

EU's Tusk Calls on May to Press Ahead with Brexit Talks

BRUSSELS - European Council President Donald Tusk on Friday congratulated British Prime Minister Theresa May on her reappointment, underscoring that Brussels and London should press ahead with the Brexit talks.

"Our shared responsibility and urgent task now is to conduct the negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the European Union in the best possible spirit, securing the least disruptive outcome for our citizens, businesses and countries after March 2019," Tusk said in his congratulatory letter to May.

"The time frame set by Article 50 of the Treaty leaves us with no time to lose. I am fully committed to maintaining



regular and close contact at our level to facilitate the work of our negotiators," he added. European Commission President Jean Claude-Juncker, also said earlier on Friday in Prague that the EU "can open negotiation tomorrow morning at 09:30."

"We are waiting for visitors coming from London. I hope that we will not experience a further delay in the conclusion of these negotiations," Juncker said at a joint press conference together with Bohuslav Sobotka, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, and Rose Gottemoeller, NATO Deputy Secretary-General, following a high-level conference on defence and security. "First, ... (More on P4)...(16)

Trump, Sisi Underline Combating Terrorism

CAIRO - U.S. President Donald Trump asserted in a phone call with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on Friday the importance of resuming efforts of combating terrorism decisively, official news agency MENA reported.

"The two presidents underlined also the importance of standing together as one strong front against terrorism, the militant and extremist groups, and the countries funding terrorism, morally or financially," the Egyptian presidency said in a statement. "The policy of intervention in other countries'

affairs via supporting terrorism and extremist thoughts in the region becomes unacceptable," the statement added.

Egypt along with other big Arab powers decided on Monday to sever the relations with the Gulf gas-rich country Qatar over alleged accusations of supporting terror groups and intervention in other countries' internal affairs. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain named in a joint statement early Friday that 59 people and 12 entities that financed terrorist organizations and previously received support



from Qatar.

The United States offered mediation and urged the Arab Gulf countries to remain united.

Trump and the Egyptian president stressed also the continuation of coop-

eration and coordination at high levels to ensure pushing forward the efforts of restoring peace in the Middle East and uprooting terrorism ultimately, the presidency added. (Xinhua)

Brexit Negotiations to be Harder for British PM after Election: London Think Tank

LONDON - Brexit negotiations will be more difficult for British Prime Minister Theresa May following the general election results, a think-tank expert said Friday.

Dr Robin Niblett, director of Chatham House in London, said May's Conservative party still contains fierce Brexiters who will challenge every concession, but the proportion of her MPs who voted to Remain and who want a pragmatic Brexit is higher than expected.

"The net effect of these conflicting pressures is

likely to be the search for a pragmatic deal with the EU that can pass the threshold of a significant majority across the whole parliament and not just in the Conservative Party," added Niblett.

He said May was chosen by the Conservative Party last autumn to be the safe pair of hands that would navigate Britain through the difficult waters of Brexit.

"In the end, the Conservative Party has lost its outright majority, and has had to rely on gains in... (More on P4)...(17)

Trump Partially Denies Comey's Testimony, Mum on Existence of Recordings

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump said Friday that former Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) James Comey was not speaking the truth regarding several details during his Thursday testimony to the Senate.

"Some of the things he said just weren't true," Trump told a joint press conference with visiting Romanian President Klaus Iohannis.

Trump denied that he had hoped Comey would drop the FBI investiga-

tion into former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, adding that he did not ask Comey to pledge allegiance.

Trump said he is "100 percent" willing to "speak under oath" to give his version of those events.

Comey has told the Senate hearing the content of his five private meetings and phone calls with Trump, saying the president had asked for "loyalty" and "hoped" that the Flynn probe would be dropped. Regarding his previous... (More on P4)...(18)

EU Needs Common Security and Defence Policy: Juncker

PRAGUE - At the DESCOP Defence and Security Conference here on Friday, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said the EU needs a common security and defence policy, only the soft power is not enough to ensure security in the present world.

Juncker stressed that it is not the question of whether the EU should strengthen its ability to face threats, but how fast it would do it. The key to security on the continent is cooperation with NATO, but European countries

should play a stronger role and be able to act independently.

In today's world, a strong NATO, a strong European Union and a strong relationship between the two, are more important than they ever have been before, said Juncker. Current threats - whether war conflicts, cyber attacks, or terrorism - demand that EU member countries convert the idea of defense cooperation into reality.

