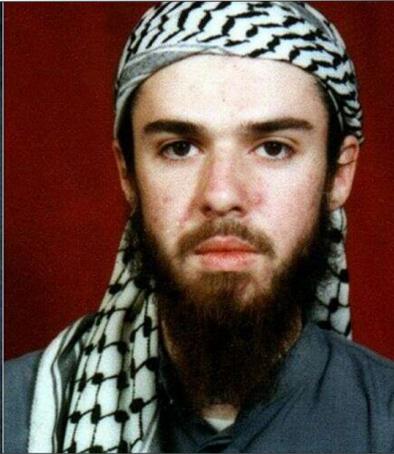


## John Walker Lindh, American Ex-Taliban Militant, Set to Walk Free Thursday

WASHINGTON - The Islamic militant who became known as the infamous "American Taliban" member is set to be released from a U.S. federal prison Thursday despite lawmakers' concerns about the "security and safety implications" of freeing an unrepentant terrorist who officials say continues to "openly call for extremist violence."

John Walker Lindh, who is currently behind bars in Terre Haute, Indiana, is set to be discharged May 23, several years before he would complete the prescribed 20-year prison sentence he received for joining and supporting the Taliban. The former Islamist fighter and enemy combatant, named "Detainee 001 in the war on terror," was



arrested in 2001, just months after the Sept. 11 attacks and the start of the war in Afghanistan, along with a group of Taliban fighters who

were captured by U.S. forces. "We must consider the security and safety implications for our citizens and communities who will receive

individuals like John Walker Lindh, who continue to openly call for extremist violence," Sens. Richard C. Shelby, R-Ala., and Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., wrote in a letter to the Federal Bureau of Prisons late last week that was obtained by the Washington Post. In the letter, the lawmakers reportedly sought details on how the agency is working to prevent prisoners such as Lindh from committing additional crimes after their release. They also asked which other "terrorist offenders" are next in line to be freed and how the Federal Bureau of Prisons determines whether or not someone is an "ongoing public threat." (Fox News)

## Neighbor News

### FM Qureshi Met His Chinese Counterpart, Discussed Issues of Mutual Interests

ISLAMABAD - Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi Wednesday met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi during the meeting of Foreign Ministers Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

During the meeting both sides exchanged views on bilateral relations, security situation in the region and other important issues of mutual interests, said a foreign office statement here.

FM Qureshi said that China was Pakistan's dearest friend and strongest ally. Pak-China friendship was a cornerstone of coun-

try's regional foreign policy.

"Whether its matter of Pakistan's national security or regional peace and stability, China has always played its significant role", he said. Shah Mahmood congratulated his Chinese counterpart on the successful holding of the second belt and Road Forum.

Chinese foreign minister was of the view that success of this forum was evident of international community's confidence in China's policies. Foreign Minister also congratulated his counterpart on the 70th anniversary of China's Republic day. (Monitoring Desk)

### Russia, France, Germany Defend JCPOA, Support Trade with Iran

TEHRAN - The leaders of Russia, France and Germany have underscored the need to preserve the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, stressing their commitment to boosting trade ties with the Islamic Republic despite the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the accord.

The Kremlin said in a statement that Russian President Vladimir Putin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron had voiced support for the agreement during a phone conversation on Tuesday.

"During the discussion of the situation around the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear program, the importance of preserving this agreement, which is a key factor in maintaining international stability and security, was noted. Russia, France and Germany reaffirmed their commitment to further mutually beneficial cooperation with Iran in trade and economy," the statement read. Merkel's office also confirmed that the trio had "underlined the need to persuade Iran to remain in the nuclear agree-

ment, which they agreed to maintain."

Last year, US President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled his country out of the JCPOA and unleashed the "toughest ever" sanctions against Tehran despite international objections.

Since then, Washington has been trying to coerce the European parties into following its lead and scrapping the multilateral accord.

