

U.S. Sanctions Bill to Bring more Uncertainties on Ties with Russia, Iran, DPRK

WASHINGTON - The U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday overwhelmingly approved a bill that will slap tougher sanctions on Russia, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Congressmen voted 419-3 to pass the bill, with three Republicans - Justin Amash, Jimmy Duncan and Thomas Massie - voting against the bill. Political analysts said the move will bring more uncertainties to the country's relations with the three countries.

"The House's 419-3 vote on the sanctions bill reflects changes in its evaluation of threats from the three countries," said Teng Jianqun, director of the Department for American Studies at the China Institute of International



Studies. Teng said the sanctions bill also shows that the United States now has great worries about its national security. "The bill, undoubtedly, will bring a negative impact and more uncertainties to America's relations with the three countries, as well as solutions to related regional issues," Teng added. The overwhelming support for the bill, which was voted on under special procedures to pass with a two-thirds majority, means that the House could override a presidential veto. The measure aims to target key Russian officials in retaliation for Moscow's alleged interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, as well as sanctions against Iran and the DPRK in response to their weapons programs. (Xinhua)

Nieghbor News

China, Russia Pledge Coordination on Strategic Security

BEIJING - China and Russia agreed to strengthen communication and coordination as the two sides Wednesday held the 13th round of strategic security consultation in Beijing. The consultation was co-chaired by Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi and Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev. Hailing the strong momentum of bilateral ties as "their best in history," Yang called on the two sides to further enhance strategic mutual trust and coordination, promote cooperation in security, and strengthen support on issues of each other's core interest. During Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Russia early this month, Xi and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin signed a joint statement

on deepening the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination. "The two sides should implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state, promote bilateral ties, safeguard their common strategic security interests," Yang said. "Promoting the two countries' comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination is a priority in Russia's diplomacy," Patrushev said, pledging more cooperation with China in strategic security and further coordination in international affairs. The two sides also agreed to strengthen coordination for the success of the seventh meeting of BRICS High Representatives for Security Issues, which will be held in Beijing Thursday to Friday. (Xinhua)

EU Executive to Start Legal Action against Poland over Judiciary Reform

BRUSSELS - The European Commission said on Wednesday it would start legal action against Poland over an overhaul of the judiciary that it says undermines the independence of judges and so breaks EU rules. The Commission also gave Poland a month to respond to EU concerns over the rule of law raised by the EU executive in an unprecedented process launched in 2016 and now aggravated by the planned Polish legal reforms.

Polish President Andrzej

Duda on Tuesday signed into law a bill giving the justice minister the power to hire and fire senior judges who head ordinary courts. But in a move welcomed by Brussels, Duda also blocked two other bills that would have given the government and parliament power to replace Supreme Court judges. "An independent judiciary is an essential precondition for membership in our (European) Union," Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker said in a statement. "The EU can



therefore not accept a system which allows dismissing judges at will." "If the Polish government goes ahead with undermining the independence of the judiciary and the

rule of law in Poland, we will have no other choice than to trigger Article 7," he said, referring to a legal process of suspending Poland's voting rights in the 28-nation EU. (Reuters)

Hungary Blames Soros for EU Stepping up against Hungary over Migrant Quota

BUDAPEST - Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Peter Szijarto on Wednesday blamed the Hungarian-born American billionaire George Soros for being behind the European Union's (EU) criticism against Hungary. "Strangely, after the reception of Soros in Brussels, all of the European institutions put more pressure on Hungary," he told a press conference, after meeting with State Minister of Georgia on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Victor

Dolidze. The European Court of Justice should dismiss a challenge by Hungary and Slovakia to a scheme to share thousands of refugees among member states under a quota system, the court's senior lawyer Yves Bot said earlier Wednesday. The two countries filed lawsuits with the European Court of Justice in 2015 after the European Commission pushed through the mandatory quotas to ease the migrant crisis, over the objections of Budapest and Bratislava. (Xinhua)

President Trump Says Yellen, Cohn are Contenders for next Fed Chair

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that current Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen and the White House National Economic Director Gary Cohn are among contenders to lead the central bank next year. In an interview with the Wall Street Journal on Tuesday, Trump said Yellen, whose term as Fed Chair expires next February, has done "a good job" and he has "a lot of respect for her." "I'd like to see rates stay low. She's historically

been a low-interest-rate person," he said, adding Yellen is still in the running to serve a second four-year term as head of the central bank. Trump said Cohn is also on the list of candidates to lead the central bank, although Cohn and other White House officials have said he is focused on his current job. "I've known Gary for a long time, but I've gained great respect for Gary working with him, so Gary certainly would be in the mix," said the president. (Xinhua)

Merkel to Win German Parliamentary Elections: Survey

BERLIN - Less than two months before Germans elect a new federal parliament (Bundestag) in September, a "Stem-RITL Wahltrend" poll published on Wednesday suggests that Angela Merkel is likely to cruise to her fourth term as chancellor. Conservative sister parties Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU) both defended their lead with a combined 40 percent of electoral support. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), led by former president of the European

parliament Martin Schulz, stagnated at 22 percent. After an initial surge in support when he took the reins of the SPD in March 2017, Schulz has struggled to translate the so-called "Schulz effect" into a lasting electoral following. The SPD has since suffered defeats in three state elections in Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein and North Rhine-Westphalia, raising questions over his ability to successfully compete with Merkel. Merkel continues to enjoy a significant advantage over other candidates in the category



of whom survey respondents would vote for if they could cast a direct ballot for the chancellorship. After holding German chancellor for 12 years, Merkel can still count of the support of 52 percent of voters. The Left party (Linke) stood at 9 percent, the Free Democratic Party (FDP) was tied with the Green party (Gruene) at 8 percent respectively and the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party was last with 7 percent of the vote. (Xinhua)

