

# French President Says EU Needs No Outside Advice

PARIS - The European Union (EU) "does not need external advice to tell it what it has to do," French President Francois Hollande said Monday.

Hollande made the remarks in response to U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's comments on topics such as the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in an interview with The Times of London and German newspaper Bild published Monday.

"Europe will always be ready to pursue trans-Atlantic cooperation, but it will base its decisions on its interests and values," Hol-



lande said at a ceremony for outgoing U.S. Ambassador to France Jane Hartley. Hollande also said NATO "will be obsolete only when threats have also become obsolete."

In the interview, Trump said the future of the EU is "very tough" and a Brexit would not have happened if people had not been forced to take in refugees. Trump also said NATO was "obsolete because it was not taking care of terror," and he complained that various members of the bloc were not paying their dues, which was "very unfair to the United States." (Xinhua)

## Russia Accuses U.S. of Starting New Arms Race

MOSCOW - Washington is "initiating a new arms race" by deploying large-scale troops to Europe, said Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova on Monday. The U.S. military buildup in Europe has "a powerful potential for destroying the entire architecture of European security ... threatening to trigger long-term destructive consequences in the Euro-Atlantic region," she said in an online statement. Washington is trying to impose a confrontational

model of relations reminiscent of the Cold War, Zakharova added. According to her, the United States transferred to Poland an armored brigade, consisting of about 4,000 troops and 2,500 combat hardware units, earlier this month. Starting in January, 300 U.S. marines will be deployed to a Norwegian base. In late March, a U.S. air brigade is expected to be deployed to Germany, and a battalion tactical group will be deployed to Poland in April. (Xinhua)

## Moscow Willing to Cooperate with Trump in Addressing Common Challenges: Russian FM

MOSCOW - Moscow is willing to cooperate with the new U.S. administration under Donald Trump in seeking solutions to their shared problems and fighting common threats, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday. At his annual press conference, Lavrov reiterated Moscow's readiness to work with Washington "in a business-like manner" and "on the basis of equality and respect of mutual interests."

Trump, who will take the oath of office on Friday, has said that he was ea-

ger to concentrate on the fundamental interests of the United States in security, which Lavrov said coincided in many ways with the guidelines of Moscow's foreign policy proclaimed by President Vladimir Putin. "When we hear that in foreign policy the main thing for Donald Trump is the struggle against terrorism, we can only cheer it," said the diplomat. Again he criticized the outgoing administration under Barack Obama for failing to keep its anti-terror ... (More on P4)...(19)

## Merkel Refutes Trump's Criticism Towards her Refugee Policy

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Monday refuted U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's criticism towards her refugee policy. "He (Trump) has recently reiterated his positions, which have been known for a while, mine are also known," Merkel said in response to Trump's labelling her refugee policy as a "catastrophic mistake."

When asked to comment on Trump's praise of "Brexit", Merkel said: "I think we Europeans hold our destiny in our own

hands." "I will continue to commit myself to ensure that the 27 member states' intensive and, above all, forward-looking cooperation," she said.

Merkel also stressed, however, "cooperation at all levels" with Trump after his inauguration. In an interview with the Times of London



and German newspaper Bild, Trump said Merkel had "catastrophic" poli-

cies on refugees and said NATO was "obsolete". (Xinhua)

## Britain Can't Have Trade Deal Talks with Third Party Until it Exits EU: Mogherini

BRUSSELS - Britain can't negotiate on trade deals with third parties as long as it's a member state of the European Union (EU), the bloc's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini warned on Monday. At a press conference after this year's first Foreign Affairs Council, Mogherini was asked by a reporter whether she would do anything special to cope with an upcoming Eurosceptic U.S. administration.

"I think that the European Union will stick together. I am 100 percent convinced

of this," she said. Stressing that Britain is still a member state seven months after the Brexit referendum, Mogherini said: "as long as a member state is a member state, there are no negotiations bilaterally on any trade agreement with third parties."

"This is in the treaties and this is valid for all member states as long as they remain member states, until the very last day," she added.



