

# US Ready to Add Capabilities to Deter Russia in Europe: Mattis

VILNIUS - Pentagon chief Jim Mattis on Wednesday said the United States and NATO are prepared to deploy any capabilities necessary to help beef up air defence systems in the Baltic region.

Mattis's remarks come amid heightened tensions with Russia, which is preparing for massive military exercises in its western military region in September, and has deployed a missile system in neighbouring Kaliningrad. "We will deploy whatever capability is necessary here," Mattis said when asked about regional air defences. Two US defence officials earlier said the United States was considering sending a



Patriot missile battery to the Baltic region for NATO air defence exercises this summer, though they stressed the move would only be temporary.

Moscow last year deployed nuclear-capable Iskander missiles into its Kaliningrad exclave, which borders Lithuania and Poland, rattling the NATO members.

Mattis blasted such moves. "Any buildup of Russian combat power in an area where they know, and we all know, they are not threatened by anything that we are doing ... is simply destabilising," Mattis said at a press conference with Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė. (AFP)

## Trump to Decide on Paris Climate Agreement after G7 Summit

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump will not make an announcement on whether or not to pull the country out of the Paris Agreement on climate change until after he returns from the May 26-27 Group of Seven (G7) summit in Italy, the White House said Tuesday. "The president has been meeting with his team for quite a while on this matter," White House spokesman Sean Spicer told reporters at a daily briefing. Trump was originally

scheduled to sit down Tuesday with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Environmental Protection Agency administrator Scott Pruitt, his daughter Ivanka Trump and others to discuss the agreement, but the meeting was postponed.

When asked if the canceled meeting is a sign that Trump is vacillating on the agreement, Spicer said: "No, I think it's simply a sign that the president wants to continue to meet ... (More on P4)...(23)

## G7 Seen Urging Trump to Stick with Climate Pact at Summit

OSLO/PARIS - President Donald Trump will face pressure from other Group of Seven leaders at a summit this month to keep the United States in a global agreement to combat climate change after he put off a decision on whether to quit the pact. Trump, who doubts climate change is man-made and made a campaign pledge to "cancel" the 2015 Paris Agreement, postponed on Tuesday a planned decision on whether to stay or leave that had been due before the May 26-27 summit in Italy. The delay, until after

Trump returns to Washington, would give him more time to meet with his advisers and decide what is "in the best interest of the United States", White House spokesman Sean Spicer said.

It also gives other G7, who all support the Paris plan to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energies by the end of the century to limit global warming, a chance to put their case to Trump face-to-face.

"The decision to delay by the White House is an opportunity to discuss the issue in detail," a French ... (More on P4)...(25)

## China Calls for Enhanced Cooperation between UN, EU in World Development

UNITED NATIONS - A Chinese envoy Tuesday called on the UN and the EU to strengthen cooperation and make positive and greater contributions to world peace and development.

Liu Jieyi, China's permanent representative to the UN, made the appeal at a Security Council meeting on cooperation between the UN and the regional organization.

Noting that anti-globalization and conservative thinking are on the rise,

Liu said all parties should jointly safeguard the international order with the UN at the center, and strengthen the UN's status in international affairs.

Liu said the two organizations should establish a concept of common, comprehensive and sustainable security and jointly push parties to abandon zero-sum thinking to achieve win-win for all.

On development, Liu said many developing countries are faced with unique difficulties in implement-



ing the UN agenda for sustainable development,

and the EU should provide more funding and technical support to help those countries achieve development goals. "China attaches great importance to its relationship with the EU and has all along supported the ... (More on P4)...(24)

## Turkey Hopes to Continue EU Accession Bid on Win-Win Basis: Erdogan

ANKARA - Turkey wants to continue its EU membership bid on a win-win basis, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said.

"Our country, which has been a historical, geographical and cultural part of Europe for centuries, demands to continue the EU membership process, which it sees as a strategic target, based on mutual respect, quality and a win-win concept," Erdogan said in a written statement released by Turkish presidency official website on Europe Day.

The Turkish president said

that the cooperation developed with the EU at the peak of the migrant crisis in 2016 was the "most concrete and latest example" of this understanding. "We would like to carry our cooperation with the EU to the highest level in fields such as immigration, economy, energy, customs union and membership negotiations," the statement added.

