

# Trump Rolls out "America First" Agenda, Saying His Job "Not to Represent the World"

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump rolled out his "America First" agenda in his first speech since inauguration at a joint session of Congress on Tuesday night. "America must put its own citizens first ... because only then, can we truly make America great again," Trump stressed, resonating his campaign theme. Trump started his address by decrying recent threats targeting Jewish community centers and last week's racially-motivated shooting of two Indian men in Kansas City, calling for the United States to be united "in condemning hate and evil in all its forms." Rolling out his "America First" agenda "guided by two



core principles: Buy American, and Hire American," Trump tried to paint "a new surge of optimism" by depicting what he has done since entering the White House and reiterating what he will do in the four-year presidency, most of them in line with his pledges on campaign trail. He vowed again that his administration will replace Obamacare "with better healthcare," build a wall along the border with Mexico, reduce tax rate on U.S. companies, invest one trillion U.S. dollars to upgrade the country's "crumbling infrastructure", boost inner city safety and make child care accessible. On immigration policy, Trump... (More on P4)...(24)

## Trump to Seek Congress Approval for \$1trillion Infrastructure Investment Plan

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday night said he would ask Congress to approve a plan to invest 1 trillion U.S. dollars in the infrastructure of the United States to create millions of new jobs. "We've spent trillions of dollars overseas, while our infrastructure at home has so badly crumbled," Trump said in his first address to a joint session of Congress since inauguration, noting that "the time has come for a new program of national rebuilding." Trump said the investment plan would be financed through "both public and private capital" and create "millions of

new jobs." He also said the infrastructure investment would be guided by two core principles: "Buy American, and Hire American," which would benefit America-based construction, engineering and architecture companies and U.S. workers. In terms of tax reform, Trump said his economic team was developing "historic" tax reform that would cut corporate tax rates and provide "massive tax relief" for the middle class at the same time. But he did not offer any concrete details of the proposal. U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said last... (More on P4)...(25)

## New Syrian Peace Talks Planned for March 14 in Kazakhstan: Agencies

MOSCOW - Syrian peace talks involving the armed opposition and Russia, Iran and Turkey are scheduled to take place in Kazakhstan on March 14, Russian news agencies reported on Wednesday, citing a source close to the talks. There was no immediate mention of the Syrian government's involvement and another source told agencies the meeting would be a technical one. Russia says it believes that previous talks held in Astana, the capital of



Kazakhstan, helped jump start United Nations-led peace negotiations in Geneva.

The ceasefire has been repeatedly violated however, while the war against jihadist groups such as

Islamic State - which are not included under the ceasefire - has raged on. (Reuters)

## Merkel Visits Egypt, Tunisia to Talk About Migration

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel will visit Egypt and Tunisia this week with migration at the top of her agenda as she meets her counterparts in the North African nations. Merkel's spokesman Stefan Seibert said Wednesday Germany is interested in helping Egypt strengthen its coastguard and clamp down on illegal trafficking across the Mediterranean, which leads to thousands of deaths each year. Germany also intends to

work together more closely with the two countries to curtail overall migration from Africa to Europe. The German government will also talk about both Egypt and Tunisia taking back asylum-seekers who have been rejected in Germany. Merkel will visit Egypt on Thursday and Tunisia on Friday. Beyond meeting the two countries' leaders, she will talk to religious leaders and members of civil society. (AP)

BRUSSELS - European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker will present the white paper on the future of Europe to the European Parliament on Wednesday, his chief spokesperson announced on Tuesday. "The white paper will give an opportunity to heads of state and government to start a period of reflection about the future of Europe and options which they have in order to ensure unity and cooperation between the 27 member states in the future," Juncker's chief

spokesman Margaritis Schinas said at a daily news conference, referring to the post-Brexit EU. Except for shoring up European solidarity, the detail of the white paper is not known until it's published Wednesday afternoon. Leaders of EU members are due to discuss the white paper at a summit next week in Brussels. They will meet again in Italy on March 25 to mark the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, which founded the predecessor of the EU.