Trump Says Won't Let Syria's Assad Get Away with "Horrible" Actions

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he won't let Syrian President Bashar al-Assad get away with the "horrible" actions he has done. "I am not a fan of Assad. I certainly think what he has done to that country and to humanity is horrible," Trump said at a joint press conference with visiting Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri at the White House. "I have been saying that for a long time. I am not somebody that will stand by and let him get away with what he tried to do," Trump warned. In April, Trump ordered the U.S. military to launch 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles against a Syrian airbase in response to alleged chemical attack launched by the Syrian government forces. (Xinhua)

EU Warns U.S. it May Respond Swiftly to Counter new Sanctions on Russia

MINSK - The Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant Will be Fully Put into Operation in the Summer of 2020, Rosatom Director General Alexei Likhachev said on Monday. While meeting with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, Likhachev said Russia's State Atomic Energy Corporation (Rosatom) adheres to the agreement made between the Belarusian head of state and the Russian president in 2012 that the project was to build the safest and the most modern nuclear station in Europe, local media reported. "This is a new generation of security. In the world there are no such analogues," Alexei Likhachev said. Lukashenko said Belarus pays great attention to the construction of the nuclear power plant. (Xinhua)

France Says U.S. Sanctions on Iran, Russia Look Illegal

PARIS - France's foreign ministry on Wednesday said new U.S. sanctions against Iran, Russia and North Korea appeared at odds with international law due to their extra-territorial reach. The U.S. House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly on Tuesday for these sanctions, which could affect European firms. The foreign ministry said in a statement that



French and European laws would need to be adjusted in response and added that discussions would be necessary at

European Union level because of the potential impact on European citizens and firms. (Reuters)

Qatar Says new Terror List is "Disappointing Surprise"

DOHA - Qatar said on Wednesday a decision by four Arab states to add 18 groups and individuals allegedly linked to Doha to their "terrorist" lists was "a disappointing surprise" and that it was doing all it could to fight extremism. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain put another nine groups based in Yemen and Libya and nine people from several Arab countries on the blacklist, saying all were associated with Qatar. "(The new list) comes as a disappointing surprise that the blockading countries are still pursuing this story as part of their smear campaign against Qatar," Sheikh Saif Bin Ahmed al-Thani, director of the Gulf kingdom's Government Communications Office, said



in a statement sent to Reuters. "This latest list provides further evidence that the blockading countries are not committed to the fight against terrorism. As we have previously stated, all individuals with links to terrorism in Qatar have been prosecuted." Sheikh Saif said Qatar constantly reviews its anti-terror laws to "remain on the front foot in the fight against extremism and terror financing." (Reuters)

Britain May Never Actually Leave EU: Political Expert

LONDON - Britain could remain for years in a transitional arrangement with the European Union, a leading academic expert in politics has predicted. It could even lead to Britain never actually leaving the EU as negotiators come to terms with the complications of striking a "Brexit" deal, said Dr Stuart Wilks-Heeg, head of politics at the University of Liverpool. In an interview with Xinhua, Wilks-Heeg also said the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), the party set up to champion Brexit, could virtually disappear from Britain's political landscape. David Davis, the government Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, is currently heading negotiations with Brussels about Britain's withdrawal as a member state in March 2019, two years after triggering the article 50 exit mechanism. Former prime minister David Cameron called the national referendum in June 2016 after he had led unsuccessful talks with Brussels in a bid to tackle growing issues in Britain, particularly high levels of immigration. Wilks-Heeg believes had those talks delivered a solution, the referendum may never have happened. Even so, Cameron, like many others, strongly believed British people would vote to stay in the EU. Wilks-Heeg said: "It is clear we are heading for a transitional arrangement with Brussels, and as we end up half-in, half-out, things could just slip down the agenda. That could see us in this transitional stage indefinitely, and possibly almost permanently." (Xinhua)

Iran Warns Fresh U.S. Sanctions Harm Nuclear Deal Implementation

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian official said Wednesday the fresh sanctions by the U.S. against Iran will have adverse impacts on the "successful" implementation of the nuclear deal, official IRNA news agency reported. Given the U.S. commitments, "they should have implemented the JCOPA with goodwill and in constructive atmosphere, and they should have avoided the measures which might have (negative) impacts on the successful implementation of the deal," Abbas Araqchi, senior Iranian nuclear negotiator and deputy foreign minister, was quoted as saying. However, the recent

move of the U.S. congress to impose sanctions on Iran runs counter to the U.S. commitments, Araqchi told reporters. "Iran will definitely respond to the U.S. hostile move," he noted. The U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday overwhelmingly approved a bill that will slap tougher sanctions on Russia, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Sanctions against Iran is in response to Tehran's growing missile program. Iranian officials have repeatedly said Iran maintains its right to respond to the U.S. if the latter does not comply with the nuclear deal. (Xinhua)

Turkmenistan, Iraq Hold Political Consultations

ASHGABAT - Political consultations between Turkmen and Iraqi deputy foreign ministers were held in Ashgabat, the Turkmen foreign ministry said in a message July 26. The Iraqi delegation was headed by the country's Deputy Foreign Minister Nizar Issa Abdul-Hadi Al-Khairalla. "The Turkmen and Iraqi deputy foreign ministers exchanged views on topical issues of regional security and cooperation," the message said. "The sides stressed com-

prehensive commitment to the development of cooperation in fighting terrorism." According to the message, the Turkmen and Iraqi officials also discussed the possibilities of developing trade and economic cooperation and establishing direct contacts between the entrepreneurs of the two countries. The sides also agreed to analyze the current state of the legal framework of the Turkmenistan-Iraq relations. (Trend)