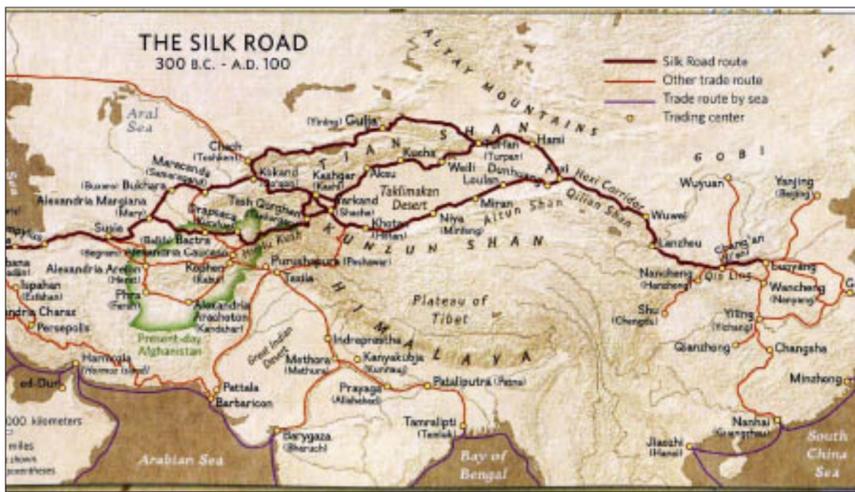


Senior Leaders Stress Trade Dispute Mechanism for Belt & Road

BEIJING - Senior Chinese leaders Tuesday approved a guideline on establishing a mechanism to appropriately solve trade and investment disputes among the Belt and Road countries according to law. The guideline on setting up a dispute-solving mechanism and institution among Belt and Road countries was passed at the second meeting of the Leading Group for Deepening Overall Reform of the 19th Communist Party of China Central Committee. It was agreed that the principle of wide consultation, joint contribution and



shared benefits should be observed in establishing the mechanism and institution. A dispute settlement mechanism which connects litigation, mediation and arbitration will be created on the basis of China's current judiciary, arbitration and mediation agencies, and by absorbing and integrating legal service resources home and abroad, according to the meeting. Members of the group called for equal protection for both Chinese and foreign parties' rights to create a stable, fair and transparent law-based business environment. (Xinhua)

U.S. Diplomats to Travel to Europe for Talks on Iran Nuclear Deal: Tillerson

WASHINGTON - The United States will send diplomats to Europe to discuss the Iran nuclear deal with their European counterparts, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on Monday. "We have a team traveling, actually. They're coming to Europe. A team that will meet with counterparts," Tillerson told reporters en route to France, according to a statement released by the U.S. State Department. Tillerson's words came over a week after U.S.

President Donald Trump threatened a withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal if the U.S. Congress and his European allies cannot fix the alleged "disastrous flaws." European top diplomats reasserted their commitments to Iran nuclear deal ahead of Trump's decision. Tillerson said that the U.S. diplomatic team will discuss U.S. concerns about the accord with the European officials "in a package." (Xinhua)

Seven Key Issues Will "Shape the Humanitarian Agenda in 2018": Red Cross Chief

GENEVA - The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Peter Maurer on Tuesday said during the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos that seven key issues will "shape the humanitarian agenda in 2018". "While attending the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, I will remind global leaders of the need to assist and protect civilians trapped in war zones,"

he said, adding that if we don't, the result will be global instability, major breakdowns of social and economic systems, and a failure to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Saying that the first issue is the international community's report card on conflict, the ICRC chief stressed that the international community's efforts and successes in addressing conflict will be critical in shaping the political agenda and the

humanitarian response in 2018. "Success will become a template for future action, while failure will compel alternative solutions," he said. "Will safe zones in Syria succeed? Will medical deliveries to Yemen resume? Will people be able to return to Rakhine State? Will long-running, low-intensity conflicts be so neglected that they boil over and trigger mass displacement and epidemics?" he asked.

"The ICRC works to maintain basic services people need to survive. But in 2018 and beyond, we need more determined efforts toward the peaceful resolution of conflict," he added. According to him, the second issue is rebuilding urban battlefields, since 50 million people are bearing the brunt of war in cities around the world, and reconstruction is a vast challenge in populated locations. (Xinhua)

U.N. Calls for Sustained Peace, Denuclearisation on Korean Peninsula



GENEVA - A senior United Nations disarmament official on Tuesday wel-

comed an easing of tensions between North and South Korea, but called

for further steps toward removing nuclear weapons from the divided pen-

insula. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, told the U.N.-sponsored Conference on Disarmament (CD): "Such engagement must still be translated into the resumption of sincere dialogue leading to sustainable peace and denuclearisation on the Korean Peninsula." There was no immediate reaction from North Korea's delegation at the Geneva forum, which has begun its 2018 session. (Reuters)

