

NATO Alliance Getting New Supreme Commander

BRUSSELS - The NATO alliance this week is getting a new supreme commander, a former top-ranking U.S. military officer in Korea hailed Tuesday by Defense Secretary Ash Carter as a proven warrior-diplomat and "a soldiers' general." U.S. Army Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti was installed as head of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) in Stuttgart, Germany, and will become NATO's supreme allied commander Europe following a separate ceremony Wednesday at the



alliance's military headquarters in southern Belgium.

Scaparrotti, 60, will be the 18th U.S. officer to hold the post since Gen.

Dwight D. Eisenhower became the first NATO supreme commander in

1951. The commander, by tradition an American general

or admiral, is responsible for the overall direction and conduct of NATO's global military operations. The 28-nation alliance is now confronted by simultaneous security challenges ranging from a resurgent Russia to armed Islamic extremism and a migrant crisis in the Mediterranean. "Today our way of life is at a pivotal moment, as we are encountering numerous threats and strategic challenges," Scaparrotti said in brief remarks after assuming command at EUCOM.(AP)

Russia-U.S. Truce Monitoring Center for Syria to be Set Up in Geneva: Russian FM

MOSCOW - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday a joint Russian-U.S. center to monitor the ceasefire in Syria will be launched in the next few days in Geneva, Switzerland. After meeting here with the visiting United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, Lavrov said at a press conference that Russia maintains daily contacts



with the U.S. side on Syrian issues. The military of the two countries are literally in daily contact mode,

and this interaction, which is now being carried out via videoconferencing, acquires direct nature with

the creation in the next few days in Geneva of a joint Russian-U.S. center for a rapid response to ceasefire violations," Lavrov said. The minister also said that an agreement was expected to be hammered out soon by Russia and the United States on a ceasefire in Aleppo, a major city in northern Syria. "I hope that the decision will be announced soon, ... (More on P4)...(26)

EU to Grant Turkey Visa-Free Travel Under Migrant Deal

BRUSSELS - The EU will on Wednesday grant conditional approval for Turks to gain visa-free access to the Schengen zone, sources told AFP, meeting one of Ankara's key demands to keep a migrant deal alive. The European Commission, the executive arm of the 28-nation EU, will say Turkey must still implement further measures in order to access the passportless Schengen area without visas by June, the sources said on Tuesday. Ankara

has demanded visa-free travel in exchange for taking back migrants who land in Greece under a controversial deal signed in March seeking to curb the influx as Europe grapples with its biggest migrant crisis since World War II. EU member states and the European Parliament must still approve the Turkey visa plan after it clears the Commission, which is by no means a foregone conclusion as ... (More on P4)...(27)

EU Gives 3 Mln Euros in Humanitarian Aid for Polio Vaccinations in Syria

BRUSSELS - The European Commission announced 3 million euros (3.47 million U.S. dollars) in humanitarian funding for a UNICEF and World Health Organization-led nationwide polio vaccination campaign in Syria on Tuesday. The campaign aimed to reach 2 million children in areas where medical access remains critical, such as in besieged, hard-to-reach and under-served areas, said the Commission. "The EU is committed to supporting the most vulnerable victims of the Syrian conflict. Our sup-

port can make a real difference. It can save lives and improve conditions... The systematic attacks on medical facilities in Syria and the rising civilian casualties in recent weeks are worsening the humanitarian situation," said Christos Stylianides, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management. "I continue to urge all parties to the conflict to cease targeting the civilian population and medical facilities, in accordance with international humanitarian law, ... (More on P4)...(28)

ASEAN, Partner Countries Officially Launch Joint Maritime Exercise

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN - The ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Defence Ministers Meeting- Plus Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism Exercise (ADMM Plus MS & CT) was officially launched Tuesday with an opening ceremony at the Multi National Coordination Centre (MNCC) in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei's capital. The opening ceremony was officiated by Brunei's Commander of Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) Mohd Tawih who deliv-

ered his opening remarks and then proceeded with the activation of the Exercise Task Groups. "The pressures we face today are greater than ever before as security challenges have proven to be more complex and very often cross between borders with relative ease and speed," Mohd Tawih said, "there is so much we can learn from each other and resolve challenges together." "I believe that this exercise will provide that much needed platform of transparency and open communication



in order to reduce any tension, enhance trust and build deeper cooperation among all the participating countries," he added. Chinese military officers including Hu Weihua, task

commander and head of a Destroyer Division of the Chinese Navy and Tang Yinchuan, captain of the "Lanzhou" guided-missile destroyer also attended the opening ceremony.(Xinhua)

