

U.S. Warplanes to Use Turkish Bases for Anti-IS Air Raids: Report

WASHINGTON - Turkey has agreed to allow U.S. manned and unmanned warplanes to launch air raids on the Islamic State (IS) extremist group from airbases on Turkish soil, according to U.S. media reports on Friday.

The agreement, which would allow U.S. warplanes to engage in anti-IS campaign from the Turkish bases of Incirlik and Diyarbakir, was sealed late Wednesday after a phone call between U.S. President Barack Obama and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan,



The New York Times quoted anonymous U.S. officials as saying.

The new pact would fa-

cilitate the U.S. bombing of IS targets, as the two airbases are located much closer to the Syrian border than Iraq, Kuwait and Jordan, where U.S. air raids on the IS were currently launched.

A statement from the White House on Wednesday after the phone call just said that the two leaders discussed deepening cooperation in the fight against the IS, as well as efforts to "bring security and stability to Iraq and a political settlement to the conflict in Syria." (Xinhua)

U.S. Troops to Train Regular Ukrainian Military Troops: State Department

WASHINGTON - U.S. troops will begin training regular Ukrainian military forces later this year in an expansion of their current mission, which so far has been limited to instructing Interior Ministry national guard units, the State Department said on Friday.

"This training is part of our long-running defense cooperation with Ukraine and is taking place at the invitation of the Ukraine govern-



This additional program brings our total security assistance committed to Ukraine since 2014 to over \$244 million," State Depart-

ment Mark Toner said. Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, head of U.S. Army forces in Europe, said earlier this month that U.S. officials were discussing expanding the military training to include regular Ukrainian troops under the Defense Ministry.

The training is part of U.S. efforts to strengthen Ukraine's security following Russia's seizure of the Crimea last year and the spread of ... (More on P4)... (21)

Kurds 'Gain Ground in Syria's Hasakeh' in IS Fightback

BEIRUT - Kurdish militia have expanded their control over portions of a major Syrian city in their fightback against the Islamic State group, to the detriment of government forces there, a monitor said Saturday.

"The Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) are advancing in Hasakeh city against IS and at the expense of the regime," said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The YPG and government forces have both been defending the city from an IS

assault, which began last month.

The Britain-based Observatory said the YPG now controls a majority of the metropolis, despite Kurds making up just under a third of its population.

"The YPG control 70 percent of Hasakeh city, IS controls 10 percent and the regime controls 20 percent," Abdel Rahman told AFP. Before the IS began its offensive by seizing territory in southern neighbourhoods from regime forces, the Kurdish militia controlled less than half of Hasakeh. (AFP)

Iran Nuclear Deal Not to Impact U.S. Tight Oil Industry Much

WASHINGTON - Iran will increase oil export after as the newly-reached Iran nuclear deal may gradually help lift sanctions against the country, but it will not have great impact on the U.S. tight oil industry in the near future, said a senior researcher of a think-tank based in Washington D.C.

"If the U.S. tight oil industry experiences increasing economic difficulty in 2015, it won't likely be the direct result of a deal with Iran," said Deborah Gordon, director of energy and climate program with Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in a recent interview with Xinhua. "As for the pros-

pects for the industry in 2016, it probably has more to do with the likelihood of whether the global economy recovers or not." The United States has witnessed a tight oil boom in the past few years driven by the widespread usage of hydraulic fracturing and the higher crude oil ... (More on P4)... (22)

Turkey to Create IS Free Safe Zones in Syria for Refugees: FM

ANKARA - Turkey and the United States has agreed to clear northern Syria of the Islamic State (IS) militants to create "safe regions" there, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Saturday.

"Syrian refugees in Turkey and in neighboring countries will be able to settle in these safe re-

gions," the minister said at a press conference, adding that Ankara and Washington have agreed on this issue.

Also on Saturday, local Hurriyet Daily News reported that members of Free Syrian Army, a rebel group, can also be deployed at the IS free zone, which will be 98 km long and 40 km

wide. Turkey prefers to call it IS-free zone instead of a "security or safe zone" because Washington refrained from giving the wrong message to the Syrian regime, Russia and Iran to show that the objective of this plan is not against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. (Xinhua)

U.S. May Release Israeli Spy Pollard from Prison Soon: Report

WASHINGTON - The Obama administration is preparing to release convicted Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard in a move to smooth its ties with Israel which is strongly against the Iranian nuclear deal, according to a U.S. media report Friday.