Erdogan stated the "greatest risk" against the unity of the EU was the discriminatory discourse by "populist politicians." "Unfortunately, such social illnesses as discrimi-



nation, cultural racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia, have been spreading across the continent," he said. "Such trends and policies rising in Europe also poison Turkey-EU re-

lations." Meanwhile, Omer Celik, Turkish EU Minister, said the country wished to enhance ties with the EU instead of speaking about "concerns." (Xinhua)

## Trump Fires FBI Director James Comey

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump fired James Comey, the director of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the White House said in a statement Tuesday.

"Today, President Donald J. Trump informed FBI Director James Comey that he has been terminated and removed from office," the statement said.

"President Trump acted based on the clear recommendations of both Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and Attorney General Jeff Sessions," the statement added.



"The FBI is one of our nation's most cherished and respected institutions and today will mark a new beginning for our crown jewel of law enforcement," the statement quoted Trump as saying.

A process to select a new

FBI director is underway. In a letter he sent to Comey earlier Tuesday, Trump said that "While I greatly appreciate you informing me, on three separate occasions, that I am not under investigation, I nevertheless ... (More on P4)...(26)

## Trump Meets with Russia's Top Diplomat

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump welcomed Vladimir Putin's top diplomat to the White House Wednesday marking his highest level face-to-face contact with a Russian government official since taking office.

The talks come one day after Trump fired the FBI director, who was overseeing an investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrived at the White House and entered from its exclusive West Executive entrance, out of range for reporters to ask questions.

Before that session, Lavrov stopped at the State Department to see Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who said the get-together was a chance for the two to "continue our dialogue" and "exchange of views" that they started last month in Moscow. During that trip, ... (More on P4)...(27)

## U.S. Criticizes Russian Build-up near Baltic States

PABRADE TRAINING AREA, Lithuania - U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said on Wednesday that a Russian missile deployment near the Baltic states was "destabilizing", and officials suggested the United States could deploy a Patriot missile battery in the region for NATO exercises in the summer.

U.S. allies are jittery ahead of war games by Russia and Belarus in September that could involve up to 100,000 troops and include nuclear weapons training -- the biggest such exercise since 2013.

The drills could see Russian troops near the borders of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Russia has also deployed Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad, its enclave on the Baltic Sea. It said the deployment was part of routine drills, but U.S. officials worry that it may represent a permanent upgrade. Asked during a trip to Lithuania about the deployment, Mattis told a news conference: "Any kind of build-up like that is simply destabilizing."

The United States is ruling out any direct response to the Russian drills or the Iskander deployment. But at the same time, U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, raised the possibility that a Patriot missile battery could be deployed briefly to the Baltic region during NATO exercises in July that focus on air defense, known as Tobruk Legacy.

The officials stressed that the Patriots, if deployed, would be withdrawn when the exercises were over. That would most likely happen before the Russian drills began, they said. (Reuters)

## India, Russia Agree to Work Closely During Review of Bilateral Cooperation

NEW DELHI - New Delhi and Moscow Wednesday agreed to work closely in various sectors including civil nuclear energy, renewable energy, trade, technology and disaster management.

The decision was taken during a meeting between India's foreign minister Sushma Swaraj and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin in New Delhi.

"The two leaders reviewed the progress made on various bilateral issues since their last meeting on September 13, 2016 as well as the preparations for the forthcoming India-Russia annual summit to be held in St. Petersburg on June 1, 2017," a statement issued by ministry ... (More on P4)...(28)

## Moon Jae-In, South Korea's New President

SEOUL - Moon Jae-in was elected as South Korea's 19th president, winning a sweeping victory over his conservative and centrist rivals by a wide margin.

The liberal president, who lost narrowly to his predecessor Park Geun-hye in 2012, conveniently won this election as the conservative bloc was brought down by Park's impeachment and arrest over corruption allegations.

Moon advocates the "sunshine policy" of trying to expand inter-Korean cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The rapprochement policy was created by late liberal President Kim Dae-jung and championed by Kim's suc-

cessor Roh Moo-hyun who governed the country for five years from 2003.

