

US Sends Troops to Yemen, Steps up Anti-Qaeda Strikes

WASHINGTON - The Pentagon acknowledged for the first time Friday it has deployed US troops to Yemen since the country's collapse last year to bolster government and Arab coalition forces battling Al-Qaeda. Spokesman Navy Captain Jeff Davis said the US military has also stepped up air strikes against fighters with Yemen-based Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). A "very small number" of American military personnel has



been working from a "fixed location" with Yemeni and Arab coalition forces -- especially

the Emiratis -- in recent weeks around Mukalla, a port city seized by AQAP a year ago, Davis said.

"This is of great interest to us. It does not serve our interests to have a terrorist organization in charge

of a port city, and so we are assisting in that," the spokesman added. He said the troops were help-

ing the Emiratis with "intelligence support," but declined to say if they are special operations forces. AQAP fighters have now fled Mukalla and other coastal areas, due to the government offensive. While the number of US personnel on the ground is limited, the United States is also offering an array of assistance to partners in Yemen, including air-to-air refueling capabilities, surveillance, planning, maritime security and medical help. (AFP)

Abe's Visit to Russia No More than Diplomatic Maneuver

BEIJING - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe paid a quick and unofficial visit to Russia on Friday and held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, which is but a diplomatic maneuver generating no progress on the four disputed Pacific islands. Before Abe's visit, the Japanese government mentioned several times that it wished the two countries would tackle the territorial dispute during the prime minister's visit. Abe himself

said to Japanese media prior to his visit that he hoped to negotiate with Russia "patiently" so as to solve the territorial dispute and help to bring about a bilateral peace treaty. "I will tenaciously tackle (the territorial issue). The issue cannot be resolved without direct talks between the leaders (of Japan and Russia)," Abe told a press conference in London on Thursday. He also ... (More on P4)...(24)

Bad Politics, Not Media, Helps Trump Secure U.S. Presidential Nomination

BEIJING - U.S. President Barack Obama on Friday seemed to be indicating that too much media coverage of billionaire Donald Trump has helped him secure Republican presidential nomination. However, it is largely not the media but public anger over bad U.S. politics that has helped Trump the most. The roaring rise of a bombastic Donald Trump does not merely depend on his tactical campaign, but is attributable to his capitalizing on negative public sentiment. Obama

tried to remind reporters and the American public on Friday that the U.S. presidential election is a serious business. "This is not entertainment. This is not a reality show. This is a contest for the presidency of the United States," said the president. In recent years, ordinary people in the United States have manifested a strong dislike for Washington insiders, disappointment over Congress political stalemate, distaste of big-money politics and fear of terrorism, economic



recession and unemployment. Trump, who strode to success in a couple of months, knows well the

amount of frustration among the white working class population, especially those in rural ... (More on P4)...(25)

Calm Prevails Syria's Aleppo City As Truce Extends

DAMASCUS - Calm has prevailed Syria's northern city of Aleppo for the second day, following 14 days of bloodshed, a monitor group reported on Saturday. The situation in Aleppo remained largely calm since after midnight Wednesday, when a U.S.-Russian-backed truce, or "regime of silence," went into effect, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Still, the "cautious calm" was interrupted some mortar shelling by the rebels on government-controlled areas, and Syrian airstrikes against rebel-



held areas, according to the UK-based watchdog group. On Thursday, a 48-hour truce went into effect in Aleppo city, and on Friday, the Russian base of Hmairim in Syria's northwestern city of Latakia an-

nounced the extension of the truce for additional 72 hours. The truce came following strenuous efforts by Russia and the United States to establish a ceasefire in Aleppo, whose districts have seen a heavy

bloodletting by the rebels' shelling on government-controlled areas, and the counter military offensives on rebel-held districts in the eastern part of the city. The Observatory, which ... (More on P4)...(26)

