdogan, adding that he thought stringing Turkey along was hypocritical. Erdogan made it plain that Turkey would not wait forever.

“One cannot permanently implore and wait to be finally included,” he said, adding that frustration over the EU stance might tempt Ankara to turn its back to Europe.

Ties between Turkey and Europe worsened last year amid mass arrests and firings carried out by Erdogan's government following a July 2016 coup attempt. (AP)

Seoul Offers High-Level Delegation for N. Korea Talks

SEOUL — South Korea has proposed sending a five-member delegation led by a government minister to rare talks with North Korea next week, the Unification Ministry in Seoul said Saturday. The offer came a day after the two Koreas agreed to hold their first official dialogue in more than two years to discuss the North's participation in next month's Winter Olympics in South Korea. The tentative rapprochement comes after the North's leader Kim Jong-Un warned in his New Year speech that he had a nuclear button on his desk, but also said Pyongyang could send a team to

the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. Seoul responded with an offer of talks and earlier this week the hotline between the neighbours was restored after being suspended for almost two years. The ministry said on Saturday that the South had suggested Unification Minister Cho Myung-Gyon lead the delegation to the meeting in the truce village of Panmunjom on Tuesday. He would be accompanied by four other officials, including two vice ministers — one of whom is in charge of sports — the South said as the two Koreas discussed the size and formation of delegations by fax. (AFP)

U.S.-Korea Trade Talks Pit Pickup Trucks against Nuclear Threat

WASHINGTON / SEOUL — The United States and South Korea on Friday completed the first round of review talks on a bilateral trade deal with Washington saying there was “much work to do” to reach a new pact. Since taking office in 2017, President Donald Trump has pulled the United States out of talks on a 14-nation Asia-Pacific trade pact, started negotiations on a new deal for the North American Free Trade Agreement between the U.S., Mexico and Canada and initiated

a review of the 2012 Korea deal. Washington has taken a hard line in the NAFTA talks, which appear stalled with just two rounds of negotiations left, saying that concessions are the only way for Canada and Mexico to keep the deal. The Korea trade talks will have to strike a balance between Trump's domestic agenda and the need to contain a nuclear-armed North Korea. A swift agreement would have aided that, officials from both sides told Reuters



ahead of the talks on Friday. The U.S. goods trade deficit with South Korea has doubled since the 2012 signing of the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS). Almost 90 percent of the 2016 shortfall of \$27.6 billion came from the auto sector, an issue the United States is expected to press hard in the Washington talks. (Reuters)

Tillerson Elaborates U.S. Foreign Policy, Says will Keep Job for Whole 2018



WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson talked about the U.S. foreign policy when receiving a media interview on Friday, saying he will stay in his post for the whole year of 2018. ON

DPRK, Iran In his interview with CNN, Tillerson said it was “too early to tell” the expected outcome of the talks between Pyongyang and Seoul next week. “We had channels open to

North Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) for some time,” he said, noting the U.S. pursuit of “the complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula” remains unchanged. Speaking of the recent protests in Iran, Tillerson threatened that non-nuclear sanctions will be coming “in all likelihood, unless Iran alters its behavior.” ON RUSSIA In Tillerson's eyes, the first year of the Trump administration's engagement with Russia was “difficult,”

“tough” and “strained” though Washington has maintained a constantly “active” engagement with Moscow. “We have to be very open and candid and frank with one another,” he said, noting the United States has “made it clear that the keystone is really Ukraine.” “We have to make progress in Ukraine,” he said, adding the whole Russia investigation against the Trump administration “has had no impact” on the U.S. foreign policy, since “the rest of the world recognizes it is a domestic issue.” (Xinhua)

Turkey, Germany Agree on Need for Dialogue to Improve Ties: Turkish Foreign Minister



GOSLAR, Germany — Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Saturday he had agreed with German counterpart Sigmar Gabriel that “difficulties and disagreement” with Germany needed to be solved through dialogue and cooperation. Cavusoglu signalled on Friday he

wanted to build bridges with Germany, Turkey's biggest trade partner and an important NATO ally, after disagreements such as over Ankara's large-scale crackdown on suspected supporters of a failed 2016 coup and the arrest of German-Turkish journalist Deniz Yucel. (Reuters)

