

Syria Deal May be on Agenda for Putin-Trump Asia Meeting: Report

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin and his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump may discuss a Syria settlement at an Asian economic summit in Vietnam next week, the RIA news agency reported on Saturday. Relations between Moscow and Washington have soured further since Putin and Trump first met at a G20 summit in Hamburg in July when they discussed allegations of Russian meddling in the U.S. election, but agreed to focus on better ties.

Tensions have risen over the conflict in Syria, after Russia vetoed a United Nations plan to continue an ongoing investigation into chemical weapons.



A Syria settlement "is being discussed" for the agenda of a possible meeting between the two presidents, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying by RIA, adding it was in their common interest to have enough time to discuss the issue. "Somehow or another it requires cooperation," Peskov said. Trump told Fox News this week that it was possible he would meet Putin during his Asia trip. "We may have a meeting with Putin," he said. "And, again - Putin is very important because they can help us with North Korea. They can help us with Syria. We have to talk about Ukraine." (Reuters)

Xi Instructs Army to Improve its Combat Readiness

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday instructed the armed forces to improve their combat capability and readiness for war. Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), made the remarks while inspecting the CMC joint battle command center as its commander in chief. "The CMC should lead the armed forces to be ready to fight and win wars, and to undertake the missions and tasks

of the new era entrusted to them by the Party and the people," said Xi, in military uniform. The capability to win is strategically important in safeguarding national security, and strengthening that capability and combat readiness in the new era would provide strategic support to the realization of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation, according to Xi. Xi called on the military to closely follow the situation of national security and to ensure military preparedness in all directions and all fields. (Xinhua)

US Report Affirms Global Warming, Despite Trump's Anti-Climate Policies

WASHINGTON - A major U.S. government report on Friday affirmed that global warming is real and "extremely likely" caused by human activities, a stark contrast with President Donald Trump's position on climate change. The 477-page report, part of a congressionally mandated review conducted every four years known as the National Climate Assessment, showed that global annually averaged surface air temperature has increased by about 1.0 degree Celsius over the last 115 years.

"This period is now the warmest in the history of modern civilization," said the assessment, officially titled the Climate Science Special Report. "The last few years have also seen record-breaking, climate-related weather extremes, and the last three years have been the warmest years on record for the globe," it said. "These trends are expected to continue over climate timescales." Based on extensive evidence, the report concluded that it is "extremely likely" - meaning a 95



to 100 percent probability - that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.

"For the warming over the last century, there is no convincing alternative explanation supported by the extent of the observational evidence," it noted. (Xinhua)

Turkish, German FM Informally Meet in Antalya to Discuss Ties



ANKARA - The foreign ministers of Turkey and Germany held a surprise meeting in Turkey's southern province of Antalya on Saturday, and

discussed the bilateral relations, local broadcaster NTV reported. The two ministers, Mevlut Cavusoglu and Sigmar Gabriel, are in Antalya for

the 2017 Turkish Airlines Open golf tournament held as part of the European Tour Rolex Series. "I met Sigmar Gabriel in Antalya informally to discuss bilateral relations, including the difficult issues and mutual expectations," Cavusoglu confirmed their meeting on his Twitter on Saturday. The ties between the two countries have been

strained from a deep mistrust. Ankara has been accusing Germany of tolerating activities of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in its territories and of offering asylum to the followers of Fethullah Gulen after the coup attempt last year. Berlin, in return, criticized Turkey for arresting German journalists and activists on baseless grounds. Despite disagreements, both sides have expressed interest in dialogue to improve relations between the two allies. (Xinhua)

N. Korea Rules out Negotiations as Trump Heads to Asia

SEOUL - North Korea ruled out talks and threatened to increase its nuclear arsenal in a fresh warning to Donald Trump's administration Saturday as the US President set off on a tour of Asia. Trump departed for his first presidential trip to Asia Friday, with tensions over North Korea's nuclear and missile threats looming large. He is due to arrive in South Korea Tuesday, after first visiting Japan. The North's state-run KCNA news agency said in a commentary that the US should be disabused of the "absurd idea" that