Juncker said the soft power in itself is not powerful enough in an increasingly militarised world, there



is the need of a credible EU defence policy. He said a European Security and Defence Union will help protect the EU, of which three quarters of

Europeans are in favour. In the 1950s, attempts to move towards common defence have been part of the European project, said Juncker. (Xinhua)

Trump Affirms Commitment to NATO's Mutual Defence Clause

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday for the first time that he was committed to the NATO charter's Article 5 on mutual defense.

"I'm committing the United States and have committed, but I'm committing the United States to Article 5," said Trump here at a joint press conference with visiting Romanian President Klaus Iohannis. "And certainly we are there to protect, and that's one of the reasons that I want people to make sure we have a very, very strong force by paying the kind of money necessary to have that force," said Trump. However, Trump ignored the question when asked whether the United States saw Russia as a threat to regional security and peace. It was the first time that Trump, who once called... (More on P4)...(19)

British PM under Fresh Pressure as Top Aides Quit

LONDON - British Prime Minister Theresa May was forced to relinquish her two closest aides on Saturday as she struggled to reassert her authority following a crushing electoral setback.

The Conservative leader has been warned her days are numbered after calling Thursday's vote three years early, only to lose her majority in parliament. Senior party figures have cautioned against any immediate leadership challenge, saying it would only cause further disruption as Britain prepares to start Brexit negotiations as early as June 19. But reports suggest they demanded the departure of May's joint chiefs of staff, Nick Timothy and Fiona... (More on P4)...(21)

Naming Qatar-Link "Terrorism List" Adds More Pressure on Qatar

CAIRO - Arab states that have severed ties with Qatar "tightened their squeeze" on Friday by putting 12 organizations and 59 people linked with the Gulf oil-rich state on "a terror sanctions list."

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt and Bahrain, along with other countries on Monday cut relations with Qatar and accused it of fomenting instability in the region, sheltering members of terrorist organizations, and intervention in other country's internal affairs.

They have imposed what Qatar says is "a blockade"



of shipping and air traffic, and closed Qatar's only land border, causing panic buying at supermarkets and provoking confusion and anxiety across the population. SCREWS TIGHTENED

Qatar dismissed the terror listing as part of "baseless

allegations that hold no foundation in fact."

"The developments intensified a confrontation between Qatar and a group of Arab nations led by Saudi Arabia and Egypt," said Tariq Fahmy, professor of political sciences with... (More on P4)...(20)

Erdogan Urges Lifting of Blockade against Qatar

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday evening called for lifting the blockade against Qatar, reaffirming Turkey's support for the Arab country. "I call on the leaders and citizens of the Gulf states, there will be no winner in this fight and slanders will get us nowhere," the president said at a fasting-break dinner in Istanbul.

He urged Saudi Arabia to end all restrictions on Qatar and resolve the ongoing dispute through talks. Early this week, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt cut off diplomatic ties

with Qatar and imposed sanctions on it on the grounds that Doha supports terrorism, with Libya, Yemen and the Maldives following suit. Qatar has rejected the accusations as "unjustified" and "baseless."

"We will not abandon our Qatari brothers," Erdogan said. "There is no such thing. Until now I have not seen Qatar give support to terror."

On Thursday night, Erdogan ratified two deals on deploying Turkish troops to Qatar and training its gendarmerie after they were passed by Turkey's parliament a day earlier. (Xinhua)

Five-Day UN Ocean Conference Concludes with Call to Action

UNITED NATIONS - The five-day UN Ocean Conference on Friday agreed on a call for action to "act decisively and urgently" to implement long-term and robust strategies to reverse the decline of the world's oceans, suffering pollution, acidification, over- and illegal-fishing and a general lack of high seas governance. "Recognizing that the wellbeing of present and future generations is inextricably linked to the health and productivity of the ocean," the 193-countries taking part in the conclave agreed in the Call for Action. Furthermore, the world must "act decisively and urgently, convinced that our collective action will make a meaningful difference to our people, to our planet and to our prosperity."

