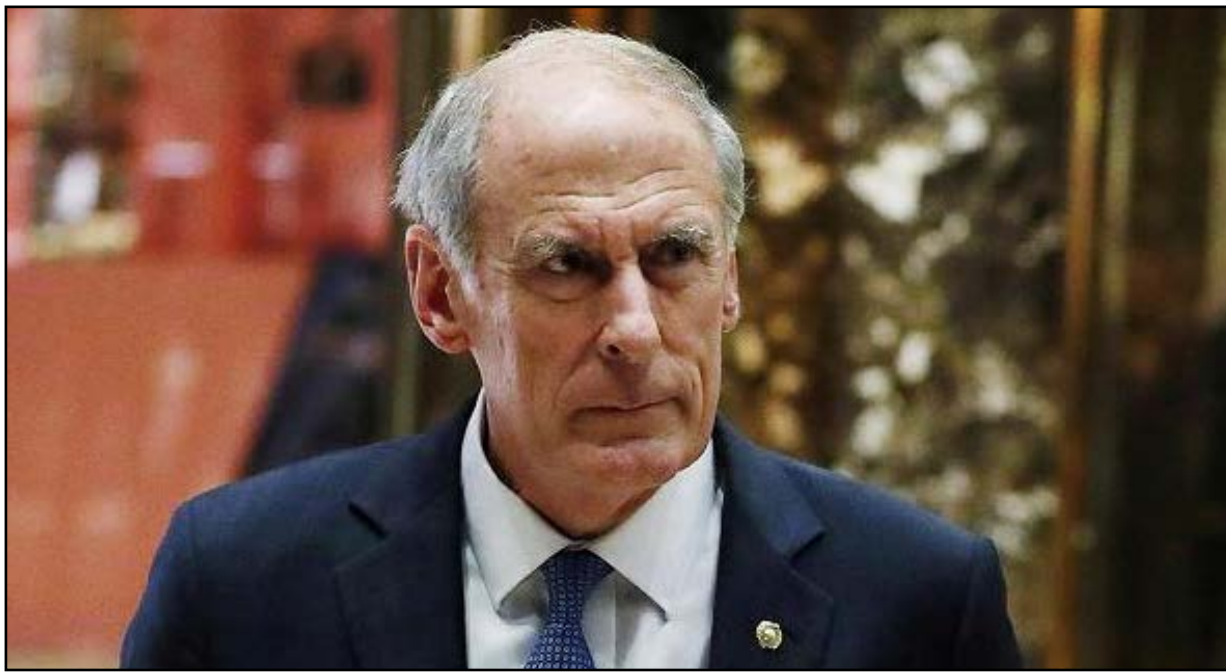


Trump Picks Former Senator Coats as National Intelligence Director

WASHINGTON - U.S. President-elect Donald Trump said on Saturday that he will nominate former Senator Dan Coats for U.S. director of national intelligence.

"I'm very confident that Senator Dan Coats is the right choice to serve as director of national intelligence," Trump said in statement, adding that the former lawmaker has "clearly demonstrated the deep subject matter expertise and sound judgment required to lead our intelligence community."

The announcement came amid a rift between Trump and the U.S. intelligence



community over Moscow's alleged interference in the U.S. presidential election last year.

The U.S. intelligence released a report on Friday, accusing Russian President Vladimir Putin of ordering "an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election" in order to "undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process."

Trump has repeatedly refused to accept the findings that Russia has intervened in the 2016 presidential election. The Russian government has also denied the accusations....(More on P4)...(19)

Graham Urges Trump to Defend Democracy with Russia Sanctions

WASHINGTON - A top Senate Republican is urging President-elect Donald Trump to defend democracy in the United States and around the world by punishing Russia for trying to interfere in the American presidential election as U.S. intelligence agencies allege.

"He's going to be the defender of the free world here pretty soon," Sen. Lindsey Graham, a frequent Trump critic, said in remarks broadcast Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press." "All I'm asking

him is to acknowledge that Russia interfered, and push back. It could be Iran next time. It could be China."

Trump has consistently refused to blame Russia in the hacks that American intelligence agencies say were directed by Russian President Vladimir Putin. U.S. intelligence officials on Friday briefed the president-elect on their conclusions that the Kremlin interfered in the 2016 election in order to help him win the White House. ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

Deep Freeze Grips Europe, Threatens Homeless, Migrants

BELGRADE, Serbia - Blizzards and dangerously low temperatures persisted in parts of Europe on Sunday, prompting Pope Francis to draw attention to the homeless suffering in freezing weather. In Serbia, aid workers scrambled to help hundreds of migrants sleeping rough in parks and makeshift shelters.

The extreme winter weather that has gripped Europe in the past days has caused more than a dozen deaths, left village

es cut off, caused power and water outages, frozen rivers and lakes, grounded flights and led to road accidents. Serbia's authorities on Sunday banned river traffic on its stretch of the Danube - one of Europe's main rivers - because of ice and strong wind.

