

EU Election Fiasco: Head of German Social Dems & Merkel's Coalition Partner to Step Down

BERLIN - Andrea Nahles said she will resign as the leader of Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD). It comes a week after the establishment parties took a big hit, losing the combined majority in the EU elections.

Nahles announced that she will step as down as SPD leader and the head of its group in the national parliament on Tuesday. Writing in a farewell letter to her colleagues, she said that she does not believe there is enough support for herself anymore. The discussions... and the large amount of feedback from the party have shown me that there is no longer support for me in holding these offices.

The Social Democrats have been longtime coalition partners with Chancellor Angela Mer-



kel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), with which they have formed ruling governments. Chosen as party chief a year ago, Nahles led the SPD during the European Parliament elec-

tions in late May. The results were utterly disappointing for centrist parties across the continent, as the pro-European bloc EPP and the Social Democratic alliance S&D (which

Germany's Social Democrats are members of) lost their combined majority for the first time. (RT)

Israeli Jets & Combat Helicopters Strike Syrian Artillery, Air Defense Units - IDF

JERUSALEM - The Israeli military has confirmed striking "a number" of Syrian Army targets in cross border raids that, according to Damascus, left at least three soldiers dead and seven others wounded. "Israeli warplanes and combat helicopters attacked several military targets belonging to the Syrian army, including two artillery batteries, a number of observation and intelligence posts on the Golan Heights front," the IDF said in a rare press release, not-

ing that it also targeted Syrian Army air defense posts. The raids came in response to two rockets, allegedly fired from Syrian territory into Hermon in the northern Golan Heights on Saturday night, the IDF explained, posting a video of the attack. Earlier, Syrian state media said that at least three soldiers were killed and seven others were wounded in two consecutive attacks on the Damascus and ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

The Trumps Are Coming: London Ready for Controversial Visit

LONDON - It's a unique odd couple: A 93-year-old sovereign who has made a point of keeping her opinions to herself during her long reign is hosting a 72-year-old reality-TV-star-turned-president who tweets his uncensored thoughts daily to 60 million followers.

For Queen Elizabeth II, Britain's unflappable monarch, the arrival of U.S. President Donald Trump, his family and his armored entourage on Monday means a full day of ceremony and toasts



topped by a magnificent banquet at Buckingham Palace. Yet beneath the pomp and ceremony, there are differences aplenty. There will be

a formal tea hosted by Prince Charles and his wife Camilla for Trump and his wife, bringing together a future king who has warned about the

Chinese Defense Minister Vows to 'Fight to The End, at All Costs' Over Trade & Taiwan



BEIJING - Beijing will fight to the end to protect its national interests both economically, amid the trade war with the US, and militarily, if any

outside force dares to challenge the One China policy and split Taiwan from the mainland. The People's Liberation Army will have no

choice but to protect Taiwan at all costs should the US or any other outside force dare to split the island from the mainland, Defense Minister Wei Fenghe told delegates of the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit, a day after his American counterpart tried to muster an international coalition against China's growing might in the Indo-Pacific. "No attempts to split China will succeed," the defense chief said. "Any interference in the Tai-

wan question is doomed to failure." China must be and will be reunited. Stressing that China will not yield a "single inch" of its "sacred land," the minister said the PLA serves "entirely for self-defense" and will only strike back if attacked. Some countries from outside the region come to the South China Sea to flex muscles in the name of freedom of navigation. While the threat of a wider conflict indeed hangs ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

'Unlimited Reach, No Safeguards': Snowden Warns of Greatest Social Control Scheme in History

WASHINGTON - The US government has a tendency to hijack and weaponize revolutionary innovations, Edward Snowden said, noting that the natural human desire to communicate with others is now being exploited on an unprecedented scale. "Our utopian vision for the future is never guaranteed to be realized," Snowden told the audience in Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada via live stream from Moscow this week, stressing that

the US government "corrupted our knowledge... towards a military purpose." They took our nuclear capability and transformed it into the most horrible weapon that the world had ever witnessed. And we're seeing an atomic moment of computer science... Its reach is unlimited... but its safeguards are not! The whistleblower, who in 2013 leaked a trove of highly classified information about ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Iraq Condemns Eighth French IS Member to Death

BAGHDAD - An Iraqi court on Sunday sentenced to death an eighth Frenchman for joining the Islamic State group, rejecting his claims he was tortured into confessing.

Fodil Tahar Aouidate, 32, first appeared in court on May 27 but a judge delayed his trial to allow for a medical examination.

"The medical report shows that there are no signs of torture on his body," the judge told the court.

Aouidate showed no reaction when the judge handed down his death sentence, according to an ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

Mexican President Says Confident That US Will Negotiate on Tariffs

MEXICO CITY - Mexico's president said Saturday he thinks US officials are prepared to negotiate on President Donald Trump's threat to use tariffs as a tool to fight illegal migration across the border. "There is willingness on the part of US government officials to establish dialogue and reach agreements and compromises," President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador told a news conference. He did not say what gave him reason to believe this, though he noted that his government had contacted both US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and adviser.

Trump's surprise announcement Thursday of new tariffs against a key US trading partner was widely criticized, including by US business groups, border-state ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

Pompeo, Swiss FM in Talks Likely Dominated by Iran Tensions

BELLINZONA, Switzerland - U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met Sunday with his Swiss counterpart for talks expected to focus on Iran amid rising tensions between Washington and Tehran that have sparked fears of open conflict.

Pompeo met Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis in the southern Swiss town of Bellinzona as concerns about the potential for escalation and miscalculation with Iran have unnerved many in Europe and the Middle East. Switzerland represents U.S. interests in Iran and has been an intermedi-



ary between the two before although it is not clear if Pompeo is looking for specific assistance from the Swiss beyond what it already does in looking after Americans detained in the Islamic Republic.