Some U.S. officials have been pushing for Pollard's release within weeks or months, considering his date of parole in November as a possible

date for release, the Wall Street Journal reported on its website.

Pollard, an American citizen and former civilian analyst of the U.S. Navy, was arrested in November 1985 and later sentenced to life imprisonment for spying for Israel, in a sensational case which has often divided the two allies.

Pollard supporters argue that the punishment ... (More on P4)... (23)

Greek Bailout Talks to Start on Monday after Delay

ATHENS - Talks between Greece and its international creditors over a new bailout package should go ahead on Monday after logistical issues that delayed meetings this week are resolved, a Greek official said on Saturday.

The meetings with officials from the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund had been expected to start on Friday but were delayed by organizational issues including the location of talks and security.

The finance ministry official said talks were now expected to get underway

formally on Monday after the logistical issues were resolved. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, denied that the government was trying to keep the lenders' team away from government departments.

"We don't have any problem with them visiting the General Accounting Office," the official said. Greeks have viewed inspections visits by the lenders in Athens as a violation of the country's sovereignty and six-months of acrimonious negotiations with EU partners took place in Brussels at the government's request. (Reuters)

Libyan Senior Official Survives Assassination in Tunisia

TRIPOLI - Undersecretary of Interior of Libya's internationally recognized government, and Minister of Interior in charge Col. Mustafa Al-Debbashi on Thursday survived an assassination attempt in the Tunisian capital, according to the ministry's spokesman on Friday.

Tunisian authorities arrested a terrorist who was attempting to assassinate Col. Al-Debbashi as he was in Tunisia," the ministry's spokesman

Lieutenant Tariq Kharraz said.

"The arrested terrorist is a Tunisian national and linked to a Libyan terrorist group. He is being interrogated currently by the Tunisian security to uncover the motives behind the attempted assassination and for further details of the group he belongs to," Kharraz added. No group has claimed responsibility for the attempted assassination so far. (Xinhua)

French Defence Minister Visits Cairo after Warplane Deal



CAIRO - French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian began a two-day visit to Cairo Saturday, just days after France delivered the first batch of 24 Rafale warplanes Egypt bought in a multi-billion-euro deal.

Le Drian, who is on a tour of Africa, is to hold talks with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and other Egyptian officials during his trip. The visit comes after Egypt took delivery of three of 24 Rafale fighter jets it bought from France in a 5.2-billion-euro (\$5.6-billion) deal. Egypt bought the jets to boost its military capability in the face of an unstable Libya to the west and the threat posed by the Islamic State group in the Sinai Penin-

sula. The deal also includes contracts for missiles and for a frigate from naval group DCNS. "The minister will discuss the deliveries of hardware" to Egypt following the Rafale deal, a French official said ahead of Le Drian's visit.

Le Drian met with his counterpart Sedki Sobhi, and will hold talks with Sisi and other Egyptian officials which are expected to discuss the conflict in Libya, officials said. Since the fall of dictator Moamer Kadhafi's regime in 2011, Libya is in chaos, with two rival governments vying for power and jihadists taking advantage of the situation to gain ground. (AFP)

Neighbour News

Support for Terrorists Dangerous Initiative: Iran Diplomat

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian diplomat says

financial and military support for terrorist groups is a dangerous initiative, posing a threat to regional and international countries. "Pressure [exerted] by certain countries to overthrow the legitimate Syrian government in addition to financial and military support for terrorist groups was a dangerous initiative which strengthened terrorist groups and turned into a threat to regional countries and the international community," Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said in a meeting with Yves Rossier, the State Secretary at the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

(FDFA), in Tehran on Saturday.

He expressed hope that regional countries would boost cooperation to fight terrorism and extremism in a "committed and responsible" way.

The Iranian envoy also said the people of Syria and Yemen have the right to determine their own fate and said the crises in the two Arab countries should be settled through dialog.

