

# U.S. Military Must Get Ready to Deal with "Challenges": Hagel

HOUSTON - U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel urged the country's military to prepare for "challenges" that could pose a threat to the U.S. national security on Thursday. In an address at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy in Fort Bliss, western Texas, Hagel mentioned threats such as Russia's efforts to regain the Crimea Peninsula, the emergence of the Islamic State of the Iraq, Ebola's spread in West Africa and "other challenges" to the country's national security, according to reports from the website of the Department of Defense. He described the threats as un-

precedented in modern times, saying that it was a trend that would continue to place demands on military leaders. Stressing the importance of U.S. responsibility to deal with such threats, Hagel said that the U.S. would have "very little margin of error." "The world will be presented more and more with those kinds of issues where responsible leadership will always end up having to rely on responsible judgment," he said, adding that not every problem will come with immediate answers. He also warned that "we are living at a very defining time in the world,

and we have not seen disruptions in the world order like we are seeing today since World War II." "These next few years will define a world order," full of ups and downs and inconsistencies, he noted.

"That means we have to prepare this institution in ways we've never had to prepare it and much of that will fall on you in your command positions," Hagel said. He emphasized that he believes qualities such as responsibility and good judgment will continue to be the key requirements for leadership in the Defense Department in the future. Hagel be-



came the country's 24th Secretary of Defense on Feb. 27, 2013, but he will be replaced by Ashton Carter who is waiting

for confirmation by the Senate. Fort Bliss, where Hagel completed his basic training in 1967, is a United States Army post

in the U.S. states of New Mexico and Texas, with its headquarters located in El Paso, a city in western Texas. (Xinhua)

## Foiling Every Attack is 'Extremely Difficult': Europol Chief

THE HAGUE - The large number of radicalized Muslim extremists across Europe, their lack of command structure and growing sophistication make it "extremely difficult" for law enforcement agencies to foil every terror attack, the head of European Union police agency Europol said Friday. Europol's security and law enforcement agencies need to cooperate more closely to prevent attacks like last week's deadly rampage in Paris, Europol chief Rob Wainwright told The Associated Press in an interview. "The scale of the problem, the diffuse nature of the network, the scale of the people involved make this extremely difficult for even very well-functioning counterterrorist agencies such as we have in France to stop every attack," Wainwright said.

At least 2,500 and possibly up to 5,000 suspects have traveled from Europe to conflicts in Syria and Iraq, he said.

"The sheer numbers of people involved, the way in which they've been radicalized on the Internet, radicalized by their engagement in the conflict in Syria and Iraq, makes this extremely difficult for the police to contain it in a complete way," he said. In a grim assessment by the man who leads efforts to coordinate crime-fighting across the European Union, Wainwright said the threat is evolving as cells controlled by a clear commander have been replaced by "thousands of independent actors or semi-independent terrorist suspects" who are difficult to track. "That's the real problem I think that the intelligence community faces right now," he



said. Wainwright praised Belgian authorities for the counterterror operation Thursday night that they said foiled an imminent attack and left two suspects dead in the eastern town of Verviers. Wainwright said Europol was in close contact with Belgian authorities in the days before Thursday's operation in Verviers. "I can say that a number of very effective police and security service operations have been carried out in recent years," he

said, but wouldn't identify any. "The number of those has increased in the last year especially." In the face of the threat, "we have to make sure therefore that we can work together in a better way across Europe," he said. That could include legislation under consideration in the European Union to share airline passenger data. "I think it would add value to the counterterrorist program," Wainwright said. (AP)

## Turkey Expects High Level Capital Inflow in 2015

ANKARA - Turkey estimates a strong capital inflow in 2015, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan said in Ankara on Friday.

Our inflation target is still 6 percent level. We should watch the oil prices a little more time. If prices continue at this level, probably we could experience the 5 percent level of inflation in 2015," Babacan said,

adding that Turkey easily achieved its inflation target of 6.3 percent and growth rate of 4 percent in 2014. "Every 10 U.S. dollars drop of the oil prices reduces Turkey's current account deficit by 4.4 billion dollars," Babacan said.

Turkey's current account deficit has been narrowing, as the 12-month cumulative deficit narrowed to 46.7 billion U.S. dollars in September 2014 and the highest level was 76.8 billion U.S. dollars in October 2011. (Xinhua)

## Cameron to Press Obama on Gov't Access to Communications

WASHINGTON - British Prime Minister David Cameron is expected to press President Barack Obama Friday on getting American technology companies like Google and Facebook to allow governments to snoop on encrypted communications, amid fresh concerns about terrorism.