The cosignatories have vowed efforts to compensate for Washington's absence and make sure that Iran will be able to collect its economic dividends of the deal. Tehran, however, complains that they have failed to take practical measures to fulfill their end of the bargain despite Iran's full compliance. On May 8, the first anniversary of Washington's exit from the JCPOA, Iran announced its decision to stop exporting excess uranium and heavy water for a 60-day period, during which the remaining signatories would have to honor their promises and ensure that Iran is no more deprived of the economic benefits it was promised under the agreement. (Press TV)

### Turkmenistan Creates Interdepartmental Council on Seismic Risk Reduction

ASHGABAT - An interdepartmental council on seismic risk reduction in seismic zones of Turkmenistan has been created, Trend reports with reference to a decree issued by the president of the country. The document was adopted in order to ensure safe social, economic and environmental conditions for the population living in seismically dangerous areas of Turkmenistan, determine and record the level of seismic hazard, and reduce the impact of potential earthquakes. This should also serve

the implementation of the tasks stipulated in the program "Seismic risk reduction in seismically hazardous areas of Turkmenistan." Turkmenistan is located in a seismically dangerous zone. On the night of October 6, 1948, a magnitude 10 earthquake occurred in Ashgabat and claimed numerous lives. More than 20 digital stationary and dozens of autonomous, mobile seismic stations monitor the seismic activity in Turkmenistan. One of these mobile seismic stations is located in the Karakum Desert. (Trend)

### Turkey Ratifies Several Agreements with Uzbekistan

TASHKENT - Turkey has ratified a number of agreements with Uzbekistan, Trend reports citing Resmi Gazete. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan ratified the agreement between the governments of Uzbekistan and Turkey on the mutual

extradition of persons who have committed crimes. The document was signed on April 30, 2018 in Tashkent. The agreement between the governments of the two countries on cooperation in the field of air transportation was also ratified. (Trend)

### Japan Woos Trump with Pomp and Circumstance, looks to Avoid Trade Battle

TOKYO - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will treat U.S. President Donald Trump to an imperial banquet, front row seats at a sumo tournament and a trip to the country's biggest warship on a state visit as Tokyo seeks to avoid a bust-up over trade.

New Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Harvard-educated Empress Masako will host a lavish dinner for Trump during his stay through May 28, part of a display meant to showcase the two countries' alliance.

The U.S. leader will become the first foreign dignitary to be so honored since the monarch inherited the throne this month. Trump will also play golf with Abe and inspect Japan's Kaga helicopter carrier. At their summit on Monday, Trump and Abe are expected to discuss topics from North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and China's economic and military rise to two-way trade at a time when Washington is embroiled in a trade war with Beijing. (Reuters)

### UN Disarmament Chief Says Risks of Nuclear-Weapons Use Higher Than Ever Since WWII

UNITED NATION - The director of the UN disarmament think tank has said that the risks of a nuclear strike are now higher than ever since the World War II ended, partially due to the erosion of old arms control mechanisms.

Renata Dwan, director of the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), an autonomous institution set up by the UN General Assembly in 1980 to assess risks to international security arising from militarization, told Reuters

in an interview that the world has never been closer to crossing the nuclear threshold since the end of the WWII.

"I think that it's genuinely a call to recognize - and this has been somewhat missing in the media coverage of the issues - that the risks of nuclear war are particularly high now, and the risks of the use of nuclear weapons are higher now than at any time since World War II," Dwan said.

The growing likelihood of a nuclear attack



brought about the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the first legally binding agreement prohibiting all types of nuclear

weapons as well as their transfer, stationing and threat of use. The treaty passed by the UN General... (More on P4)... (11)

### 'Our Eyes in The Sky': India Launches All-Weather Satellite to Control Borders



NEW DELHI - India successfully launched a new Earth observation satellite featuring radar imaging capable of penetrating through thick clouds. The new tech-

nology is believed to be used by the military for border control.

RISAT-2B, New Delhi's brand new low-orbit satellite was launched on early Wednesday

morning from the Sriharikota island in south-eastern India. Equipped with synthetic aperture X-band radar, the mission has "special imaging capabilities" as it allows all-weather surveillance, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief Kailasavadivoo Sivan told local media. Also, the satellite is carrying an Indian-made Vikram processor for the first time.

