

# Tillerson, Polish PM Discuss Security, Energy Issues

WARSAW - Visiting U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson discussed here Saturday security issues with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, with NATO strengthening and Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline among the main issues raised during the meeting. "Poland is a very strong ally", said Tillerson during a press conference after the meeting. He also congratulated the country on having already fulfilled a commitment of spending up to 2 percent GDP expenditure on defense. "Poland and the United States together are against Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which undermines the overall security and energy stability of Europe", Tillerson said. He expressed



hope that the U.S. and Poland could make closer cooperation in the field of energy. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline is set to run from the Russian coast along the Baltic Sea bed to the German shore, and is scheduled to be put into operation by the end of 2019. The total capacity of two strings of Nord Stream 2 is 55 billion cubic meters of gas per year. At the press conference, Poland's Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz, who also took part in the meeting, said that "Mr. Tillerson's visit is for us a confirmation of close ties between Poland and the United States, ... a confirmation of the U.S. interest in the Central and Eastern Europe region". (Xinhua)

## NATO Chief Hails Portugal as "Key Ally" but Calls for Increased Spending

LISBON - The secretary general of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, hailed Portugal as a "key ally" in a visit to Lisbon on Friday while calling for increased spending on defense. "It is a great honour to be here because Portugal is such a key ally in our alliance," Stoltenberg told a press conference here following a meeting with Portugal's Minister of Defense Azeredo Lopes. "I welcome that Portugal has stopped the cuts in defense spending and also that we have started to in-

crease," he added. "But I also expect that you will continue because we need more investments from many NATO Allies to make sure that we are delivering on the promise and the pledge we made back in 2014." At a NATO Summit held in Wales in 2014 member countries pledged to spend 2 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on defense. "Portugal makes NATO more secure -- on land, at sea, in the air and also in cyberspace," Stoltenberg continued. (Xinhua)

## Moscow Reserves Right to Respond to New U.S. Sanctions: Russian FM

MOSCOW - The new round of anti-Russia sanctions by the United States is irrational and "senseless," and Moscow reserves the right to respond, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Friday. "Continuing efforts to exert pressure on our country, the U.S. imposed additional sanctions against a number of Russian citizens and companies under the far-fetched pretext of Russia's involvement in the Ukrainian crisis," the ministry said in a statement. Earlier on Friday, the U.S.

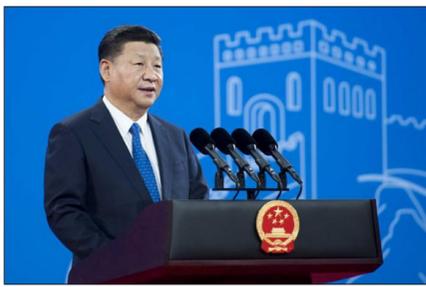
administration added a total of 21 individuals and 21 entities to its anti-Russia sanction list, according to a notice posted by the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Department of Treasury. Calling the new move part of Washington's "senseless sanctions campaign," the foreign ministry warned that the sanctions will bring no results but financial losses for the U.S. business. The ministry underlined that Moscow will not be frightened by denials of



U.S. visas or trade bans and will defend its national interests. "If the U.S. authorities prefer to break economic and other ties with Russia, it is their right, as we reserve the right to respond," the

statement said. Senior members of Russian parliament echoed the foreign ministry in saying that Moscow will certainly respond to the aggressive move taken by the U.S. (Xinhua)

## Fight against Organized Crime Reflects Xi's Governance Thought



BEIJING - China's latest campaign against organized crime and officials who hide criminal organizations reflects President Xi Jinping's outlook on security and his people-

centered governance thought, according to academics. According to a document released by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council Wednesday,

the fight will focus on industries and areas prone to organized crimes that prompt the "strongest public reaction" and that which is "detested" by the people. The document said China would maintain a tough stance against "all types of organized crime." The CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core has attached great importance to national security and people's security since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012. In the report delivered to the 19th CPC National

Congress in 2017, Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, listed "pursuing a holistic approach to national security" as one of the 14 points underpinning China's endeavor to uphold and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. "We must put national interests first, take protecting our people's security as our mission and safeguarding political security as a fundamental task," Xi said. (Xinhua)

