

Pentagon Sounds Alarm over Military 'Expansion' of China... Which Only Has One Base Abroad

PENTAGON - The Pentagon, whose military installations abroad dwarf those of China, is deeply worried about Beijing conspiring to build up such facilities across the world in order to protect the global One Belt, One Road project.

The Chinese military is hastily working to project power overseas, the US Department of Defense warned in a comprehensive report to Congress. Rising global ambitions have increasingly propelled China's military "to think about how it will operate beyond China's borders and its immediate periphery," the paper alleges.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) currently has one overseas facility in Djibouti but Pentagon analysts believe they are eyeing others, possibly in



Pakistan, the Middle East or Western Pacific. China's projects such as the 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR) "will probably drive military

overseas basing through a perceived need to provide security for OBOR projects." That aside, the report stoked fear of China

using submarine patrols and developing an icebreaker fleet as a bulwark of spreading influence in the Arctic.

Authors of the publication also voiced concerns that Beijing's "more robust overseas logistics and basing infrastructure would allow China to project and sustain military power at greater distances." The US has the largest and the most powerful military in the world. It is estimated to have as many as 800 bases in more than 70 countries and territories, ranging from huge air bases in Europe to small radar facilities in the Pacific.

China, along with Russia, has been named one of America's greatest military challenges. It's unsurprising that the ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

Neighbor News

China's Xi Urges Closer Naval Ties amid Regional Tensions

QINGDAO, China - Chinese President Xi Jinping urged closer ties between the world's navies on Tuesday, amid tensions over China's rapid expansion of its naval forces and forceful assertions of territorial claims in the South China Sea. Xi's remarks came in an address to foreign naval officers attending a fleet review marking the 70th anniversary of the People's Liberation Army Navy, an event Beijing is using to showcase its growing ability to exert force far from its shores.

Following his speech, Xi boarded the destroyer Xining, one of China's most modern and capable warships, at the northern port of Qingdao to preside at the review, which will also feature China's sole commissioned aircraft carrier, numerous other surface ships and submarines and a display of naval aviation. China's navy will "continue to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with foreign navies, actively shoulder its international responsibilities, safeguard the security of international waterways and provide more public goods for maritime security," Xi was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency. "Holding high the banner of win-win cooperation, the Chinese military is committed to creating a security environment featuring equality, mutual trust, fairness and justice, joint participation and shared benefits," said Xi, who also heads China's armed forces. (AP)

Pakistan Intends to Working Closely with Islamic Development Bank: President

ISLAMABAD - President Dr Arif Alvi Friday said that Pakistan and Islamic Development Bank (IDB) had a long-standing partnership and the country intended to continue to work closely with the latter.

Talking to President of the IDB Dr. Bandar M.H. Hajjar, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, here, the president emphasized that the incumbent government was undertaking reforms to steer the economy out of current economic challenges. In this regard, he said the government was focused on fiscal consolidation, monetary policy

and fiscal inclusion. He underlined that the government was also focusing on affordable housing and small and medium enterprises sectors to boost employment opportunities and economic growth. The president highlighted that the first phase of the CPEC projects were about to complete and now the government was focusing on the second phase that included the establishment of Special Economic Zones which would transform Pakistan's transport network into an economic corridor. (Monitoring Desk)

Iran to Respond to Threats Made by Other OPEC Members If Interests Are Threatened: Iranian Minister of Petroleum

TEHRAN - Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zangeneh has warned that Iran will reply in kind if its interests in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are threatened.

"Iran is part of OPEC due to its interests and if members of the organization seek to threaten it, Iran will not leave them unanswered," Zangeneh said on Thursday. The petroleum minister made the comments after a meeting with OPEC Secretary-General Mohammed Barkindo who had arrived in Tehran on Wednesday to participate in the

24th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining & Petrochemical Exhibition. "I told Barkindo that OPEC is threatened by the unilateralism of some of its members and that it's possible that the organization may collapse," said Zangeneh following the meeting. Barkindo said that the organization seeks to reach decisions collectively. "We have seen numerous times in the past how one-sided decisions made by state-members have failed to be effective. The same will happen again this time," said the OPEC chief. (Press TV)

Turkmenistan Renewing Customs Procedures for Export-Oriented Goods

ASHGABAT - A workshop dedicated to the improvement of the customs procedures for goods intended for export was held at the Turkmen State Customs Service, Trend reports referring to the State Customs Service. This event was held as part of the state program on increasing the volume of the Turkmen intended for export.