Foreign ministers of the 28-nation bloc gathered on Monday to discuss the developments in Syria and Middle East peace process, just days ahead of Donald Trump takes office as U.S. President. In an interview with Brit-

ish daily The Times, Donald Trump said he will offer Britain a quick and fair trade deal with U.S. within weeks after taking office to ... (More on P4)...(20)

## UN Envoy Highlights 2017 Decisive for Libyan Stability

TUNIS - It must be "a year of decision and breakthrough" in 2017, said Martin Kobler, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), in an exclusive interview with Xinhua on Monday.

I appealed to the political will of everybody now to come together to form strong institutions in security, political and economic," said Kobler while addressing his "clear messages" to all parts concerned in Libya. He explained the politi-



cal breakthrough means that the government of national accord should be endorsed by the House of Representatives of Libya who delayed or canceled several times the vote for

the government backed by UN.

The Parliament should also pass the constitution amendment and Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) must... (More on P4)...(21)

## Russia Successfully Test-Fires Topol-M Ballistic Missile

MOSCOW, Jan. 17 (Xinhua) -- Russia conducted on Monday a successful test launch of a silo-based Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) from the Plesetsk launch site, the Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday. "The simulated warhead hit a designated target at a firing range on the Kamchatka peninsula with high precision," the ministry said in a press release. The test launch was intended to confirm combat capabilities and reliability of Topol-M ICBMs, the ministry said.

The Topol-M single-warhead ICBM has a maximum range of about 11,000 kilometers and can carry a nuclear warhead with a yield of up to 550 kilotons. The missile can be deployed on both silo-based and mobile land-based launch platforms. (Xinhua)

## Iraqi Forces Push into IS-Held Pocket in Mosul: Military

MOSUL, Iraq/BAGHDAD - Iraqi special forces pushed deeper into Islamic State-held districts in eastern Mosul on Tuesday, and army units battled the militants inside a military base in the north of the city, military officials said. Islamic State has been driven out of most eastern districts of its Iraqi stronghold in the three months since the U.S.-backed campaign began. Iraqi troops have seized large areas along the river, which bisects Mosul from north to south.

Capture of the entire east bank, which military officials say is imminent, will allow the army, special forces and elite police units to begin attacks on the city's west, still fully held by the militants. Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) forces pushed into the Eastern Nineveh and Souq al-Ghanam districts, which are flanked by areas held by Iraqi troops, spokesman Sabah al-Numan said.

The special forces have now taken control of the Andalus and Shurta neighborhoods, where they were fighting on Monday, Numan told a Reuters reporter in Mosul.

"Roughly all the eastern axes for which CTS is responsible will be completed and we will announce the liberation of the entire eastern side," he said, but did not specify when.

A separate military statement said the CTS had also seized al-Muhandiseen district, nearly three miles further northwest, a short distance from the river. (Reuters)

## Nieghbor News

### Xi Proposes New Models of Global Growth, Cooperation, Governance, Development

DAVOS, Switzerland - Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday stressed the importance of pursuing new models of global growth, cooperation, governance and development.

Xi made the remarks in a keynote speech at the opening session of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland. Xi pointed out the root causes of the sluggish global economy as lack of robust driving forces for global growth, inadequate global economic

governance, and uneven global development.

The Chinese president stressed the need to develop a dynamic innovation-driven growth model, a model of open and win-win cooperation featuring a well-coordinated and interconnected approach, and a model of fair and equitable governance in keeping with the trend of the times.

He also called for a balanced, equitable and inclusive development model. (Xinhua)

### Pak Govt. Criticised Over Lack of Progress on CPEC Route

ISLAMABAD - Leaders of Pakistani opposition parties criticised the government on Monday for its failure to allay their and the provinces' concerns about the lack of development and non-establishment of industrial zones along the western route of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The criticism against the federal government came during a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on the CPEC, presided over by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal.