## U.S. Secretary of State Tillerson Visit Latin America

WASHINGTON - U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will kick off a week-long tour to five countries in Latin America next week, with the crisis in Venezuela as a focus of talks, the U.S. State Department said on Friday. The trip, which is slated between Feb. 1-7, will take Tillerson to Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Colombia and Jamaica, where he will engage with leaders of the countries on topics of energy security, democracy and others, said U.S. State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert in a statement. During his stay, Tillerson will "advocate for increased regional attention to the crisis in Venezuela," Nauert added. Venezuela has been grappling with a severe economic crisis sparked by plummeting oil prices. Venezuelan government claimed that the crisis has been aggravated by the "economic warfare" unleashed by the U.S.-backed right-wing opposition. Venezuela has over 3 billion U.S. dollars blocked in the international financial system due to U.S. economic sanctions, Venezuelan Foreign Affairs Minister Jorge Arreaza said in December. (Xinhua)

## Turkey Blasts Germany, Belgium for Indifference to Attacks on its Nationals

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday lashed out at Germany and Belgium over attacks on Turkish nationals by sympathizers of Kurdish groups in both countries. "They are attacking our citizens in Germany and Belgium. What are they waiting for (before taking any actions)?" Erdogan said in Istanbul while attending the opening ceremony of a highway tunnel. "The attacks against our mosques in Germany cannot be explained by anything, we will not sit and wait," he added, criticizing German police for just looking on. Supporters of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) as well as Syria's Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its armed wing, the People's Protection Units (YPG), attacked Turks and vandalized two Turkish mosques in Germany last week over a Turkish military operation in Afrin in northwestern Syria, Turkish media reported. According to press reports, the demonstrators shouted anti-Turkey slogans and punched Turkish passengers at Hannover airport, while two mosques run by Turkish expatriates came under attack in two other cities. Last October, a group of PKK sympathizers reportedly assaulted a number of Turkish nationals in Belgium's Anvers province. Erdogan urged German and Belgium authorities to take actions against the attacks, adding "what if these incidents have taken place in Turkey and our police remained silent, how would the entire world respond?" Ankara outlawed the PKK for its armed struggle against the state for more than 30 years, and sees the PYD and YPG as PKK's Syrian offshoots, while the European Union and the United States have also listed the PKK as a terror group. (Xinhua)

## Progress Achieved in Making ASEAN Single Destination: Tourism Ministers

CHIANG MAI, Thailand - Progress has been made in making ASEAN a united and single destination, said Thai Tourism Minister Weerasak Kowsurat during a press conference on Friday after the 21st meeting of ASEAN tourism ministers. ASEAN refers to the Association of South-east Asian Nations that groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Weerasak, who chaired the meeting, said the ministers noted the progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (2016-2025)



where 15 key activities under the Work Plan for 2016-2017 have been completed and the ministers adopted the Work Plan (2018-2019). He said ASEAN is expected to receive 125 million international visitors, exceeding the target of 121 million to the region set for Visit ASEAN@50. 2017 marked the bloc's 50th anniversary.

For the future, Weerasak said the ministerial meeting had adopted the declaration in four important areas namely cruise tourism, gastronomy tourism, tourism investment and tourism for all, focusing on the development of tourism infrastructure with connectivity in rail, land and aviation to make ASEAN a united, single destination. (Xinhua)

## UK Vows Stronger Ties with North Africa after Brexit

RABAT - A visiting British official said on Friday that his country seeks to strengthen ties with North Africa particularly following the imminent exit from the European Union. Speaking at the press briefing after a meeting with Moroccan Foreign Secretary of State Mounia Boucetta, Alastair Burt, British Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa, said his visit to Morocco,

the first of its kind to the region, is aimed at strengthening relations between the two countries in various fields. The British minister also stressed the importance of strengthening bilateral security cooperation, particularly in the fight against terrorism and the exchange of intelligence and security information, noting that Morocco is an important partner in the region. (Xinhua)