Jordan Urges Unified Arab Efforts to Deal with Trump's Jerusalem Move

AMMAN — King Abdullah II of Jordan on Saturday called for intensified Arab efforts to support the Palestinians following a decision by U.S. President Donald Trump recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the state-run Petra news agency reported. At a meeting with several Arab foreign ministers, the king said there was a need for more efforts to support the rights of the Palestinians in preserving their legal and historic rights in Jerusalem and in creating their independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Jordanian leader said the issue of Jerusalem should be settled through negotiations and as part of a lasting peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis based on the two-state solution, the international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. He underlined the need for supporting the Jerusalemites and protecting the Arabic identity of the city as well as the holy Islamic and Christian sites.

Jordan, he said, will continue to safeguard the holy sites in the city. Discussions also covered best means to face the consequences of the U.S. decision that violates international resolutions. In a press conference following a meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Amman, Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi reiterated the Arabs' rejection of the U.S. decision. Rejecting any Israeli unilateral measures, he said the Arabs will push for a global recognition of Palestine. The minister added that the Arabs will exert more efforts to curb any further recognitions of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, adding that there will be no peace and security in the region without creating an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. (Xinhua)

Russia to Improve Naval Infrastructure in Arctic in 2018

MOSCOW — Russia's Northern Fleet will prioritize the improvement of infrastructure in the Arctic in 2018 to maintain high combat readiness, the Defense Ministry said in a news release Saturday. The Northern Fleet will continue voyages to the Arctic, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean this year and develop new types of weapons and equipment, it said. The fleet will be testing their fourth submarine in 2018. The Prince Vladimir is the first upgraded Borei-class nuclear-sub, capable of



carrying up to 16 Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles. Another Borei-class submarine, the Yuri Dolgoruky, is already serving the Northern Fleet. Earlier this week, the Defense Ministry said Russian troops in the country's

far north and the Arctic will be equipped with the Tor-M2DT autonomous short-range anti-aircraft missile system in 2018. Russia is strengthening its defense forces in the Arctic while stepping up efforts to exploit resources in the region. (Xinhua)

Turkish Opposition Leader Calls for Decisive Military Actions in Syria

ANKARA — Devlet Bahceli, leader of the Turkish opposition Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), has called on the Turkish armed forces for decisive actions in the Syrian city of Afrin, Turkish media reported Jan. 6. There are terrorists of the YPG (Kurdish People's Protection Units) and the PYD (Kurdish Democratic Union Party) in Afrin, and the Turkish armed forces must wipe them off the map, he said. Bahceli also noted that the YPG and the PYD are a real threat for Turkey and the whole region.

Earlier, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that the country doesn't rule out a new military operation against YPG and PYD in Afrin. On Oct. 25, 2017, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that a new military operation may be held in Afrin. Turkey has been moving military equipment to its border with Syria since June 21, 2017. Military equipment is being deployed in Turkey's southern province of Kilis, which borders Syrian territories controlled by the YPG and the PYD. (Trend)

Iraqi PM Reiterates Pledge to Build National Army to Protect Iraq's Unity

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi Saturday reaffirmed his government's commitment to establishing a national army to protect the integrity of Iraq and the unity of its people. “We confirm our continuation to build a strong national army that defends Iraq's land and its citizens without exception and preserves the sovereignty of the state,” Abadi said in a statement marking the 97th anniversary of the Iraqi Army Day. “We are building an army that belongs to a single and unified Iraq. It does not represent a certain party or a sect. Our heroic army fought a fierce war to save his people and his citizens and liberate his land from terrorism,” the statement said.