The agency, however, did not disclose any images of the satellite,

implying that it is likely to be used for military purposes. It is believed that its enhanced radar imaging features will enable the Indian army to keep track of activities on its borders. The brand-new optics are set to become "our eyes in the sky above," India's Defense Minister Chowkidar Nirmala Sitharaman tweeted. The satellite imaging issue raised public concerns in February as tensions escalated in the disputed region of Kashmir. ... (More on P4)... (12)

### Saudi Arabia, UAE to Attend U.S.-Led Palestine Investment Meeting

RIYADH - Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will participate in a conference next month in Bahrain aimed at encouraging investment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, part of U.S. President Donald Trump's long-awaited Israel-Palestinian peace plan.

The "Peace to Prosperity" economic workshop, to be hosted on June 25-26 in cooperation with the United States, has already been rebuffed by Palestinian officials and business

leaders who want their political demands to be addressed in any solution to the decades-old conflict.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Islamist group Hamas have called for an Arab boycott of the meeting. The Saudi minister of economy and planning will attend, state news agency SPA reported on Wednesday. The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation said Abu Dhabi would also send a delegation. (Reuters)

### Deadly Strikes Hit Syria Market as Damascus Battles Jihadists

MAARET AL-NUMAN (Syria) - Syrian government air strikes killed 12 civilians in a market in Idlib province, a monitor said on Wednesday, as fierce fighting raged for the jihadist-held northwestern region.

In neighbouring Hama province, government forces battled to repel a jihadist counteroffensive around the town of Kafr Nabuda that has left more than 50 combatants dead in 24 hours, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The Hayat Tahrir al-Sham alliance, led by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate, controls a large part of Idlib province as well as adjacent slivers of Hama, Aleppo and Latakia provinces. (AFP)

### Modi's Party Promises to Boost India's Economy; Congress Calls Exit Polls Fake

NEW DELHI - India's ruling coalition has promised to rev up growth, double farmers' income and boost infrastructure spending in the next five years after exit polls showed it would retain power when general election votes are counted on Thursday.

Exit polls have predicted an outright majority for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's alliance in the seven-phase election that ended on Sunday.

Such surveys have proved misleading before, and the main opposition Congress party on Wednesday dismissed them as fake. The coalition, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which is led by Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), met in New Delhi on Tuesday confident of victory. (Reuters)

### 'Fool of Low IQ': North Korea Roasts Biden after Presidential Hopeful Attacks Kim Jong-Un

PYONGYANG - Pyongyang has unleashed an avalanche of insults directed at Joe Biden after the Democratic presidential hopeful referred to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as a dictator.

Biden was declared a "fool of low IQ" and an "imbecile" lacking human qualities by Pyongyang's state-controlled Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Tuesday. The verbal lashing comes just days after the presidential hopeful suggested during a rally in Philadelphia that US President



Donald Trump was "embracing dictators like [Russian President Vladimir] Putin and Kim Jong-un."

The state news agency further accused Biden of insulting the country's leadership and engag-

ing in an "intolerable and serious politically-motivated provocation" against the North. "We will never pardon anyone who dare provoke the supreme leadership of the DPRK ... (More on P4)... (13)

### Turkey Preparing for Possible U.S. Sanctions Over S-400s: Minister

ANKARA - Turkey's defense minister said it was preparing for potential U.S. sanctions over its purchase of Russian S-400 missile defense systems, even while he said there was some improvement in talks with the United States over buying F-35 fighter jets.

Turkey and the United States have been at odds on several fronts including Ankara's decision to buy the S-400s, which cannot be integrated into NATO systems. Washington says it would jeopardize Turkey's role in

building Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jets, which it says would be compromised by S-400s.

While Washington has warned that Ankara faced sanctions under its Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) if it presses on with the deal, Turkey has said it expected U.S. President Donald Trump to protect it. Speaking to reporters late on Tuesday, Defence Minister Hulusi Akar said Turkey was fulfilling its responsibilities ... (More on P4)... (14)