UN Envoy Warns That Iraq's Political Crisis Helps Extremists

UNITED NATIONS - The top U.N. envoy in Iraq strongly urged the country's political leaders and civil society on Friday to work together to resolve the current political deadlock, warning that the ongoing crisis and chaos are only serving the interests of Islamic State extremists. Despite notable progress on the ground against the Islamic State group, Jan Kubis told the U.N. Security Council that "it remains a formidable and determined enemy that constantly adjusts its tac-

tics and attack patterns." He pointed to the discovery of more than 50 mass graves in territory retaken from IS, including three found on April 19 in the soccer grounds area of Ramadi, and reports that the extremist group is using chemical weapons. Kubis said enemies of Iraq -- first and foremost IS extremists -- "stand to benefit from political instability and lack of reforms." He said a profound political crisis engulfing Baghdad and the country has ... (More on P4)...(27)

Labour's Khan Becomes First Muslim Mayor of London

LONDON - Sadiq Khan, the son of a bus driver, became London's first Muslim mayor on Saturday, seeing off a Conservative challenger who attempted to link him to extremism and securing a much-needed win for his opposition Labour Party. Khan's victory, which also makes him the first Muslim to head a major Western capital, was con-

firmed shortly after midnight inside London's futuristic glass and steel city hall following a day of mixed news for Labour in elections elsewhere in the country. Dealt a crushing blow in Scotland, where it came third behind the Scottish National Party and Britain's ruling Conservatives, Labour did better than expected in England, saving its left-

leaning leader from an early challenge. But the big prize was the London mayor vote, which pitted Khan, 45, who grew up in public housing in inner city London, against Conservative Zac Goldsmith, 41, the son of a billionaire financier. "This election was not without controversy and I am so proud that London has ... (More on P4)...(28)

S. Korea, U.S. Agree to Step up Pressure on DPRK

SEOUL - South Korea and the United States agreed on Saturday to mount pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), as the DPRK was holding its party congress for the first time in 36 years. South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se phoned with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry earlier in the day and reached the agreement, the ministry said in a press release. "(They) agreed to keep sending strong warning messages together with the international community to deter additional nuclear tests and provocations by the DPRK," the ministry said. The DPRK leader Kim Jong Un on Friday celebrated the "great success" of the country's nuclear program at the seventh congress of the ruling Workers' Party. The two officials also shared their assessment of the DPRK's ongoing ruling party congress and the possibility of further "provocations" by Pyongyang, according to the press release. (Yonhap)

Torture Continues in Post War Sri Lanka: UN Official

COLOMBO - The UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment Juan E. Mendez on Saturday said that torture still continues in Sri Lanka. Speaking to reporters after concluding his visit to Sri Lanka, Mendez however said that the number of torture-related incidents have reduced when compared to the peak of the war. Sri Lanka defeated the Tamil Tiger rebels in May 2009 after 30 years of war but was accused of committing grave human rights abuses in the process. The current government which took office last year had promised change and also accountability over incidents related to the war. Mendez and the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of the justice system Monica Pinto conducted a joint visit to Sri Lanka from April 29 to May 7 to assess recent developments and identify challenges related to the use of torture and ... (More on P4)...(29)

Poles Hold Large Anti-Govt. Protest in Favor of EU

WARSAW - Tens of thousands of people marched Saturday in central Warsaw to show their opposition to the policies of the conservative government, which they view as anti-democratic and harmful to Poland's position in the European Union. City authorities estimated that 240,000 turned out, which if true would make it the largest anti-government demonstration since the Law and Justice party took power last year and embarked on bringing deep changes to the country. There was also a counter-protest held by nationalists who voiced opposition to influence by Brussels in Poland's affairs, but it drew significantly fewer people.



The protest and counter-protest highlight a bitter social divide in Poland between those who want deeper integration with Europe and those who feel that EU membership has eroded national sovereignty, only recently regained after the end of the Cold War. The anti-government march was held under the motto "We are

and will remain in Europe" and comes just days after the 12th anniversary of Poland joining the EU. It was organized by the opposition party Civic Platform and the civic group Committee for the Defense of Democracy, known in Poland as KOD, and was supported by other opposition parties. (AP)

AU Calls for Smooth, Peaceful Partial Re-Run of Elections in Union of the Comoros