North Korea, U.S. Clash at Disarmament Forum

GENEVA - North Korea said on Tuesday it had a "powerful and reliable" nuclear deterrent to thwart any attack and accused the United States of deploying military assets nearby under the pretext of ensuring security at the Pyeongyang Winter Olympics. "This is a dangerous act of throwing a wet blanket over the current positive atmosphere of inter-Korean relations ... which could drive again into an extreme phase of confrontation," Han Tae Song, North Korea's Ambassador to the

United Nations in Geneva, said. South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Monday a thaw in relations between the two Koreas ahead of next month's Winter Olympics presented a "precious chance" for the United States and North Korea to discuss the North's weapons programs. North Korea is developing missile and nuclear technology amid regular threats to destroy the United States and Japan and in defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions. (Reuters)

Qatar Hails Rising Ties with Turkey Amid Ongoing Gulf Crisis

DOHA - Qatar and Turkey have strengthened their bilateral relations over the last few years, particularly after the siege imposed on Qatar by its Gulf allies, local media reported Tuesday. After the imposition of the embargo on Qatar by the Saudi-led blockading countries who closed air-land-sea borders with Doha, the trade exchange between Doha and Ankara, B2B meetings and people to people contact has been growing fast and steadily. "The imports from Turkey has jumped by 30 percent compared to the same period last year," said Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim Al Thani, Chairman of Qatar chamber. He added that the bilateral trade volume in 2017 reached QR3.9bn. Around 205 Turkish companies are currently operating in Doha and implementing projects to the tune of QR42.24bn (11.6 billion U.S. dollars). According to the report, it showed that Qatar's investment in Turkey has crossed over 20 billion dollars, which led Qatar to become the second largest investor in Turkey. Doha hosted the (Expo Turkey 2018) which concluded on January 19, with the participation of 111 Turkish companies, and contributed to enabling Qatari importers to contact with Turkish manufacturers to represent them in the local market. On June 5, the quartet includes Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt severed ties with Qatar accusing it of backing extremism and fostering links with their Shia rival Iran. Doha, however, vehemently denies the claims and Ankara have insisted there is absolutely no evidence to back the allegations. (Xinhua)

Tillerson to Present U.S. Strategy on Syria to European, Arab Allies

PARIS - Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will give an outline of the United States' strategy to stabilize Syria and push ahead with a political solution when he holds talks with close allies in Paris on Tuesday, Western and Arab diplomats said. Tillerson will first attend a meeting hosted by France on an initiative to target those responsible for chemical attacks, largely in Syria. He then holds informal consultations on the Syrian strategy with a smaller group of foreign ministers from key allies - Britain, France, Germany, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

"We'll know more later, but Tillerson will present a paper on Syria," said a Middle Eastern diplomat. This month Tillerson signaled an open-ended U.S. military presence in Syria as part of a broader strategy to prevent Islamic State's resurgence and pave the way for the eventual departure of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. In the speech he called for "patience" on Assad's departure - the clearest indication yet of U.S. acceptance that Russia and Iran have bolstered Assad and that he is unlikely to leave power immediately. Tillerson said the U.S.

strategy would focus on diplomatic efforts. It was not clear how detailed Tillerson's presentation would be or whether it would be form a basis to approach Russia, a key backer of Assad, which will host a Syrian peace congress in Sochi on Jan 29-30. The foreign minister of Turkey, which has launched a major military offensive targeting Kurdish YPG forces in north-west Syria, will attend the chemical weapons meeting but was not due to join the consultations on Washington's Syrian strategy. (Reuters)

French UN Envoy Warns of New Tragedy in Syria

UNITED NATIONS - The UN Security Council held a closed-door emergency meeting here on Monday on the situation in Syria, which is "at a crossroads," as described by a French envoy to the UN. French ambassador to the United Nations Francois Delattre, whose delegation called for the meeting following a Turkish military incursion into a Kurdish enclave in Syria, stressed the importance of imposing "maximum pressure" on the Syrian government to steer the country toward a political

process. Syria is at a crossroads with the worst scenario being possible, Delattre told reporters after members of the Security Council were briefed behind closed doors by UN Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman and Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock. Delattre warned of the risk of fragmentation, ethnic cleansing, renewed wave of terrorism, and new humanitarian tragedies in Syria. But he said peace was still possible. (Xinhua)

Tillerson Tells UK Not to Forget Special Relations with U.S.