Cameron has argued that intelligence agencies must be able to intercept terror suspects' communications on encrypted social media and messaging sites. However, his view has struck a nerve in the U.S. and in Britain, countries that both have grappled to find a balance between security and privacy. White House spokesman Josh Earnest wouldn't say whether Obama would support a government "backdoor" to get around encryption and allow authorities to monitor communications that might help to protect national security, but Earnest said the issue surely would arise in Obama's meeting with Cameron. "I think our British counterparts would agree that it is

imperative that we properly balance the need for government, intelligence agencies and national security agencies to access to certain kinds of information to try to protect their citizens," Earnest said.

Cameron arrived Thursday evening at the White House, and after being greeted by Obama in the White House, the two sat down for a working dinner of herb-encrusted lamb and pickled wild mushrooms, with warm pear cake for dessert. On Friday, they were to hold a more formal meeting in the Oval Office before taking questions from the American and British press. While Cameron's trip to the U.S. was planned before the attacks in France, his visit is seen by the White

House as an opportunity to show trans-Atlantic solidarity in the fight against terrorism. "The terrorists know only how to destroy, but together we can do something infinitely more powerful: build security, strengthen justice and advance peace," Obama and Cameron wrote in The Times of London in an opinion piece in advance of Cameron's visit. "The United States and Britain will continue to work closely with all those who believe in peace and tolerance." The White House said the leaders also would discuss the global economy and cybersecurity, another matter that has taken on fresh relevance following November's hacking of Sony Pictures Entertainment, which the U.S. blamed on North Korea. (AP)

## U.S. Should Listen to DPRK's Peace Appeal

BEIJING - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has expressed unusual willingness to resume DPRK-South Korea summits and hold direct dialogue with the United States since the beginning of the New Year. The United States, holding a stake in Korean Peninsula peace and stability, needs to seize the momentum to listen to the DPRK's voice and join hands with other pertinent parties to unravel the decades-old predicament. In a significant move taken since DPRK top leader Kim Jong Un came into office three years ago, the DPRK's Six Party Talks representative Ri Yong Ho and former U.S. Special Representative for DPRK Policy Stephen Bosworth are scheduled to have two-day talks on Sunday in Singapore. Last year, the DPRK's diplomatic activities focused on its relations with Russia and Japan. This year, they have shifted toward South Korea and the United States. In his New Year's speech... (More on P4)...()

## Ukraine Denies Reports of Insurgent Airport Takeover

KIEV - Ukrainian authorities on Friday denied reports from independence-seeking insurgents that the insurgents have taken control of the airport in the eastern city of Donetsk. "The Donetsk airport is still under the control of the Ukrainian troops," the press service of the government's military operation said in a statement. According to the statement, Ukrainian troops have repelled the insurgent offensive on the airport and since 8.00 p.m. local time (GMT 1800) Thursday, a "relative lull" has reigned in the conflict-torn facility. The "Defense Ministry" of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic said that the insurgent forces have controlled the Donetsk airport. Commenting on the report, Ukrainian army

spokesman Leonid Matyukhin accused insurgents of spreading false information about fighting over the strategic facility. "They (insurgents) have a different perception of what's going on, they live in some other world. You can't believe everything they say," Matyukhin told reporters. Ukrainian troops took control of the airport in the insurgent-held city in July. Since then, the facility has been a flashpoint in the conflict that began in mid-April in 2014 and that has claimed more than 4,700 lives so far. The defense of the airport is a strategic goal of the Ukrainian government forces, which enable Ukrainian troops to retain a presence on the outskirts of Donetsk, the largest city in the restive region. (Xinhua)

## Russia Could Soon Run Multiple Ukraine-Sized Operations: U.S. General

several neighbors at once on the scale of its present operation in Ukraine, a senior American general said. Lieutenant-General Ben Hodges, commander of U.S. Army forces in Europe, told Reuters an attack on another neighbor does not seem like an immediate threat because Moscow appears to have its hands full in Ukraine for now. But that could change within a few years, when upgrades sought by President Vladimir Putin would give Russia the ability to carry out up to three such operations at the same time, without a mobilization that would give the West time to respond. "Right now, without mobilizing, I don't think

they have the capacity to do three major things at one time. They can do one thing, I think, in a big way without mobilizing. But in four to five years, I think that will change," Hodges said. "Certainly within the next four to five years they will have the ability to conduct operations in eastern Ukraine and pressure the Baltics and pressure Georgia and do other things, without having to do a full mobilization." The war in Ukraine, in which NATO says Moscow has supported pro-Russian rebels with arms and troops, has alarmed some of Russia's other neighbors, who are seeking greater reassurances for their defense from the (Reuters)