About three months after Britain's June referendum to leave the 28-nation bloc, Juncker in his State of the Union address pledged that "the commission will

set out such a vision for the future in a White Paper in March 2017, in time for the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome." (Xinhua)

## Putin's Central Asian Tour to Cement Alliances Amid Challenges

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin visited traditional allies of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on Monday and Tuesday to "synchronize watches" in face of challenges, analysts said. According to them, Putin's diplomatic flurry, which was rare in recent years, aimed to settle pressing issues in the region and build a more consolidated Central Asia. SECURITY PROMISES Russia will beef up efforts to protect the Tajik-Afghan border, including using a Russian military base in



Tajikistan, Putin said after talks with his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmon. Under a deal that expires in 2042, the Russian military base in Tajikistan now houses the largest ground troops of the Russian

Armed Forces outside the country. "This is important because Tajikistan shares a 1,300-km border with Afghanistan, where comes growing terrorist threat," said... (More on P4)...(26)

## UN Panel Says Evacuation of Syria's Aleppo Was a War Crime

GENEVA - A U.N. panel said Wednesday the evacuation of eastern Aleppo in December, after months of siege and aerial bombing by Russian and Syrian forces, was one of many war crimes committed by those fighting for control of Syria's largest city. The Commission of Inquiry on Syria unveiled a report looking at violations by all parties in last year's battle for Aleppo. It singled out a "particularly egregious attack" in which Syrian warplanes targeted a humanitarian aid convoy. The findings come amid an open-ended stretch of talks aimed at resolving the six-year-long conflict. The capture of Aleppo was a major victory for President Bashar al-Assad and shifted the military balance in his favor. The agreement to evacuate rebel-held eastern... (More on P4)...(27)

## French Presidential Candidate Fillon to be Summoned by Magistrates

PARIS - French presidential candidate Francois Fillon confirmed Wednesday that he would be summoned on March 15 by the investigating magistrates over alleged fake jobs. But the 62-year-old conservative candidate said he would not withdraw from the race. "Only universal suffrage and not a prosecution can decide who will be the next President of the Republic. I will not give in, I will not surrender. I will not pull out," he said. Previously, the conservative nominee had promised to drop his presidential bid if he would be placed under formal investigation. Fillon, whose campaign is hit by a legal investigation, called on supporters to resist a legal manoeuvre, which he called "a political assassination". He has denied wrongdoing along with the allegations by a satirical newspaper that his wife and two children have received hundreds thousands of euros for jobs they may did not do. On January 25, French satirical weekly Le Canard Enchaîné reported that Fillon had paid his wife and two of his five children about one million euros (1.05 million U.S. dollars) for their jobs as parliamentary assistants. However, there was no evidence showed Fillon's wife had really worked, the report added. In November 2016, Fillon won the center-right Republicans party's primary runoff to represent the biggest opposition party in the 2017 French presidential race scheduled for April 23 and May 7. (Xinhua)

## Amina Mohammed Sworn in as UN Deputy Secretary-General

UNITED NATIONS - Nigeria's former Minister for Environment, Amina Mohammed, was officially sworn in as deputy secretary-general of the United Nations on Tuesday. In a welcoming speech, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that he was extremely happy and proud that she had accepted to serve with him. Mohammed spoke to the press Tuesday morning that she would focus primarily on helping the secretary-general to reposition sustainable development at the heart of the United Nations. In her first engagement, Mohammed declared open the 2017 Economic and Social Council... (More on P4)...(28)

## UK Government Facing Defeat on EU Citizens' Brexit Rights

LONDON - The British government was expected to suffer a defeat in Parliament Wednesday over the right of European Union citizens to stay in the U.K. after Brexit. The House of Lords was due to vote on an amendment that inserts a promise to protect EU nationals' status into a bill authorizing the government to begin exit talks with the bloc. By leaving the EU, Britain will be withdrawing from the bloc's policy of free movement of citizens among member states. That leaves 3 million EU nationals in Britain, and 1 million