Countries agreed to implement robust strategies to reduce the use of plastics and micro-plastics such as in toothpaste and cleansing aids, according to the outcome document. They also agreed to develop and implement effective adaptation and mitigation measures that contribute to ocean and coastal acidification, sea-level rise and increase in ocean temperatures, and to address other harmful impacts of climate change on the ocean. The Call for Action also includes measures to protect coastal and blue carbon ecosystems, such as mangroves, tidal marshes, sea grass and coral reefs, and wider interconnected ecosystems, as well as enhancing sustainable fisheries management, including to restore fish stocks at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield. (Xinhua)

Nieghbor News

Renewable Energy Use Rises with China, EU, India Giving World Hope

MADRID - The use of renewable energy sources throughout the world is gathering pace with 2016, seeing a 9-percent rise in the capacity to generate clean energy, according to a latest study published by the Spanish "Fundacion Renovables".

According to the foundation, 2016 saw the capacity to generate electricity from renewable energy sources increased by 161 gigawatts to a total of just over two billion gigawatts, of which of which 47 percent is produced by sunlight, 34 by the wind and 15.5 percent by water.

Speaking to Xinhua, Laura Martin-Murillo, Director of the Fundacion Renovables (Renewable Energy Foundation), which pressures for increased generation

of clean energy sources in Spain, was optimistic this trend will continue. "Last year showed the growth of renewables is unstoppable," she said, adding that renewables now produce "9 percent of the world's energy and 2016 saw a 9 percent increase in capacity".

Once the infrastructure is in place, renewable energy becomes much cheaper, with the Fundacion Renovables calculating the cost of just 0.05 U.S. dollar per kilowatt per hour - less than the equivalent cost of producing energy with fossil fuel or nuclear energy.

"(In 2016) we did more with less; there was more renewable energy in the world, but with less investment. Renewable energy is getting cheaper all the time," Martin-Murillo said. (Xinhua)

Sharif Arrives Pakistan after Participating in SCO Summit

LAHORE - Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Saturday arrived Pakistan after concluding his two-day official visit to Astana, Kazakhstan.

The prime minister, during his stay in Astana, participated in 17th meeting of the Heads of State Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Pakistan became a full member of the SCO. Pakistan has been an Observer with SCO since 2005 and applied for full membership of the organization in 2010.

On the sidelines of the SCO Summit, the Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghani-

stan and Russia. He exchanged views with these leaders on matters of mutual interest and discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations with these entities and to promote stability and prosperity in the region.

The UN Secretary General also called on the Prime Minister. The prime minister along with other participating SCO Heads of States also attended the inaugural ceremony of the Expo 2017 where he also visited Pakistani and Belarusian stalls.

Advisor to PM on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, Minister for Commerce Khuram Dastgir and Minister of State for Petroleum Jam Kamal accompanied the prime minister during his visit. (APP)

Terrorist Attacks Seeking to Take Revenge from Iran: Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani condemned the Wednesday's terrorist acts in Tehran, and said that the attacks were aimed at taking revenge from the Iranian nation.

"When the great Iranian nation achieves a very significant success; the ill-wishers never lose a chance to strike them a blow," President Rouhani said. The Iranian president reiterated that the massive presence of people in the country's presidential and municipal elections astonished "our ill-wishers while our friends became happy

round the globe", President Rouhani said.

The Iranian president went on to say that since democracy abolishes terrorists' thoughts and indicates that violence is not a solution and the only solution to resolve problems is the votes of people, then elections and polling stations have dealt a severe blow to violence-seekers and terrorists, their supporters are looking for a chance to take revenge ignoring the fact that the Iranian people are very resistant and have experienced many of such incidents in their lives. (FNA)

OSCE Assists Turkmenistan in Implementation of Migration Programs

ASHGABAT - The OSCE assists Turkmenistan in implementation of programs on migration, reads a press release of the OSCE Ashgabat office. Representatives of government institutions and public organizations discussed topical issues of migration and the role of the OSCE in migration governance at an OSCE-organized roundtable discussion that took place in Ashgabat.

The Center in Ashgabat, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan and the Office of the Co-ordinator of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA),

organized this event to contribute to the implementation of national migration-related initiatives of Turkmenistan in line with relevant OSCE's commitments.

The event brought together officials from law-enforcement bodies, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Mejlis (Parliament), Ombudsman and Justice Ministry as well as representatives of other relevant institutions and public organizations. A representative from the OCEEA presented OSCE's mandate and best practices, as well as regional and national activities in the area of migration. (Trend)