Trump administration officials have sug-

gested they would look positively at any move to release at least five American citizens and at least two permanent U.S. residents who are currently imprisoned in Iran. Pompeo is in Switzerland on the second leg of ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

Clashes at Jerusalem Holy Site as Israel Marks 1967 War Win

JERUSALEM - Israeli police say security forces have clashed with Muslim worshippers at Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld says Palestinians hurled stones and chairs at forces Sunday, an Israeli holiday celebrating the capture of the Old City during the 1967 Middle East war.

The incident came after Israeli nationalists visited the contested site, revered by Jews as the Temple

Mount and by Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary.

Tensions run high on Jerusalem Day, which this year falls toward the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Two days earlier, police say a Palestinian stabbed two Israelis in the Old City before being killed.

Israelis are to hold an annual march through the Old City, and police say they're on high alert to avoid violence. (Fox News)

Where There Are Threats, There Are Defenses: Chinese Defense Minister on South China Sea

SINGAPORE - Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister Wei Fenghe said here on Sunday that China's construction on its South China Sea islands and reefs is its legitimate right and is purely defensive in nature.

"The current situation in the South China Sea is improving towards greater stability. It is attributed to the common efforts of the countries in the region," Wei said. "However, there are always people trying to rake in profits by stirring up troubles in the region."

He said over 100,000 ships sail through the South China Sea each year, and "none has been threatened."

However, in recent years, some countries outside the region come to the South China Sea to flex muscles, in the name of freedom of navigation. "The large-scale force projection and offensive operations in the region are the most serious destabilizing and uncertain factors in the South China Sea," he said.

If there is chaos in the South China Sea, the regional countries are the ones who will bear the brunt, and China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have made progress in negotiating the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, he added.

Wei noted that China's construction on its South China Sea islands and reefs is legitimate and defensive in nature. ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

Neighbor News

Iran Warns Any Clash in The Gulf Would Push Oil Prices Above \$100

LONDON - U.S. military vessels in the Gulf are within range of Iranian missiles, a top military aide to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday, warning any clash between the two countries would push oil prices above \$100 a barrel. Iran and the United States have been drawn into starker confrontation in the past month, a year after Washington pulled out of a deal between Iran and global powers to curb Tehran's nuclear programme in return for lifting international sanctions. Washington re-imposed sanctions last

year and ratcheted them up in May, ordering all countries to halt imports of Iranian oil. In recent weeks it has also hinted at military confrontation, saying it was sending extra forces to the Middle East to respond to an Iranian threat.

Yahya Rahim Safavi, a top military aide to Khamenei, said: "The Americans are fully aware that their military forces (in the region) are within the Iran's missile range and all U.S. and foreigners' navy in the Persian Gulf are within the range of land-to-sea missiles of the Revolutionary Guards." (Reuters)

Uzbekistan Simplifies Tourist Visa Regime, Expands Electronic Visa Validity

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan has increased the number of countries whose citizens can obtain tourist visas in a simplified procedure and expanded the e-visa validity period in a bid to boost tourism, the Uzbek Foreign Ministry said over the weekend.

Citizens of 77 countries can now get Uzbek tourist visas within two working days and the requirements to provide a tourist voucher or invitation of the inviting legal or natural persons in Uzbekistan have been abolished, the ministry said, citing a presidential decree signed earlier this

week. Furthermore, the validity of a Uzbek electronic visa for a 30-day stay in the country has been expanded to 90 days. That is, the stay of a foreign citizen is calculated from the moment of crossing the Uzbek state border, including entry into the country on the 90th day, according to the document.

The number of foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan has reached 1.3 million in the first quarter of 2019, an increase of 42 percent compared to the same period of 2018, according to the Uzbek State Committee for Tourism. (Xinhua)

Turkmenistan Getting Ready for World Expo 2020

ASHGABAT - Work is underway to organize the pavilion of Turkmenistan at World Expo 2020 in Dubai, UAE, Trend reports referring to the Neutral Turkmenistan newspaper.

The Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan selected the project of Tekmil, a local private enterprise.

The country's national symbols are reflected in the external decor of the pavilion: a bas-relief of Turkmenistan's famed Ahal-Teke horse on the building's gable, as well as carpet styling, the expressiveness of which will be emphasized by specular lighting, and elements of the Turkmen yurt (a portable, round tent traditionally used by various nomadic peoples), the information says. One of the building's walls, 50 meters wide, will be assembled from LED screens displaying the country's natural and historical sights, magnificent seascapes and the country's Caspian resort of Awaza, among other things.

The company plans to use innovative technologies, as well as high-resolution video content, which will create a 3D visualization. The area of the national pavilion will cover 1,581 square meters. (Trend)

Turkey, Pakistan Discuss Counter Terrorism Efforts

ANKARA - Turkish and Pakistani officials on Friday gathered in the capital Ankara to discuss the reflection of international terrorism on the regional and global level and how to tackle extremism and radicalism.

"The two sides reviewed the global and regional threats posed by international terrorism and reiterated their resolve to jointly combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," Pakistani embassy in Ankara said in a statement.

Noting that a "comprehensive" approach was needed to combat global and regional terrorism, Turkey and Pakistan underlined the importance of addressing the root causes of extremism to effective-

ly battle terrorism. "It was agreed to explore further avenues of cooperation between the two countries including exchange of best practices in areas such as law enforcement/security, criminal justice and rule of law, countering financing of terrorism and prevention of radicalization," the statement read. In addition, Turkey and Pakistan exchanged views on the threat posed by terrorist group Daesh in the Middle East and other parts of the World.

The Pakistani delegation was led by Ahmad Farooq, director general of counter-terrorism, whereas Turkish delegation was led by Aylin Tashan, director general for research and security. (Trend)