Britons living in other member countries, in limbo. The government has said repeatedly that it plans to guarantee the right of EU citizens to remain in Britain, as long as U.K. nationals living elsewhere in the bloc get the same right. Critics accuse the government of treating people as bargaining chips in the divorce negotiations. The amendment commits the government to guaranteeing that EU citizens living legally in Britain when the bill is passed "continue to be treated in the same way with regards to their EU-derived rights." (AP)

## Nieghbor News

### China Moves to Boost Transport Infrastructure: Officials

BEIJING - The Chinese government has announced ambitious plans to improve the country's transport infrastructure in the next few years. The State Council on Tuesday issued a document to expand the transport network during the 13th Five-year Plan period (2016-2020). By 2020, the country will have 150,000 kilometers of railway lines, 5 million km of roads, 260 airports and 2,527 berths for vessels over 10,000 tonnes. High-speed railways will increase to 30,000 km, connecting more than 80 percent of cities with a population of more than 1

million. The government aims to build a modern transport system that is safe, convenient, efficient and green by 2020, according to the document. China has already weaved enormous networks of railroads, expressways and ship routes, which have smoothed its rapid economic expansion during the past decades. "China tops the world in the length of high-speed railroads, expressways and urban rail transit networks, and the number of berths for vessels over 10,000 tonnes," Li Pumin, secretary general of the... (More on P4)...(29)

### ECO Leaders Push for Enhanced Economic Cooperation at Pakistan Summit

ISLAMABAD - Leaders of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) on Wednesday adopted the Islamabad Declaration and the ECO Vision 2025 underscoring the need for enhanced cooperation in various fields including energy, highways and tourism. The documents were adopted during the 13th summit of the ECO, highlighting the group's "pragmatic and tangible organizational targets." The ECO groups Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan,

Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Addressing the summit, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said that the grouping would be able to take longer strides in advancing the programs and activities of the organization with more understanding among the heads of states and governments. ECO can play a vital role in building the future of the economy of the region and for this to happen, he said, adding that the ECO needs restructuring since the 21st century is the era of... (More on P4)...(30)

### Takfirism, Xenophobia Present Enormous Challenge to World: Iran Official

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian official has warned against the emergence of radical and xenophobic groups across the globe, warning that they pose a significant challenge to the realization of human rights. Deputy Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araqchi made the comments in an address to the high-level panel of the UN Human Rights Council in the Swiss city of Geneva on Tuesday. Araqchi warned against the rise of Takfiri outfits in the Middle East besides Islamophobic and xenophobic groups in the

West, saying "extremist ideologies - manifested in violent radicalism- have ravaged the Middle East, while distorting and defaming a great religion and demolishing great civilizations at the same time." He further emphasized the significance of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's 2013 proposal for the World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE), saying world leaders need to fully implement the provisions envisaged in the initiative amid efforts to eradicate terrorist... (More on P4)...(31)

### Berdimuhamedov: Turkmenistan Favors Diversity of Energy Flows

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan's energy strategy is based on the principles of diversity of energy flows and expansion of their geography, said Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. The head of state made the remarks during the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) summit in Islamabad March 1. Berdimuhamedov said that gas pipelines running from Turkmenistan to China and from Turkmenistan to Iran have been constructed in recent years and construction

of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline has stated, the Turkmen Dowllet Habarlary state news service reported. Ashgabat initiated creation of an international legal framework for reliable energy supply, which resulted in the unanimous adoption of a resolution on "Reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation" by the UN General Assembly on Dec. 19, 2008. (Trend)

### Uzbekistan, ILO Sign MOU

TASHKENT - decree Uzbekistan and the International Labor Organization (ILO) on February 28 signed a memorandum of understanding, which ensures extension of implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme for 2017-2020 years, the local media re-

ported. According to the Ministry of Labor of Uzbekistan, the document was signed in the framework of the ILO delegation visit to Tashkent. The delegation was headed by ILO Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, Heinz Koller. (AKI)