The Iraqiya official television aired footage showing graduation ceremony on the anniversary for the Iraqi Collage of War in its military camp in Rustamiyah area southeast of the Iraqi capital Baghdad. On Jan. 6, 1921, Iraq established its first battalion of the modern army by the British during their mandate over the country after World War I. During the past three years, the Iraqi army with other security forces have fought fiercely against the Islamic State group and liberated all the Iraqi lands, which were seized by the extremist group in mid-2014 in northern and western Iraq. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

Xi Stresses “Consistency,” Urges CPC to Make New Progress

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized “consistency” in upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics in his speech for senior officials on Friday, setting guidelines for the Communist Party of China (CPC) to make new progress. Xi, who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, asked the officials to “consistently” promote the “great new project of Party building” and increase their sense of precaution and prevention of risks and challenges. He made the remarks at the opening of a workshop attended by newly elected members and alternate members of the CPC Central Committee, as well as provincial and ministerial-level officials. Xi's speech placed

“socialism with Chinese characteristics in a new era” into its historical lineage of social revolutions led by the CPC, illustrating the links of continuity. The speech also put socialism with Chinese characteristics into the context of the evolution of socialism worldwide. When socialism emerged, it was a brand new social form, and socialism with Chinese characteristics was an unprecedented pioneering cause that must continuously develop. “Consistency” in Party building has been the key to the victory of the CPC, from the “great project” of Party building proposed in revolutionary times to the “great new project of Party building” during reform and opening up, and the strict self-governance of the Party since its 18th national congress in 2012. (Xinhua)

CPEC to Carry forward all Weather Pak-China Friendship to Next Generation: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD — Minister of State for Information, Broadcasting, National History and Literary Heritage Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb said CPEC was the project of shared destiny and it would not only carry forward the time-tested and all weather friendship of decades between Pakistan and China to the next generation but would also establish a solid connect among the people of entire region. She was talking to H.E. Mr. Yao Jing, Ambassador of China during his maiden visit of Ministry of IBNH&LH here Friday. She said CPEC would prove to be a game changer and its impact would become apparent on regional connectivity, investment opportunities, industrial and financial cooperation, energy, tourism, educational links and people to people contacts. CPEC would not only establish great link with culture through one road

one belt initiative, but would also offer great prospects for the youth of both countries to realize their potentials, she added. “We in Pakistan have successfully restored law and order situation and now are striving to improve the perception about Pakistan and the level of tolerance in the society,” the MOS said. She said Pak-China relations were rooted in the will of the people of both the nations and would be further reinforced through enhanced people to people contacts and cultural exchanges. Alluding to the recent tweet by the US President, Donald Trump, the Chinese Ambassador said, “We are encouraged to see that Pakistan has made great strides in combating terrorism, improving law and order situation and building infrastructure in the country.” (Monitoring Desk)

US Failed to Rally UNSC Behind Iran Agenda

TEHRAN — An analyst believes US President Donald Trump was seeking to use the protests in Iran as an “opportunity” to put pressure on the Iranian government but he failed to push his agenda at the UN Security Council (UNSC). “I do not think he has succeeded, I think he did not get the support critically from UN Security Council big players like France who dismissed it and said well look, there is no threat to international peace, why should we even have a debate in the house and Russia of course slammed it

completely, the report as being entirely baseless,” Martin Jay told PressTV in an interview on Saturday. “I think we are looking at a certain amount of panic coming from the Trump administration to throw its weight around in New York at United Nations to [put] this subject into play and try and generate hysteria and panic from other members, I think it does not reflect very well on Trump's administration and I think he is losing credibility with other key members of the UN Security Council,” he added. (Presstv)

Uzbek President Simplifies Export of Goods to Foreign Exhibitions

TASHKENT — Since Jan. 1, 2018, business entities in Uzbekistan have been allowed to export goods worth up to \$5,000 for showcasing at exhibitions and fairs abroad without concluding an export contract and without registering a cargo customs declaration, according to the decree of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. When exporting goods to exhibitions in foreign countries, entrepreneurs should in-

form the border customs checkpoints about the planned participation in a foreign exhibition (fair), the place, date and time of its holding, as well as exported goods (name, quantity and value). In 2017, entrepreneurs of Uzbekistan, in order to find potential foreign partners and promote domestic products to foreign markets, took part in 88 international exhibitions and fairs held in 24 countries. (Trend)