## 11 More Air Strikes Hit IS in Syria, Iraq: U.S. Military



WASHINGTON - The United States led six more air strikes against Islamic State in Syria and five in Iraq since early Thursday, according to the U.S.-led military coalition. The strikes in Syria centered around the key border town of Kobani, destroying nine of the militants' fighting posi-

tions, the Combined Joint Task Force said in a statement on Friday. In Iraq, the five strikes near Ramadi, al-Qaim, al-Asad and Mosul struck various fighting positions as well as a building, boats and a barge used by Islamic State, according to the statement. (Reuters)

## Neighbor News

### Pakistan Bans Haqqani Network after Security Talks with Kerry

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has outlawed the Taliban-linked Haqqani network, officials said on Friday, days after U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry urged Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government to fight groups that threaten Afghan, Indian and U.S. interests.

American officials blame high-profile attacks in Afghanistan on the powerful Haqqani network, which mainly operates out of Pakistan's border areas. Senior Pakistani government officials told Reuters a formal announcement of the ban would be made "within weeks." "We have decided to ban the Haqqani network as a step in implementing the National Action Plan devised after the (Peshawar) school attack," said a cabinet member, referring to a massacre of 134 children by Taliban gunmen last month. "The military and

the government are on the same page on how to tackle militancy. There is no more 'good' or 'bad' Taliban." Kerry specifically pressed for action against the Haqqanis, including banning the group," the official added. A second official, a minister who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed the decision to outlaw the Haqqani group. The United States accuses the Pakistani intelligence agency of supporting the Haqqani militants and using them as a proxy in Afghanistan to gain leverage there against the growing influence of its arch-rival India. Pakistan denies this allegation.

A formal announcement of the ban would show the government is keen to convince the United States it will no longer differentiate between 'good' and 'bad' militants. (Monitoring Desk)

### Zarif Asks Powers to Seize Opportunity for Striking Deal with Iran

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif cautioned the Group 5+1 (the US, Russia, China, Britain and France plus Germany) not to miss the present opportunity for cutting a final deal with Iran. Speaking in a televised interview in Geneva, Zarif advised nuclear negotiators to use opportunity for resolution of the deadlock over Iran's nuclear program. The Iranian top diplomat also said that he will discuss the country's peaceful nuclear program and the fight against terrorism in his tour around Europe. Zarif noted that he will meet European High

Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini during his visit to Belgium. The Iranian foreign minister is due to continue his European tour after meeting his US counterpart John Kerry in Geneva, Switzerland, on Wednesday. He is scheduled to visit three European countries of Germany, Belgium and France after the conclusion of his talks with Kerry in Geneva. Zarif and Kerry had three rounds of talks on Wednesday. The talks were the first of kind in the new Christian years aimed at reviewing the ways to accelerate negotiations between Iran and the 5+1. (FNA)

### Premier Li's Visit to Switzerland to Boost Finance, Trade Cooperation

BEIJING - Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's upcoming visit to Switzerland will intensify cooperation in finance and trade, a senior diplomat said here Friday. Li will attend the 45th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) and pay a working visit to Switzerland next Tuesday to Thursday. Finance cooperation will highlight the premier's working visit to the European country, Vice Foreign Minister Li Baodong told a press briefing. Calling Switzerland "an important financial hub in Europe," the vice foreign minister said Switzerland has advanced experience in the area. China has been deep-

ening its reform in the financial sector and encouraging Chinese banks to go abroad, which provides great opportunities for both sides to better financial cooperation, he said. China and Switzerland established financial dialogue plan during Premier Li's visit to Switzerland in May 2013, Li said, adding that both sides will further exchange views on financial cooperation and there will be new outcomes this time. This is Premier Li's second visit to Switzerland since he took office in March 2013, which shows the importance China has attached to Switzerland, Li said. (Xinhua)

### Tajikistan Seeks Extradition of Umarali Quvvatov from Turkey

DUSHANBE - The Tajik law enforcement authorities have asked the Turkish Government to extradite Tajik fugitive businessman Umarali Quvvatov, who heads the Tajik opposition organization Group 24. Tajik Interior Minister Ramazon Rahimzoda told journalists in Dushanbe on January 15 that Umarali Quvvatov is accused of committing a number of serious economic crimes and attempting to organize mass disorder in the country. According to him, three supporters of this or-

ganization have been detained in the country since Group 24 was branded extremist by Tajikistan's Supreme Court. "Besides, eight supporters of this organization have been detained in Russia at the request of the Tajik law enforcement authorities and they are waiting for extradition to Tajikistan," Rahimzoda said. We will recall that Umarali Quvvatov was detained in Istanbul on December 19. The Tajik law enforcement authorities say he was detained for violation of rules of stay in Turkey. (Asia-Plus)