Two men died of cold in Poland on Saturday, bringing the nation's death toll from winter weather to 55 since Nov. 1, authorities said Sunday. Temperatures dropped to minus 30 de-



grees Celsius (minus 22 Fahrenheit) in the mountains of southern Poland. In Italy, eight deaths were blamed on the cold, including a man who died in the basement of an unused building in Milan, and another one on a street flanking Florence's Arno River. Francis ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

Chairman of Expediency Council Ayatollah Rafsanjani Passes Away

TEHRAN - Chairman of the Expediency Council Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has passed away at the age of 82 due to heart condition. Ayatollah Rafsanjani was admitted to a hospital in northern Tehran on Sunday after having an acute heart attack. Born on August 25, 1934, the influential Iranian politician and writer was the fourth president of the Islamic Republic, serving from 1989 to 1997. Rafsanjani was the head of the Assembly of Experts from 2007 to 2011. The influential cleric was elected chairman of the Iranian parliament in

1980 and served until 1989. He assumed office as the Chairman of the Expediency Council in 1989. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani attended the hospital where Ayatollah Rafsanjani was hospitalized, undergoing treatment. Head of Tehran's Shohada Hospital has declared heart arrest as the cause of Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani's passing away. Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani was among the main aides to late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini. He played an influential role both during anti-Shah struggles before the victory



of the Islamic Revolution and afterwards through various stages of the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Rafsanjani was also a key figure during the eight years of Iraq's imposed war on Iran (1980-88), serving as substitute to commander-in-chief of the armed forces. *(Press TV)*

UK will Have 'Control over Borders' after Brexit: PM

LONDON - British Prime Minister Theresa May insisted on Sunday that Britain will have "control over our borders" after Brexit, suggesting she would be prepared to quit Europe's trading zone to achieve it.

"The referendum vote was a vote for us to... bring control into our immigration system. I'm clear that is part of what we need to deliver," she told Sky News in an interview.

"We will be able to have control over our borders, of our laws." German leader Angela Merkel has warned Britain will not be able to remain in the EU's single market while "cherry picking" the terms - including over the

free movement of labour. May on Sunday appeared to suggest she would be willing to quit the trade zone. "Often people talk in terms of, somehow we're leaving the EU but we still want to keep bits of membership of the EU," she said. "We're leaving, we're coming out, we're not going to be a member of the EU any longer." Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on Sunday said the prospect of a second independence referendum for her nation was not mere bluster if Britain left the single market. "They will be making a big mistake if they think I am in any way bluffing," she told BBC's Andrew Marr show. *(AFP)*

North Korea Says Can Test-Launch ICBM at Any Time: KCNA

SEOUL - North Korea said on Sunday it can test launch an intercontinental ballistic missile at any time from any location set by leader Kim Jong Un, saying the United States' hostile policy was to blame for its arms development.

Kim said on Jan. 1 that his nuclear-capable country was close to test-launching an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

"The ICBM will be launched anytime and anywhere determined by the supreme headquarters of the DPRK," an unnamed Foreign Ministry spokesman was quoted as saying by the official KCNA news agency, using the acronym for the country's name. The North is formally known as the Democratic



People's Republic of Korea. The United States said on Thursday that North Korea had demonstrated a "qualitative" improvement in its nuclear and missile capabilities after an unprecedented level of tests last year.

Experts have said that while North Korea may be close to testing an ICBM, it would likely take years to

perfect the weapon. Once fully developed, a North Korean ICBM could threaten the continental United States, which is around 9,000 km (5,500 miles) from the North. ICBMs have a minimum range of about 5,500 km (3,400 miles), but some are designed to travel 10,000 km (6,200 miles) or further. *(Reuters)*

China's Top Anti-Graft Body to Keep High Pressure on Corruption

BEIJING - China's top anti-graft authority has pledged to maintain a tough stance on corruption in 2017 and promote "comprehensively and strictly governing the Party" to go deeper.

Efforts are needed to maintain a sound intra-Party political environment and prepare for the 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) National Congress to be held this year, according to a communique released after the seventh plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) held from Friday to Sunday. The communique called for strengthened intra-Party supervision and strict procedures for official selection and promotion, so as to guarantee selection of clean officials for central and local governments. Chinese President and General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee Xi Jinping spoke at the meeting, which was also attended by leaders including Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli. *(Xinhua)*

6 Killed in Suicide Car Bomb Attack in Iraq's Baghdad

BAGHDAD - At least six people were killed and ten others wounded in a suicide car bomb explosion in eastern the Iraqi capital of Baghdad on Sunday, a police source said.

The attack occurred in the morning when a soldier at a checkpoint opened fire on a suspected suicide car bomb and detonated it at a busy intersection near Jamila wholesale vegetable market in Sadr City neighborhood, according to a statement issued by Brigadier Saad Maan, spokesman of Baghdad Operations Command, which is responsible on security of the Iraqi capital. The massive blast left many nearby shops and stalls destroyed and set fire to several nearby vehicles, the spokesman said.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack, but the Islamic State (IS) militant group, in most cases, is responsible for such suicide bombing targeting Iraqi security forces as well as crowded areas, including markets, cafes and mosques across the country. The attack came as the Iraqi security forces backed by anti-IS international coalition are carrying out a major offensive to drive out the IS militants from its last major stronghold in and around Mosul. Many blame the current chronic instability, cycle of violence, and the emergence of extremist groups, such as the IS, on the U.S., which invaded and occupied Iraq in March 2003. *(Xinhua)*

Neighbor News

New Unit of S. China Nuclear Plant Starts Operation

GUANGZHOU - The fourth unit of the Yangjiang nuclear power plant in the southern province of Guangdong was connected to the grid on Sunday, said China General Nuclear Power Corp. (CGN), the owner of the plant.