The employees of the Turkmen State Customs Service, representatives of various organizations, ministries and private entrepreneurs attended the workshop. According to the report of British Petroleum (BP), Turkmenistan ranks

fourth in terms of natural gas reserves in the world. Presently, Turkmenistan sells gas to China and Russia. Ashgabat is diversifying the local economy. The textile industry and oil industry are developing. As part of the state program on increasing the volume of Turkmen products intended for export, 33 projects are planned to be implemented. The issue is the creation of new facilities aimed at the development of the chemical industry, industry, light industry, engineering, agriculture, food industry, domestic pharmaceuticals. (Trend)

DNC Contractor asked Ukrainian Embassy for Dirt on Trump Campaign, Envoy Confirms

KIEV - The Ukrainian ambassador to the DNC at the US has confirmed that a Democratic National Committee (DNC) contractor attempted to get information on Donald Trump's campaign manager, Paul Manafort, to initiate hearings in Congress.

Alexandra Chalupa, a self-described human rights activist, approached the mission in 2016 showing interest in Manafort's case. The ambassador, Valery Chaly, said in written answers to the Hill that his office

was unaware of her connections to the DNC at the time and knew Chalupa "because of her engagement with Ukrainian and other diasporas in Washington D.C." "All ideas floated by Alexandra were related to approaching a Member of Congress with a purpose to initiate hearings on Paul Manafort or letting an investigative journalist ask President Poroshenko a question about Mr. Manafort during his public talk in Washington, D.C.," the ambassador said. (RT)

Putin Challenges Washington in Venezuela Power Play

MOSCOW - Russia emerged as a crucial power broker in the crisis in far-away Venezuela this week when Washington accused Moscow of convincing President Nicolas Maduro not to flee to Cuba. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Maduro had a plane on the tarmac ready to fly to Havana when "the Russians indicated that he should stay". Moscow hit back, dismissing the claim as fake and accusing Washington of supporting a

coup "that has nothing to do with democracy" by backing opposition leader Juan Guaido. Moscow has its reasons for standing behind Maduro - he's a rare ally in Latin America and Russia has poured billions into the Venezuelan economy. But analysts say Russian President Vladimir Putin is also playing the long game, hoping to use Venezuela as leverage in his global tug-of-war with Washington. "Russia is seeking to translate its influence



over Maduro - which is in fact not absolute - into an opportunity to have dialogue with the United States," Tatyana Stanovaya, head of R.Politik, a Paris-based analysis firm, told AFP. "Maduro is a bargaining chip." (AFP)

Solid Jobs Report, Earnings Push Stocks Broadly Higher



NEW YORK - U.S. stocks moved broadly higher in early trading on Wall Street Friday and are on track to bounce back after a two-

day slide. Major indexes, including the S&P 500, are still heading for weekly losses. First quarter company earnings have come

in mixed so far, but they have been good enough to ease worries that company profits would slump overall. Banks and consumer-related stocks lead the gains. Newell Brands, which makes Sharpie and Elmer's products, surged on a solid earnings report. Amazon rose following reports that Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway was buying the stock. Utilities and real estate companies lagged the market, a sign that investors are less interest-

ed in safer holdings and more comfortable taking on risk as they feel more confident in the economy. That confidence was given another healthy shot from the Labor Department on Friday when it reported job growth in April that surged well past economists' forecasts. It also reported that unemployment in April fell to a five-decade low. The solid job figures helped push bond prices slightly higher. The ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