LONDON - Britain and the United States sometimes forget about their own relationship as they focus on global issues, visiting U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Monday. Tillerson was in the British capital for talks with British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, with both men stressing the closeness of the relationship. The two met at the Foreign Secretary's official London residence in Carlton Gardens. In what was seen as a gesture for both countries to keep an eye on their own bilateral relationship described by Tillerson as enduring, the top U.S. diplomat said: "We spend a lot of time talking about the world's problems, whether it's North Korea, Syria, or Yemen, and sometimes we forget about the importance of our own relationship." "Both from a security standpoint, but also from an economic standpoint, we need to pay attention to that relationship and the importance of this relationship on a bilateral basis, as well while we work together in common cause to address some of these serious conflicts around the world that confront both of our nations," Tillerson said. Johnson described the relationship between the U.S. and the UK as absolutely fundamental not only to diplomacy, but also to the economy. "There are a million people who go to work in the United States every day who are employed by British companies, as there are 1.2 million who go to work every day in this country who are employed by American companies. There is no other economic relationship like it," said Johnson. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

China Calls United States Real Threat to Global Trade System

BEIJING - The United States, not China, threatens the global trade system, China's Foreign Ministry said on Monday, after U.S. President Donald Trump's administration called U.S. support for Beijing's joining the World Trade Organization in 2001 a mistake. WTO rules have proved ineffective in making China embrace a market-oriented trade regime, and the United States "erred" in backing China's entry to the trade body on such terms, the office of the U.S. Trade Representative said last week. Its report came as Trump weighs a series of

trade actions against Beijing, including a decision in a "Section 301" investigation into China's alleged theft of intellectual property, expected in the next few weeks. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said that since China joined the WTO, it had strictly followed the body's rules, carried out its obligations and contributed to the development of the multilateral system. Other countries have benefited from trade with China, which has stuck by the office of reform and opening up and has supported an open global economy, she added. (Reuters)

Pakistan PM to Attend World Economic Forum Meeting

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi will participate in the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, on Jan. 24-25, the prime minister's office said on Tuesday. The prime minister will participate in a number of important events and hold bilateral meetings with key world leaders and Chairpersons/CEOs of leading multinational organizations, a statement said. He will interact with leaders in a special session of the Informal Group of World Economic Lead-

ers (IGWEL). He will also participate in a WEF session titled "the Belt and Road Impact" on Jan. 24. "Participation of the prime minister in WEF Annual Meeting 2018 provides an opportunity to project Pakistan as prime destination of business, investment and trade. Moreover, we will showcase Pakistan's upward economic trajectory and its huge potential," the prime minister's office said. It will provide the opportunity to meet a number of world leaders in an informal setting and share views on different issues, it said. (Xinhua)

Iran Continues Military Drills Testing Radar, Missile Systems

TEHRAN - Iran's second day of military drills continues Tuesday with testing of radar and surveillance systems to detect ground and aerial activities by the mock enemy, the spokesperson for the maneuvers said. The exercise will continue using missiles and artillery fire to eliminate the assumed threats, spokesperson Rear Admiral Lower Half Mahmoud Mousavi told Press TV on Tuesday. Besides, short-range Nasr rockets along with

medium-and long-range surface-to-surface missiles would be used to strike mock enemy targets, Mousavi was quoted as saying. The Iranian army continued the exercises involving navy, ground force, the air force and the air defense unit on Tuesday. The exercises, code-named Muhammad Rasulullah-5, cover an expanse of 2.2 million square kilometers, including all of the Makran coasts and the Sea of Oman in the south of the country. (Xinhua)

Uzbek President Oks State Development Program Until 2022

TASHKENT - Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has signed a decree to approve the State Program for the Implementation of the Action Strategy on five priority development directions of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021. The document was developed following comprehensive study of topical issues, analysis of the current legislation, law enforcement practices, the best international practices, and fol-

lowing public discussion. The state program consists of five sections and stipulates development of 37 laws (the Electoral Code, the Laws on the Public Service, On the Protection of Personal Data, On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, On Science, On Innovative Activities, etc.), 142 legal acts and the implementation of 52 practical measures covering various areas. (Trend)

Georgia, Uzbekistan Discuss Transit Function Development

ASHGABAT - Georgian Parliament Chair Irakli Kobakhidze has met with the Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan Nurdinjon Ismoilov to speak about enhancing economic ties between the two nations and the development of transit function, Agenda reports. "I have already met with the speakers of both chambers of the Uzbek parliament. We spoke about the prospects of cooperation, especially in the fields of economy and

transit," Kobakhidze said. Kobakhidze also met with the head of the Uzbek Tourism Development State Committee Aziz Abdulkhakimov. The officials discussed the possibility of joint tourism projects. Within the visit Kobakhidze visited Samarkand and laid a wreath on the tomb of the first President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov in Samarkand. Georgian lawmakers took a tour of Samarkand sites included on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List. (Trend)