

Trump Calls Germans "Bad, Very Bad" when Criticizing German Trade Surplus

BERLIN - While meeting with European leaders in Brussels on Thursday, U.S. President Donald Trump said "the Germans are bad, very bad" in a way to criticize the German trade surplus, according to the German newsmagazine Der Spiegel.

Trump's meeting with President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and President of the European Council Donald Tusk on Thursday morning was followed by a larger, closed-door meeting with European leaders.

"Look at the millions of cars that they are selling in the USA. Horrible. We will stop that," Trump said at the meeting, according to Der Spiegel.



The report says as a reduction of the U.S. trade deficit is a priority of Trump, the U.S. president has blamed German trade surplus as a contributing factor and has pledged to "stop" German car sales to the U.S. It says that is also in light of the "massive amounts of money" Trump feels Germany owes to NATO.

In January, Trump threatened to impose a 35 percent tax on German auto imports, saying "I would tell BMW that if you are building a factory in Mexico and plan to sell cars in the USA, without a 35 percent tax, then you can forget that." However, Trump's criticism against Germany was rejected by Juncker, who sided with Germany. (Xinhua)

Nieghbor News

China-EU Cooperation Makes Cake of Common Interests Bigger: Envoy

BRUSSELS - "China's cooperation with the European Union (EU) has made the 'cake' of common interests bigger," China's Ambassador to the European Union (EU), Yang Yanyi, said in a recent interview with Xinhua. With the expansion of their cooperation scale, the enhancement of cooperation level and improvement of cooperation quality, more job opportunities will be created for both sides and a more competitive consumer market will be cultivated, Yang said.

"It makes peoples of both sides realize that openness and cooperation is the right choice that leads to a better life through sharing the benefits of globalization," Yang added. Yang's interview came as Chinese Premier Li Keqiang is set to pay an official visit to Germany and Belgium

next week, during which he will attend the 19th China-EU leaders' meeting in Brussels.

BELT & ROAD INITIATIVE BOOSTS CHINA-EU TIES

While talking about the growth of China-EU relations in recent years, Yang gave special emphasis on the positive impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on the China-EU relations. Since China and the EU agreed to synergize the Belt and Road Initiative and European Development Strategy at the 17th China-EU Summit in 2015, the initiative has grown from a concept into action, from vision into reality, which has brought tangible benefits to the peoples of China and Europe, and greatly promoted the connectivity and common development across the Eurasia continent. (Xinhua)

Over 60,000 Migrants Reach Europe by Sea this Year: IOM

GENEVA - A total of 60,521 migrants and refugees have crossed the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe this year, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reported Friday. The Geneva-based agency indicated that more than 80 percent of the arrivals happened in Italy, where 50,267 men, women and children have made their landing since the beginning of the year.

The remaining 10,254 maritime migrants have reached Greece, Spain

and Cyprus. Unsurprisingly, the central Mediterranean route linking North Africa with Italian shores has claimed the most lives, with IOM reporting a death toll of 1,442 this year.

A further 51 individuals have drowned on western Mediterranean passages, while 37 have died on the short stretch of water separating Turkey and Greece.

IOM figure revealed that while far fewer people have reached Europe by sea in 2017 compared



with last year, the number of deaths is higher. Indeed, a total of 1,530 fatalities have been registered since the start of the year, up from the 1,398 deaths recorded for some 193,000 arrivals over the same period in 2016. (Xinhua)

NATO Leaders Agree to Step up Burden Sharing under Trump Pressure

BRUSSELS - NATO leaders have agreed to step up NATO's role in the fight against terrorism and fairer burden sharing under pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump. The details were outlined after a one-day summit in Brussels which included Trump and leaders from the western alliance.

Speaking at a news conference after the summit on Thursday night, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said "The decisions we have taken

today are the best tools to make sure that NATO continues to deliver."