ADDIS ABABA - The African Union (AU) has called for smooth and peaceful election during the partial re-run of the elections in the Union of the Comoros scheduled for 11 May. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the AU Commission, is following with concern the political situation in the Union of the Comoros

and called for smooth and peaceful during the partial re-run of the elections in Anjouan Island, according to an AU statement later Friday. Dlamini-Zuma has approved the deployment of AU election observers to accompany the people of the Union of the Comoros in the election process. The chairperson has appealed to presidential candidates,

their supporters and all stakeholders to live up to the expectations of the people of the Union of the Comoros and avoid violence before, during and after the elections. She has also called on all political actors and stakeholders to utilize recognized non-violence channels to address any elections-related disputes. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

Pakistan Rejects US Conditions Attached to Sale of F-16s

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan needs modern F-16 fighter jets for its ongoing war against terrorism but rejects the conditions the United States has attached with their sale, said Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry on Saturday. Speaking to journalists, scholars and corporate leaders at a breakfast meeting in Islamabad, the foreign secretary said no conditions should be

attached to the sale of F-16s because Pakistan plans to use the jets only for the purpose of fighting terrorists. The US State Department earlier this week said Pakistan will have to pay from its own funds if it wants to buy F-16 fighter jets, after the US Congress last month withdrew funds for the deal to force Pakistan to act against the Haqqani network. (Agencies)

Iran Ready to Help Fight All Terror Groups: Senior Official

TEHRAN - A senior Iranian official has hailed Syria's firm resistance in the face of terrorism, saying the Islamic Republic will employ all its capacities to help counter the terror groups wreaking havoc in regional countries. In a Saturday meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus, Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, said the anti-terror fight is key to the establishment of peace in the entire world. He also praised the Syrian nation and government for vigorously de-

fending their homeland against terrorists, expressing hope that Arab country will eventually emerge victorious. Iran "will mobilize all resources to fight the terrorists that are perpetrating crimes against oppressed nations in the region regardless of the ridiculous categorization of those terrorists as moderates and extremists," Velayati added. The Syrian leader, in turn, thanked Ayatollah Khamenei as well as the Iranian nation and government for standing by Syrians and making all efforts to help the crisis-hit country in its battles against terrorism. (PressTV)

Pak-Tajikistan Keen to Boost Trade, Economic Ties: Envoy

ISLAMABAD - Jononov Sherali, Ambassador of Tajikistan in Pakistan said that Tajikistan and Pakistan are keen on boosting the bilateral trade and economic relations. Both countries are actively working on increasing the ground and air links for the purpose. During the exclusive interview with Daily Times Tajik Ambassador in Pakistan said strengthening bilateral trade and economic relations are our priorities and thus bilateral trade has steadily risen to 90 million dollars. Tajikistan has become the first country in Central Asia to start direct flight to Pakistan which will decrease flight cost to 1/3 of

the indirect flight, he said. He announced that on May 06, flight operation has started from Lahore to Dushanbe and beginning of direct flight operation and there will be two flights per week on this route. Besides enhancing the economic ties of the two countries, direct flights would increase economic ties and people-to-people contact as well, Jononov Sherali said, comparing the cost of direct and indirect flights an indirect flight costs Rs. 120,000 while the direct flight will cost only Rs. 35,000. Since it is a lot cheaper, it is likely that the number of passengers will also increase. (Agencies)

Turkmenistan Should Focus on Developing Caspian Oil Fields: President

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov has emphasized the necessity of accelerating the work on developing the country's large oil and gas fields and paying special attention to the Turkmen sector of the Caspian Sea, read a message from Turk-

menistan's government. This issue was discussed during a meeting of the country's Cabinet of Ministers. The deputy prime minister, director of the State Agency for Management and Use of Hydrocarbon Resources Yagshygeldy Rakayev delivered a report during that meeting. ... (More on P4)...(30)

Symposium on Development, Human Rights Held in Central China

WUHAN - A symposium on new development idea and China's human rights protection was held on Saturday at Wuhan University, commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the United Nation's Declaration on the Right to Development. More than 60 experts and scholars from universities and research institutes all over the

country attended the seminar held by China Society for Human Rights Studies (CSHRS). The attendees said survival and development are the basic human rights and, China has made remarkable progress in implementing and realizing the development right particularly in the past more than three decades after ... (More on P4)...(31)