UK's 'Out' Camp Lead Narrows Ahead of EU Referendum: ICM Poll

LONDON - The campaign for Britain to leave the European Union saw its lead narrow slightly over the rival "In" campaign, according to a weekly online poll published by opinion poll firm ICM on Tuesday. Forty-five percent of voters were in favor of a

so-called Brexit against 44 percent who believe Britain should remain in the 28-member bloc, not counting undecided voters, ICM said. A similar poll published last week by ICM found 44 percent of voters wanted to remain in the EU compared with 46 percent who

wanted to leave. The latest survey, which was conducted between April 29 and May 3, was weighted to take into account the likelihood of respondents actually voting in the June 23 EU membership referendum, based on their comments, the polling firm said.(Reuters)

27 Pct Drop in Migrant Deaths Crossing Mediterranean: IOM

GENEVA - A total of 1,357 refugees and migrants have drowned since the start of the year while crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe, compared to 1,733 fatalities over the same period a year ago, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported Tuesday. Representing a 27 percent year-on-year drop, IOM indicated that the first four months of 2015 were much deadlier in absolute and relative terms for those attempting to reach EU shores by sea. Maritime arrivals until April 30 totaled almost 184,000 this year compared to the 48,636 entries recorded a year ago over the same four-month pe-



riod. IOM spokesman Joel Millman warned that this dip in deaths was largely due to a change in migration patterns. "We know that for the beginning of this year more migrants were traveling the Turkey-Greece route which is a shorter trip, whereas more last year were traveling from Libya to Italy," he said. "That remains a deadly

route and the reason that deaths are slightly down this year is because it was not the preferred route this year, but it is becoming the preferred route so we're very mindful of what could be coming in the next few months," he added. Statistics show that 976 people have died on the central Mediterranean ... (More on P4)...(30)

Stability in Western Balkans Critical: Hungarian Defense Minister

BUDAPEST - Hungarian Defense Minister Istvan Simicsko underlined the importance of stability in the Western Balkans to Hungarians and the rest of Europe, when addressing a news conference here on Tuesday with his Macedonian counterpart

Zoran Jolevski. The two defense chiefs had just concluded a meeting on boosting military cooperation between their countries, on the migration crisis -- both countries lie on one of the main migration routes linking the Mediterranean and West-

ern Europe -- and on the upcoming Warsaw NATO summit in July. Simicsko voiced his appreciation of Macedonia, a non-EU member, for its share in the management of the migrant crisis. Macedonia has been ... (More on P4)...(29)

Former Mexican Foreign Minister Nominated As New UN Climate Chief

BERLIN - Former Mexican Foreign Minister Patricia Espinosa has been nominated by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon as the new UN climate chief, announced the UN climate change body in Bonn, Germany on Tuesday. "The UN Secretary General has concluded the selection pro-

cess for the next Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC with the selection of HE Patricia Espinosa," said the Secretariat of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in a statement. A consultation with an 11-member bureau has started in order to approve ... (More on P4)...(31)

Kurdish Forces Repel IS Attacks Near Iraq's Mosul

MOSUL - Kurdish security forces on Tuesday repelled attacks by Islamic State (IS) militants on towns and villages near the militant-seized city of Mosul in northern Iraq, a Kurdish security source told Xinhua. IS militants carried out a pre-dawn attack on the Christian minority town of Tall Asqaf, some 30 km north of Mosul, and man-

aged to seize part of the town, while fierce clashes continued with the Kurdish forces, known as Peshishgar, and allied Christian paramilitary unit, the source said on condition of anonymity. After fierce clashes with the attackers, the troops, backed by U.S.-led coalition aircraft, retook control of the town, while ... (More on P4)...(32)