On defense spending and President Trump's repeated demand for European allies to "pay their fair share," Stoltenberg said "Trump was blunt on that message today. But we have seen and heard this kind of plain speaking from him before." But he added that "we are all aware of the importance of this and we are now moving in the right direction." (Xinhua)

1,530 Migrants, Refugees Die Crossing Mediterranean in 2017: UN Migration Agency

UNITED NATIONS - The UN Migration Agency (IOM) said Friday that 1,530 migrants and refugees died crossing the Mediterranean in 2017.

The IOM reports that 60,521 migrants and refugees have entered Europe by sea this year, with over 80 percent arriving in Italy and the remainder divided between Greece, Cyprus and Spain, said Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, at the

daily news briefing. "This number does not include some 6,000 people who have been rescued over the past 72 hours," said Dujarric. In terms of fatalities, there have been 1,530 migrants and refugees who have died this year on this route, a figure that roughly matches those for 2016 for the same period, he said. However, the IOM warned that the deadliest season is starting right now, said the spokesman. (Xinhua)

Russian Airstrikes Kill 120 IS Fighters

DAMASCUS - At least 120 militants with the Islamic State (IS) group were killed by Russian airstrikes on the road between Raqqa province and the ancient city of Palmyra, state news agency SANA reported on Saturday.

The Russian warplanes struck a convoy of IS fighters moving from the northern city of Raqqa toward an area near the ancient city of Palmyra, said the report, giving no details about the exact timing of the airstrikes.

It added that the convoy constituted of 39 pickup trucks outfitted with ma-



chine guns. Targeting IS on that desert road is part of a campaign the Syrian army and its allies of Hezbol-

lah and Russian air force have unleashed against IS positions in that part of the country. The aim is to clear the de-

sert areas all the way to the Iraqi and Jordanian borders from IS presence. (Xinhua)

EU Presented Turkey with New 12-Month Diplomatic Timetable: Erdogan

ANKARA - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said the European Union had presented Turkey with a new 12-month timetable for renewing their relations, the Hurriyet daily said on Saturday.

Speaking to reporters on the return flight from this week's NATO summit in Brussels, Erdogan was cited by Hurriyet as saying that during the summit, Turkey and the EU had agreed on giving a new impetus to relations and added Turkey's foreign and EU affairs ministries would work towards the timetable.

Turkey's relations with the European Union, particularly Germany, have deteriorated sharply after a series of diplomatic rows. Erdogan was quoted as saying he had put the issue of the visa liberalization on the agenda during meetings with EU officials, and that Turkish and EU officials would work together on the issue. (Reuters)

"Uphold Your Pledge Against Hunger", Humanitarian Groups Tell G7

TAORMINA, Italy - The Group of Seven (G7) countries should take the lead in fighting the current famine threat, and uphold their pledge to eradicate hunger they had made in 2015, humanitarian groups said at the ongoing summit in Italy. The appeal was launched by a group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which urged the G7 to immediately provide financial resources to tackle the famine that has been declared in parts of South Sudan already, and is threatening



northeast Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen. Promoters of the initiative included Save the Children, Oxfam, ActionAid, Action global health advocacy partnership, and Global Citizen advocacy group. Their

appeal comes as G7 leaders met with their African counterparts from five countries and six organizations, in the second day of the summit taking place in the Sicilian town of Taormina. (Xinhua)

Merkel Says G7 Debate on Climate Was 'Very Unsatisfying'

TAORMINA, Italy - German Chancellor Angela Merkel said at the conclusion of a G7 summit in Sicily on Saturday that a debate between leaders over climate had been "very unsatisfying", noting the United States had been totally isolated in its refusal to commit to the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

"The entire discussion about climate was very difficult, if not to say very dissatisfying," Merkel told reporters. "There are no indications whether the United States will stay in the Paris Agreement or not." (Reuters)

Russia Urges NATO to Improve Relations

MOSCOW - The Russian Foreign Ministry on Friday called on NATO to stop confrontation and seek better relations with Moscow. Russia-NATO relations are "in the deepest crisis since the end of the Cold War," said the ministry in a statement. It noted that the military alliance has unilaterally frozen projects of practical cooperation on European security.