Pyeongyang would succumb to international sanctions and give up its nuclear weapons, adding that it is in "the final stage for completing nuclear deterrence." "It had better stop day-dreaming of denuclearization talks with us," said the commentary titled "Stop dreaming a day-dream." "Our self-defensive nuclear treasure sword will be sharpened evermore unless the US hostile policy toward the DPRK is abolished once and for all," it said, using an acronym for the official name of North Korea. (AFP)

EU's Top Diplomat Schedules US Trip to Discuss Iran Deal

TEHRAN - The European Union (EU)'s foreign policy chief is scheduled to travel to Washington to hold talks with US officials about the implementation of a 2015 multilateral deal with Iran, among other issues. The website of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU's diplomatic service, reported on Friday that Federica Mogherini's visit to Washington was slated for November 6 and 7. She is expected to meet with US Vice President Mike Pence as well as with a number of senior members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, including the latter's Speaker Paul Ryan. Mogherini is also set to address the House of Representatives' Republican Conference. The EU's top diplomat will discuss bilateral ties between the EU and the US as well as the latest developments on a number of foreign policy issues, including the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the implementation of the Iran deal, officially titled the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran's partners under the deal are Russia, China, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the US. Washington, under President Donald Trump, has at various times attempted to either scrap the deal or open renegotiations to change its terms. Those attempts have faced stiff opposition from all sides to the deal, including Europe, and most assertively by Mogherini. On October 13, Trump, who took office one year after the JCPOA had come into force, refused to formally certify that the Islamic Republic was complying with the accord under a domestic US law and warned that he might ultimately "terminate" it. (Presstv)

Macron, Putin Discuss Situation in Syria over Phone: Elysee

PARIS - The situation in Syria including access to humanitarian aid and political transition, topped a phone conversation between French President Emmanuel Macron and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Friday, the French presidency the Elysee said in a statement. Recalling "his commitment to a regular and frank dialogue with Russia", Macron told Putin, a key ally of the Syrian government, to do more "to ensure that the access to humanitarian aid is guaranteed and effective as soon as possible", notably in eastern Ghouta where many



Syrian people were in a situation of great distress. Macron called on "the permanent members of the Security Council (to) put an end to the use of chemical weapons and preserve the non-proliferation regime". "France will not give in on the fight against impunity and the full and complete dismantling of

the Syrian chemical program," he said. As Moscow was preparing to hold a Syrian congress for national dialogue on Nov. 18 in Sochi, Macron said, "All efforts to achieve a political settlement of the Syrian crisis must be within the framework of the United Nations Security Council." (Xinhua)

Macron to Visit India in Early 2018: Elysee

PARIS - French President Emmanuel Macron will fly to India at the beginning of next year to attend the International Solar Energy summit, a Franco-Indian initiative to tackle climate change and develop solar energy use, his office said on Friday. At a phone talk with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Macron said he would make his first visit to India since he took office on May 7, to take part in the meeting after which the alliance will come into effect,

"They noted the positive dynamic ... of the International Solar Alliance, which aims to optimize the exploitation of solar energy potential, modernize energy systems, universalize access to energy and accelerate economic development," the Elysee said. The alliance that wins the support of more than 100 solar-rich countries "is fully in line with the efforts of France and India to achieve the objectives set by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change", it added. (Xinhua)

Trump Heads to Japan with North Korea on His Mind

HONOLULU - U.S. President Donald Trump heads to Japan on the first stop of his five-nation tour of Asia on Saturday, looking to present a united front with the Japanese against North Korea as tensions run high over Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests. Trump, who is on a 12-day trip, is to speak to U.S. and Japanese forces at Yokota air base shortly after arriving in Japan on Sunday and looked to stress the importance of the alliance to regional security. Ballistic missile tests by North Korea and its sixth and largest nuclear test, in defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions, have exacerbated the most critical international challenge of Trump's presidency. Aerial drills conducted over South Korea by two U.S. strategic bombers have raised tensions in recent days. [nL2N1N827P]

In a display of golf diplomacy, Trump is to play a round of golf with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The two leaders also played together in Florida earlier this year. Trump will also have a state call with the Imperial Family at Akasaka Palace during his visit. Abe and Trump will meet families of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea. Joined by his wife Melania on part of the trip, Trump's tour of Asia is the longest by an American president since George H.W. Bush in 1992. Besides Japan, he will visit South Korea, China, Vietnam and the Philippines. (Reuters)

Neighbor News

China, U.S. Presidents to Map out Future Relations

BEIJING - Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zheng Zuguang said Friday that the meeting between Chinese and U.S. presidents in Beijing next week is expected to map out a blueprint for the development of bilateral ties in a new era. China and the United States are working to ensure U.S. President Donald Trump's state visit is a success, Zheng said at a press briefing.