Moon was born on Jan. 24, 1953 in the country's southeastern province of South Gyeongsang. He majored in law at Kyunghee University in Seoul.

As a student activist in the 1970s, Moon was jailed for protesting against the dictatorship of former President Park Chung-hee, father of the impeached Park. Since 1980s, he worked as a human rights lawyer together with late President Roh.

When Roh became president in 2003, Moon served as his chief of staff and senior presidential secretary for civil affairs. (Xinhua)

## Neighbor News

### Nawaz Sharif to Attend US-Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has accepted the invitation of Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud to participate in a summit to be attended by US President Donald Trump and other world leaders in Riyadh later this month.

Saudi Minister for Information and Culture Dr Awwad Bin Saleh Al-Awwad, who is a special envoy of the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques, extended the invitation to the prime minister in a meeting here on Tuesday, the PM Office said. A Gulf News report posted on its website said invitations for the coming Arab, Islamic

and United States summit were being sent to leaders of the member countries of the Saudi-led Islamic coalition to fight terrorism.

Pakistan is a part of the 41-nation Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism and last month, the government granted a no-objection certificate to former army chief Gen Raheel Sharif to assume the command of the coalition. The report said the Islamic-US summit was expected to address the issue of "hatred" and President Trump would most likely use the occasion to directly reassure Muslims that the US did not oppose Islam or Muslims. (Agencies)

### Pak-Iran Border Commission Formed to Work on Outstanding Issues: Aziz

ISLAMABAD - The Pakistani prime minister's adviser on foreign affairs, Sartaj Aziz, on Wednesday said a Pak-Iran border commission has been formed and will hold its first meeting within a month.

He said the commission will comprise four members from each country. Pakistan and Iran had agreed last week to constitute an operational committee at various levels to ensure better border management.

During a meeting between Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, it was agreed that the two countries would

cooperate with each other for effective border management and to curb drug trafficking and illegal cross border movement through intelligence-sharing.

"Smugglers and other elements are also present along the Pak-Iran border," Aziz said while speaking to the media, noting that the border issues facing the countries are not limited to terrorism. Aziz also noted that a larger number of members of Jaish-e-Adl, a militant group responsible for a recent attack on Iranian guards on the Pak-Iran border, are present on the Iranian side of the border. (Monitoring Desk)

### Iran's Election Campaign Heats up as Presidential Poll Nears

TEHRAN - Iran's election campaign heats up with the six presidential hopefuls vying for the position of the country's chief executive.

In an address to his female supporters in a stadium in the capital Tehran on Tuesday, President Hassan Rouhani, who is seeking reelection, said his performance obviously reflects his opposition to "gender discrimination" and "gender oppression."

"The [1979 Islamic] Revolution was a success because women entered the scene.

Today, if women step on the election scene, if all go to the polls, we will definitely be successful," he

said. The Iranian people have chosen the path of social and political freedom as well as freedom of thought and expression, Rouhani said, adding that he is seeking "genuine security" along with unity.

'Revolutionary management key to progress' Addressing his supporters in the city of Kerman, another candidate Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi highlighted the economic woes gripping Iranians and said the resource-rich nation of Iran does not deserve to be held back by such problems as absolute poverty, youth unemployment and corruption. (Presstv)

### Tajikistan Detains Son of Defector to Islamic State: Security Sources

DUSHANBEH - Tajik security services have detained the eldest son of a former elite police force commander who defected to Islamic State two years ago, suspecting that the young man was going to join his father, security sources said on Wednesday.

The United States last August offered up to \$3 million for information about

Colonel Gulmurod Khalimov, whom it trained in counter-terrorism before he joined Islamic State. Washington has described Khalimov as "a key leader" of Islamic State, which has seized parts of Syria and Iran and staged or inspired

deadly militant attacks around the world.

Bekhrud Khalimov, 18, Khalimov's eldest son, was detained in late April when trying to fly from Dushanbe to Moscow, the security sources told Reuters. They said he remains under preliminary arrest, which can run up to two months under Tajik law.

Bekhrud Khalimov is the eldest of the eight children whom Gulmurod Khalimov left behind, along with his then-wife, when he defected in May 2015. He took with him his mistress and their four children, according to state prosecutors. (Reuters)