Amir-Abdollahian also warned against the ongoing catastrophic human situation in Yemen and said humanitarian aid should be dispatched to the war-hit country while Saudi Arabia should stop its aggression. He called for speeding up the process of national dialog in the Arab state. (Agencies)

Uzbekistan and World Bank Sign Roadmap for Privatization

BISHKEK - Signing ceremony Chairman of the State Competition Committee of Uzbekistan Davron Khidoyatov and World Bank Country Manager for Uzbekistan Junghun Cho signed a Roadmap on improving corporate governance and developing process of privatization.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) country manager for Uzbekistan Zafar Hashimov was also present at the meeting along with the representatives of the Uzbek government. An action plan (Roadmap) on cooperation on privatization was devel-

oped at the round table discussion of the sides on March 5, 2015. Back then, the sides agreed to organize the joint work to improve the corporate governance and deepen the process of privatization.

On July 23, the sides discussed issues of technical assistance of the World Bank and the draft Action Plan.

Special attention was paid to the transition of joint stock companies to publishing their annual financial reports and making of external audits in accordance with international rules. (AKIpress)

'Acutely Aware' of Campaign against China-Pak Corridor: Gen. Raheel

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen. Raheel Sharif made it clear on Saturday that the Pakistan Army is "acutely aware" of the campaign by "rivals" against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Asim Bajwa said on Twitter. The army chief vowed that the armed forces are prepared to "pay any price to turn this long cherished dream into a reality". During his visit to Panjgur and Turbat in Balochistan where he

inspected the under-construction road network of the project, the army chief said, "CPEC and Gwadar Port will be built and developed as one of the most strategic deep sea ports in the region at all costs." The ISPR spokesman said Gen Raheel was apprised during a briefing that as many as 11 units of Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) have been employed in Balochistan for the construction of an 870 kilometre-long stretch of roads at five different locations simultaneously. (Agencies)

China Lauds Value in Concluding ITA Expansion Talks

BEIJING - China's Ministry of Commerce on Saturday lauded the value in the upcoming conclusion of negotiations on expanding the Information Technology Agreement (ITA), a tariff cutting mechanism under the World Trade Organization (WTO). WTO members representing major exporters of information technology products on Friday agreed to eliminate tariffs on 201 new products, according to WTO's press release. This step forward cleared the way for ministers from the participants to conclude their implementation plans in Nairobi in December 2015 when the WTO holds its

10th Ministerial Conference. "If the negotiations are concluded as scheduled, they will be the only completed WTO negotiations on market access in recent years," the ministry said in a statement on its website. The negotiation results will further promote global trade and world economic growth, and also inject new vitality into multilateral trade negotiations, according to the statement. Products covered by this expansion include new-generation semi-conductors, GPS navigation systems, medical equipment, as well as machine tools for manufacturing printed circuits, telecommunications satellites and touch screens. (Xinhua)

Syria's Assad Issues Pardon for Draft Dodgers



DAMASCUS - Syrian President Bashar al-Assad issued on Saturday a presidential pardon regarding military service violations, the official SANA news agency reported. The amnesty covers the crimes of desertion inside Syria and abroad as well as other military service-related crimes mentioned in the military law, said SANA.

The reports said that the amnesty gives defectors who fled the country two months to hand themselves in, and one month for those still inside Syria. The president usually issues such

amnesties each year, but this year the pardon on the military service violations has a special importance amid reports of high number of draft dodgers. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based watchdog group, said recently that there are 70 thousands draft dodgers who averted to report to service since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in mid-March 2011. Local community advertisement campaigns have started mushrooming in the capital Damascus, urging the young men to join the military service. (Xinhua)



ADEN - The Saudi-led coalition bombing Yemeni rebels since March declared a five-day truce Saturday so aid can reach a country the UN says is on the brink of a humanitarian disaster. Announcing the unilateral truce to begin from midnight Sunday, a statement on the official Saudi Press Agency said the coalition also reserved the right to respond to "military activity or movement" by the Shiite Huthi rebels during the ceasefire.

SPA said the decision was taken at the request of Yemen's President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, who has taken refuge in

the Saudi capital with much of his government. Hadi, whose supporters have recaptured most of the southern port of Aden from the rebels after four months of war, wanted the truce for the "delivery and distribution of the maximum amount of humanitarian and medical aid", it said.

Two previous UN-brokered ceasefires failed to take hold. The Saudi move came as Yemeni medical sources said a coalition air raid killed at least 35 civilians in the southwest of the war-ravaged Arabian Peninsula nation. (AFP)