Trump, who will visit China from Nov. 8 to 10, will be the first head of state to visit China since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Apart from formal activities commensurate with a state visit, "informal interactions" will be arranged for the presidents of the two countries, Zheng told a press briefing.

Using this opportunity, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Trump will have strategic communication on significant issues of common concern to build new consensus, enhance mutual understanding and friendship, and promote bilateral relations in all spheres, Zheng said.

The core of Sino-U.S. economic and trade is mutual benefit. Solving the trade imbalance between China and the United States requires expanding U.S. exports to China and increasing two-way investment, rather than restricting imports from China, he said. Zheng said that a trade war would harm both countries, noting that the two economies are highly complementary and have great potential for cooperation. (Xinhua)

Iran Calls Trump 'Crazy' in Marking 1979 U.S. Embassy Takeover

BEIRUT - Iran put a ballistic missile on display as thousands marched on Saturday to mark the anniversary of the 1979 seizure of the U.S. embassy, with a senior official accusing President Donald Trump of a "crazy" return to confrontation with Tehran.

Turnout for the annual Iranian street rallies commemorating the embassy takeover, a pivotal event of the Islamic Revolution, appeared higher than in recent years when Trump's predecessor Barack Obama pursued detente with Tehran. Last month, Trump broke ranks with European allies, Russia and

China by refusing to recertify Iran's compliance with its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, reached during Obama's tenure. Under that deal, most international sanctions on Iran were lifted in exchange for Tehran curbing nuclear activity seen to pose a risk of being put to developing atomic bombs. Iran has reaffirmed its commitment to the deal and U.N. inspectors have verified Tehran is complying with its terms, but Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has threatened to "shred" the pact if the United States pulls out. (Reuters)

Pakistan Moving Towards Goal of Economic Development: Iqbal

SIALKOT - Pakistan's Federal Minister for Interior Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday said that Pakistan, despite all hurdles, was rapidly moving ahead towards the goal of economic development and political stability.

He said the PML-N government was fulfilling its all promises made with the public including raising their living standard besides overcoming the energy crisis. He stated this while addressing the participants after inaugurating the newly established upgraded NADRA office besides launching One Window Operation at NADRA office Narawal. DG NADRA Syed Saqlain Abbas, local MPAs Khawaja Waseem Akhtar, Rana Manan Khan, Chairman Narawal District Council Ch. Ahmed Iqbal, Narawal

DC Ali Anaan Qamar were also present on the occasion. The Federal Interior Minister said the PML-N had won the general election of 2013 on the promise of development and it fulfilled its commitment, besides ending terrorism and energy shortage to a larger extent. He said in 2013 Pakistan was considered the most dangerous country of the world due to terrorism and deteriorating law and order situation, and loadshedding was 20 hours long while the industrial activity was badly hampered due to power shortage. He said that due to its strong policies, the PML-N government had been able to overcome the energy shortage, adding, "In the past, the country was facing 20-hour electricity loadshedding a day." (Monitoring Desk)

Turkmenistan Becoming Transport, Logistics Hub of Int'l Importance: President

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan is turning into a country of major transport and logistics hubs of interregional and intercontinental importance located along the Silk Road, the country's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov said in an appeal to employees of the state customs service in connection with their professional holiday. Turkmenistan's positions in the global economic space are being strengthened, he said. In order to improve the levers of macroeconomic regulation and diversify the national economy, the relevant legal framework is being modernized, the Turkmen president noted in his appeal. "As a result of implementation of targeted measures, the ancient Great Silk Road is reborn in a modern form - the form of international roadways, railways and airways," reads the appeal. (Trend)