UN Demands Protection for Hospitals in Conflicts

UNITED NATIONS - The U.N. Security Council responded to an upsurge in deadly attacks on hospitals and medical personnel, unanimously adopting a resolution Tuesday demanding that all parties to conflicts protect staff and facilities treating the wounded and sick. The resolution urges all countries to bring those responsible for such at-

tacks to justice, something that has rarely happened. The U.N.'s most powerful body expressed deep concern that the number of attacks is increasing despite obligations under international law that combatants protect medical staff and facilities as well as the sick or wounded. It reminded all ... (More on P4)...(33)

Neighbor News

Larijani Raps Self-Serving Stance on Palestine

TEHRAN - Iran's parliament speaker Ali Larijani says the Middle East region is bogged down in a political imbroglio, warning that some countries are pursuing double-standard policies on Palestine to gain prestige. The Iranian Majlis speaker made the remarks in a meeting with Secretary General of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Ramadan Abdullah Shalah, in the Iranian capital Tehran on Tuesday. Larijani said most regional countries plunged into war and are bracing for developments which require their political vigilance.

He added that the Palestinian people's Intifada (uprising) against Israel is an important chance for Palestine to resist the Tel Aviv regime. The Palestinian people's struggles would come to fruition soon, Larijani said. Abdullah, for his part, said Iran has always supported the Palestinian people. He added that the Palestinian people are firmly determined to pass the flag of their country from one generation to the next one. He said Intifada is the only solution to the liberation of Palestinian people.(PressTV)

Chinese President Appoints New Ambassadors



BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping has appointed six new ambassadors, upon approval by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, according to a statement by the national legislature. Wu Ken was appointed ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, replacing Chen Xu. Shi Zhongjun was appointed China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Vienna, replacing Cheng Jingye. Cheng Jingye was appointed ambassador to

the Commonwealth of Australia, replacing Ma Zhaoxu. Zhang Jinxiong was appointed ambassador to the Republic of Suriname, replacing Yang Zigang. Wu Haitao was appointed China's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, replacing Wang Min. Ma Zhaoxu was appointed China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland, replacing Wu Hailong. (Xinhua)

Pakistan will Get Jets from Elsewhere if F-16 Funding Not Arranged, Aziz Cautions US

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan will acquire jets from elsewhere if the United States (US) does not arrange funding for a previously agreed upon F-16 fighter jet sale, Sartaj Aziz, the prime minister's adviser on foreign affairs, cautioned the US as both countries lock horns over the purchase of the jets. "If funding is arranged, Pakistan will get the F-16s, otherwise we will opt for jets from some other place," Aziz said, without clarifying which jets he was referring to and where they

would be bought from. Aziz elaborated the US administration has given its consent for the sale of F-16s, and the only hurdle is finances. The US gives Pakistan \$265 million as part of foreign military assistance, in previous years it was \$300 million. The amount received is split between the three branches of the armed forces. Pakistan Air Force's (PAF) share is \$80 million, which they had allocated for the last three years to buy the jets, added Aziz. (Agencies)

Tajikistan-Russia Cooperation in the Field of Media Industry Discussed in Moscow

DUSHANBE - Issues related to bilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and Russia in the field of media industry have been discussed in Moscow. According to the Tajik Embassy in Moscow, Tajik Ambassador to Russia Imomuddin Sattorov met with Konstantin Antipov, Rector of Moscow State University of Printing Arts named after Ivan Fyodorov, in Moscow at the end of last week. The two reportedly discussed various aspects of cooperation between Tajikistan and Moscow State University of Printing Arts. Sattorov and Antipov also exchanged views on organizing retraining for specialists of Tajikistan's media enterprises. Currently, 120 Tajik students are studying at Moscow State Uni-

versity of Printing Arts named after Ivan Fyodorov. The University was founded in 1930 as the Moscow Polygraphic Institute (MPI) based printing department of the Moscow and Leningrad Vkhutein. Initially, the MPI was administered by Polygraphic union of the RSFSR Supreme Economic Council, was then subject to Narkomestpromu RSFSR, and the second half of 1930 - ASBMP (associations of state books and magazine publishers) of the RSFSR. In 1949, the Ministry of Higher Education of the USSR established a scholarship named after Ivan Fedorov for students MPI. At the same time in connection with the dissolution of Ovgz MPI over by the Glavpoligrafizdata USSR.(Asia-Plus)