The Russian ministry issued the statement on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between Russia and NATO. The deployment of NATO hardware and personnel

close to Russia's borders dilutes the provisions of the Founding Act and leads to a dangerous round of arms race, the ministry said. "Growing negative trends are not Russia's choice. This is a direct result of the long-term destructive policy of the bloc aimed at recklessly achieving military and political domination in European and world affairs," the statement said. NATO decided to freeze relations with Russia in April 2014 over the latter's incorporation of Crimea and its alleged role in the Ukrainian crisis. Both sides said they have continued to keep channels for political dialogue open. (Xinhua)

G7 Discusses Migration, Development with African Leaders in Italy

TAORMINA, Italy - Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) nations met with African heads of state and government on Saturday at the Italian town of Taormina, discussing issues like migration, development, among others.

Leaders of Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Niger and Tunisia were invited to join the talks, along with representatives from six African organizations, including the African Union (AU), as the G7 wrapped up its two-day annual summit.

The African leaders were welcomed with a ceremony at Taormina's ancient Greek theater in early morning, before meeting with their counterparts from the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. Holding the G7 rotating presidency in 2017, Italy wanted to have the related topics of Europe's migration crisis and African development on top of the agenda of the annual summit. Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni's government wanted G7 partners to provide substantial help to crucial African countries in terms of investments and development policies, as a way to stem the endless flows of migrants and refugees fleeing poverty, destitution, and war. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and European Union (EU) Council Donald Tusk also attended the meeting. Hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees have been risking their life crossing the Mediterranean from African coasts to Europe in the past years, and 1,520 people were estimated to have drowned in the attempt as of May 24, according to the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR. (Xinhua)

Iran, Russia Presidents Discuss JCPOA Implementation, Middle East Developments

TEHRAN - The presidents of Iran and Russia have discussed the implementation of the landmark 2015 nuclear agreement between the Islamic Republic and the P5+1 group of countries as well as the latest developments in the Middle East.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday held a phone conversation with incumbent Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, during which he once again offered congratulations to him on his landslide reelection victory.

Rouhani won a resounding reelection victory in Iran's May 19 presidential election, with 23,549,616 votes or 57 percent of the

total ballots.

During the phone conversation, the Iranian president said that Tehran welcomes the expansion of cooperation with its neighboring countries, including Russia, adding, "Iran is ready to bolster bilateral and regional cooperation with Russia with more determination and we will witness more close cooperation between the two countries in the future."

He pointed to increasing economic and trade interaction between the two sides in recent years and said Tehran supports enhanced cooperation with Moscow in infrastructural and industrial projects as well as energy and banking sectors. (Presstv)

Turkmenistan, Belarus Hold Business Talks

ASHGABAT - A business forum organized by the chambers of commerce and industry of Turkmenistan and Belarus has been held in Ashgabat, the Embassy of Belarus in Turkmenistan said in a message on Friday.

"The forum participants discussed development of bilateral cooperation at the level of business circles, including the supply chains, logistics and financing," the message said. Ambassador of Belarus to Turkmenistan Oleg Tabanyukhov in his speech at the forum drew attention to the efforts of the Turkmen and Belarusian presidents aimed at creating a favorable environment for the two countries' entrepreneurs.

About two dozen large enterprises and companies of Belarus took part in the forum.

Belarus offered its services in the supply of high-technology equipments and organization of their production, and expressed interest in Turkmen textile, agricultural and industrial products, and deepening cooperation in the manufacture of food products.

The sides also discussed the possibility of supplying railway rolling stock, agricultural and road machinery. The two countries also discussed cooperation in establishing production of high-technology lighting equipment, as well as partnership in the field of printing. (Trend)