The fourth unit now enters the final testing phase before its commercial operation, said

the company. The first, second and third units of the nuclear power plant have all realized commercial operation. The fifth and sixth units are under construction. The CGN has currently 20 nuclear power units capable of generation, with a total installed capacity of more than 20 million kw. *(Xinhua)*

Iran Warns of Efforts Made to Torpedo Syria Truce

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian official says various parties are playing a role in the increasingly complicated political and security situation in Syria, warning of excuses to sabotage a nationwide truce across the Arab state.

In a meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus on Sunday, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani said the Islamic Republic is determined to help the implementation of political approaches in order to end war and bloodshed in Syria.

"Political negotiations must be held among Syrians and directed by themselves and the United Nations and influential countries in this regard must exclusively

play a facilitating role," he said. He stressed the importance of making collective efforts to hold the talks in Damascus as the capital of the united and undivided Syria. Shamkhani, who acts as Iran's senior political, security and defense coordinator with Russia and Syria, further added that the anti-terrorism front currently enjoys the political initiative acquired as a result of close cooperation among Tehran, Damascus, Moscow and their successes on the battleground.

The SNSC secretary hailed President Assad's prominent role in leading the Syrian government and popular forces in the fight against Takfiri terrorism which has led to great achievements. *(Presstv)*

Gen. Raheel to Head Saudi-Led Military Alliance: Pakistani Media

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan's recently retired army chief Raheel Sharif has been appointed to lead a new Saudi-military alliance to fight terrorism, Pakistani media have reported.

Government officials in Saudi Arabia could not be reached on Sunday to confirm the appointment to head the coalition, the founding of which Saudi Arabia's Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announced at a sudden midnight press conference in December 2015. Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said in an appearance on Pakistan's Geo News

channel on Friday that Sharif's appointment had been finalized a few days earlier. A statement carried by Saudi state news agency SPA in December 2015 said the new coalition would have 34 members, though more have joined since then. It also said the coalition would be based in Riyadh to "coordinate and support military operations" against terrorism. Little has been heard of it since then. The states it listed as joining the new coalition included Egypt, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Malaysia, Pakistan and several African nations. *(Reuters)*

Turkmenistan to Develop New Oil Field in Caspian Sea

ASHGABAT - The Turkmen Oil State Concern held research at the Demirgazyk Goturdepe field located on the Turkmen shelf of the Caspian Sea, the Turkmen government said in a message. The research showed the presence of the rich hydrocarbon reserves in the field, according to the message.

The project of development of this field has been worked out. In order to attract foreign investments by compensating for the money spent with

a part of the volume of the produced oil, it is planned to create a joint venture, where the Turkmen Oil State Concern will carry out 90 percent of the work and a potential foreign investor will render maintenance services. The development of this area at the first phase will require about \$600 million. The investment program envisages the development of 15,000 square meters of the Demirgazyk Goturdepe field located on the ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

Uzbekistan, South Korea Eye Expanding Ties

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev held a phone conversation with Hwang Kyo-ahn, acting president of South Korea and discussed the prospects of the bilateral cooperation in 2017, the Uzbek president's press service reported. "Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Hwang Kyo-ahn noted with great satisfaction the high level of mutual trust, openness and

mutual understanding between the two countries, which provides a solid foundation for the comprehensive expansion of cooperation in politics, trade, economy, investment, as well as in the financial and humanitarian spheres," reads the message. The significance of a large-scale project - Ustyurt Gas Chemical Complex, based on the Surgul field, ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Riyadh Due to Host Saudi-Lebanese Summit to Mend Ties

RIYADH - Saudi Arabia will host a Saudi-Lebanese summit on Monday with the first ever foreign visit of the Lebanese president, Michel Aoun since his election in October 2016. Local news reported on Sunday. The two-day visit might overcome the rifts that ef-

fectured years of friendly ties between the two countries. After his election, Saudi Arabia sent in November a high profiled delegation to meet Aoun and other top officials.

Saudi Arabia stopped its military assistance to arm the Lebanese defense forces

in February 2016 because of what the country cited as Lebanese political stances against Saudi Arabia. The decision includes stop to provide arms worth 3 billion U.S. dollars to the Lebanese army through France, and the remaining unpaid 1 billion dollars assistance to

the Lebanese security forces. The decision was taken as Lebanon didn't condemn the attacks that targeted the Saudi diplomatic missions in Tehran and Mashhad and the endless negative statements made by Hezbollah group in Lebanon against Saudi Arabia. *(Xinhua)*