Germany Targets 'Right-Wing Radicalism' after Neo-Nazi March

BERLIN - Germany's top security official is pledging "to fight right-wing radicalism" following a neo-Nazi march in a town in the country's east, where far-right sentiment is particularly strong. German news agency dpa reported that Interior Minister Horst Seehofer declined to criticize authorities in Saxony state, where the town of Plauen is located, for allowing the march to take place Wednesday. Dpa reported that See-

hofer said Friday he would do "everything that's possible in a free and democratic state to fight right-wing radicalism." Several hundred people took part in the march organized by a political party, The Third Way. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas warned on Twitter against underestimating the potential for far-right terrorism in Germany, writing: "We mustn't leave the streets or the internet to the radical right." (AP)

Viral Tiktok Video Filmed Inside India's Jama Masjid Mosque Sparks Tourist Ban

NEW DELHI - The Jama Masjid mosque has banned tourists after a viral video emerged of girls dancing inside the famous Delhi holy site.

The viral video filmed for the TikTok video sharing app features two girls dancing inside the mosque and doing handstands. Other videos have since emerged showing other people dancing and singing at the mosque. Some Twitter users were outraged by the footage, denouncing the dancing as "vulgar."

The mosque committee was angered by such blatant signs of disrespect and responded by issuing a ban on tourists entering the holy site. (RT)

Japan's Abe Indicates Possible Meeting with North Korea's Kim 'Without Conditions'

TOKYO - There were signs of renewed diplomacy between Japan and North Korea on Friday, after Japanese PM Shinzo Abe was reported suggesting that a meeting with Kim Jong-un without any "preconditions" was a possibility.

The resolution of the issue of Japanese citizens "abducted" by Pyongyang has long been held up by Tokyo as a precursor to any potential thaw in relations between the two powers. However, a potential policy shift was indicated by Abe during an interview with the Sankei newspaper, where he said the only way to "break the current mutual distrust" was for both leaders to meet. The last time leaders from both countries met was in 2004, when Kim Jong-un's father, Kim Jong-il, met Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. (RT)

Indonesian Woman Tried in Killing of Kim Jong Un's Half-Brother Released from Prison

JAKARTA - The case into the killing of the estranged half-brother of North Korea's leader is likely closed after a Vietnamese woman tried in the case was released from a Malaysian prison on Friday and is back in her native country.

Doan Thi Huong, the last suspect in custody after being charged in the death of Kim Jong Nam with VX nerve agent, said at the airport that "the case has come to a complete end." She expressed her gratitude "to everyone who prayed for me" in a video taken by her lawyer in the plane just before it took off to Hanoi.



"I want to say I love you all. Thank you my Lord Jesus. Thank you so much," she said. "I want to say I love you all. Thank you my Lord Jesus. Thank you so much," she said. "I want to say I love you all. Thank you my Lord Jesus. Thank you so much," she said. "I want to say I love you all. Thank you my Lord Jesus. Thank you so much," she said.

they were taking part in a harmless prank for a TV show - smeared the nerve agent on his face at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Feb. 13, 2017. They were arrested days later and charged with murder. In March, the Malaysian ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

Mount Everest Is Covered in Garbage and Dead Bodies: Report

6,613 pounds of trash -- more than 3 tons -- have been collected from Mount Everest since mid-April, with plenty more to go, according to recent reports.

Four dead bodies have also been located during the campaign to clean the mountain, which began on April 14 out of Nepal, according to The Himalayan Times. Officials expect they will remove a total of 11 tons of garbage by the end of the 45-day

campaign period, USA Today reported on Thursday. There are still about 30 tons of garbage on the mountain, ABC reported.

"Our goal is to extract as much waste as possible from Everest so as to restore glory to the mountain. Everest is not just the crown of the world, but our pride," Dandu Raj Ghimire, Nepal's tourism director, said according to The Hindu. (Fox News)

campaign period, USA Today reported on Thursday. There are still about 30 tons of garbage on the mountain, ABC reported. "Our goal is to extract as much waste as possible from Everest so as to restore glory to the mountain. Everest is not just the crown of the world, but our pride," Dandu Raj Ghimire, Nepal's tourism director, said according to The Hindu. (Fox News)