"We expressed our concerns that no industrial

zones are being established along the western route," Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) leader Syed Shibli Faraz told Dawn after the meeting. He said that the minister had told the meeting that no industrial zones were being set up along the western route in the short term, but they were planned under the long-term arrangement. "Sites for economic zones are being decided by the Chinese at places which are commercially viable," the PTI leader quoted the minister as telling participants of the meeting. (Monitoring Desk)

### Syria Victories Result of Damascus-Tehran Coordination: Iranian VP

TEHRAN - Iran's First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri says the victories earned on the battlefields in Syria are the result of coordination between the Arab country and the Islamic Republic as well as other important factors.

Jahangiri made the remark at a Tuesday press conference with Syria's Prime Minister Imad Khamis, who has traveled to the Iranian capital, Tehran, at the head of a delegation. "It is certain that Syria's victories are owed to the gallantry and steadfastness of the Syrian people, army, the fighters of the resistance axis, and also the result of coordination on the

field as well as political coordination between the country and Iran," the Iranian official said.

"As the government and people of Iran, we have supported and assisted the Syrian people and legitimate government" in the face of terrorism, he added.

Last month, Syria retook its northwestern city of Aleppo from Takfiri terrorist groups in the biggest blow to the outfits and their foreign supporters since militancy began in the country in 2011. The victory was followed by the establishment of a ceasefire in the city, which was later expanded to the entire country. (Presstv)

### General Prosecutor's Offices of Uzbekistan and Russia Discuss Cooperation

ASHGABAT - Uzbekistan's Prosecutor General Ikhtiyor Abdullayev held talks with his Russian counterpart Yuri Chaika in Moscow, reports the website of the Russian General Prosecutor's Office.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prosecutor General of Russia Sahak Karapetyan, rector of the Academy of General Prosecutor's Office Oksana Kapinus and others. Participants of the event

noted that the prosecutors of the two countries often exchange experience of the international cooperation in criminal matters, combating illicit drug trafficking and other spheres.

The talks addressed further cooperation issues between the Russian and Uzbek General Prosecutor's Offices.

The sides following the discussions signed a cooperation memorandum. (AKI)

### Turkmenistan Outlines Plans for Wheat Cultivation

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov has given an instruction to produce 1.6 million tons of wheat in 2017, the Turkmen government said in a message.

Turkmenistan started to cultivate wheat in the years of its independence and the country has been exporting the sur-

plus of the harvest since 2011.

The planted area covers 760,000 hectares. In 2016, 1.6 million tons of bread-grain was cultivated.

Turkmenistan was awarded with a special prize by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations for achievements in the field of food security. (Trend)

## Turkish Airstrikes Hit 116 IS Targets in Northern Syria

ANKARA - 20 Islamic State (IS) terrorists were killed and 116 targets belonging to IS were hit by Turkish army in Al-Bab of northern Syria in last 24 hours, Turkish General Staff stated on Tuesday.

According to the Turkish army, 106 positions belonging to the terrorists have been shelled, destroying defense positions, shelters and command facilities, as well as weapons and vehicles.

A total of 10 airstrikes have been carried out near Al-Bab in Northern Syria, destroying 1 building, 2 snipping posts and 2 mortar manufacturing plants and other targets belonging ... (More on P4)...(22)

## Senior Iranian, Russian Security Officials Discuss Syria

TEHRAN - Senior Iranian and Russian security officials have discussed the latest political, security, and military developments in the joint campaign against foreign-sponsored terrorism in Syria.

In telephone conversation on Monday evening, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani and his Russian counterpart Nikolai Patrushev discussed the latest developments that have occurred following the establishment of a ceasefire in the Arab country. The ceasefire deal, brokered by Russia and Turkey, came into force at midnight (2200 GMT) on December 30, 2016, and has been largely holding despite

clashes between government forces and terrorists in the Wadi Barada area, where water supplies for the capital, Damascus, are located and been cut or contaminated by the terrorists. Iran has been offering Syria advisory military assistance, and Russia has been carrying out an aerial campaign against the militants in the country on a request from the Damascus government. The ceasefire does not apply to the Takfiri Daesh terrorist group and al-Qaeda affiliates in Syria. Syrian soldiers and allied fighters from popular defense groups have been engaged in fierce fighting with Daesh militants in the eastern city of Dayr al-Zawr. (Presstv)