## Defending "America First," Trump Makes his Davos Debut into Marketing Event

DAVOS, Switzerland - The "America First" mindset, defended by U.S. President Donald Trump in Davos, penetrated the whole process of his closing speech at the World Economic Forum on Friday. For the first time in Davos this year, one had to wait in line up to two hours to get a seat before the speech started. After entering the speech room, a second security check would be awaiting despite a previous one at the gate of Congress Center, unprecedented in previous speeches. And, before the president finally took the floor, one needed to listen to a 10-minute performance of "The Landwehr of Fribourg," a historic marching band. The Trump-eted preparation, a first in this year's Davos, has never had resemblances of other speakers at the global economic gatherings this week. In a nutshell, America First was everywhere in the speech room. During his roughly 15-minute speech, Trump spent about 12 minutes picturing a prosperous and lucrative U.S. economy that flourishes in his America First policy. Packed with a "very much America First" agenda, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said earlier this month that Trump would be "100 percent focused" on and committed to promoting policies that "promote strength for American businesses and the American worker." In the eyes of some U.S. allies in Europe sitting in the speech room, Trump's America First policy is steadily drawing Uncle Sam back to the stronghold of protectionism, populism and nationalism. (Xinhua)

## Neighbor News

### Trump Calls on Partners to Block Islamic Republic of Iran's Path to Nuclear Weapon!

TEHRAN - US President Donald Trump has once again accused Iran of seeking nuclear weapons despite confirmations by the United Nations' atomic agency that Tehran complies with the 2015 nuclear deal. Trump made the remarks on Friday in a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where he declared "America is open for business" despite his railing against "globalism" and free trade in the past. "My administration is proud to have led historic efforts at the United Nations Security Council and all around the world

to unite all civilized nations in our campaign of maximum pressure to de-nuke the Korean peninsula," he said. Trump also called on world countries to block what he called Iran's "path to a nuclear weapon." "We continue to call on partners to confront Iran's support for terrorists and block Iran's path to a nuclear weapon," he continued. Trump, whose country has thousands of nuclear weapons, has often made unfounded accusations that Iran has been seeking to develop nuclear weapons. Tehran has strongly denied the allegations. (Agencies)

### Govt Reforms Agenda Puts Economic Growth on Upward Trajectory: PM

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Saturday said the overall reform agenda of the present government had resulted into the revival of the national economy besides putting economic growth on an upward trajectory. He said this in a meeting with a delegation of World Bank headed by Regional Vice President Annette Dixon which called on him at the Prime Minister's House here. Annette Dixon was accompanied by Country Director World Bank Patchamuthu Illangovan, Regional Vice President IFC Snezana Stoilkovic and Nadeem Siddiqui. Minister for Water Resources Syed Javed Ali Shah, Foreign Secretary

Tehmina Janjua, Secretary Finance Arif Ahmed Khan, Secretary Water Resources Shamil Ahmed and other senior officers were also present during the meeting. Various ongoing developmental projects being undertaken in partnership with the World Bank and the dispute with India over Kishanganga and Ratle projects were discussed during the meeting. The prime minister said significant improvement of law and order, management of energy crisis and massive infrastructure development being undertaken under the umbrella of CPEC project would further strengthen the economy and improve the overall economic outlook. (Monitoring Desk)

### Turkmenistan Launches Fight against Corruption

ASHGABAT - Mammet Sapardurdyev, director of the State Service for Combating Economic Crimes of Turkmenistan, delivered a report at an expanded meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, the Neutral Turkmenistan newspaper reported Jan. 27. In order to conduct an uncompromising struggle against corruption and bribery, as well as to prevent illegal actions of some civil servants, systematic checks are carried out jointly with law enforcement agencies of Turkmenistan, the report said. In particular, it was established that Nursakhed

Sapardurdyev, who worked earlier as Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources (was dismissed from this post in December 2017), using official powers for mercenary purposes, damaged the legitimate interests of the heads of subordinated facilities, foreign companies and entrepreneurs by taking bribes from them in especially large amounts. "He illegally purchased apartments in luxury houses, cars of various brands and golden jewelry for the money obtained by criminal means," said the report. "All his property was arrested." (Trend)

### Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, China Agree to Co-Op on Road Transportation

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and China discussed the cooperation in the field of international road transport at the trilateral meeting held in Tashkent on Jan.24-25, the Uzbek Agency for Road and River Transport reported. The meeting participants focused on issues of the formation of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China automobile corridor and the further development of cooperation between Kyrgyzstan, China and Uzbekistan in the field of international road transportation. The sides exchanged information on the state of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of international road

transport, discussed the implementation of the signed Agreements in this area and agreed on preliminary quotas for the exchange of permission forms for the carriage of goods for 2018. There was noted that the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China transport corridor is of key importance for diversification of foreign trade routes and a substantial reduction in the terms of transportation of goods between states and transit through their territories. The agreement between the governments of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and China on international road transport was signed on February 19, 1998. (Trend)