

Trump, Putin Say Military Communications Improving in Syria

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin said on Saturday they are satisfied with the communication between their militaries, which has "dramatically" accelerated the losses of the Islamic State (IS) on the battlefield in recent months.

In a joint statement issued after their meeting on the margins of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting in Da Nang, Vietnam on Saturday, the two leaders confirmed their determination to defeat IS in Syria.

According to the statement, which is posted on the website of the U.S. State Department, they agreed to maintain open



channels of communication between the two militaries to help ensure the safety of U.S. and Russian forces engaged in the fight against the IS until its final defeat.

"There is no military solution to the conflict in Syria," read the statement, adding that the two leaders confirmed that "the ultimate political solution to the conflict must be forged through the Geneva process."

They affirmed that these steps must include the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, constitutional reform and free and fair elections under UN supervision, "with all Syrians, including members of the diaspora, eligible to participate." (Xinhua)

EU Brexit Chief Preparing for 'Possible' Failure

PARIS - EU Brexit chief Michel Barnier said Sunday that he is making contingency plans for the "possible" failure of divorce talks with Britain, which he has given two weeks to reach preliminary agreement on key issues.

"It's not my (preferred) option," he told French weekly Le Journal du Dimanche (JDD). "But it's a possibility. Everyone needs to plan for it, member states and businesses alike. We too are preparing for it technically."

He recalled that without a deal on post-Brexit

trade terms the EU and Britain would revert to World Trade Organization (WTO) tariffs, with trade ties "like those we have with China".

On Friday Barnier gave Britain a two-week ultimatum to make concessions on a divorce agreement if it wants to unlock the next phase of talks in December.

He said it was "vital" for Britain to increase its offer on its exit bill - which a figure senior EU officials put at up to 60 billion euros (\$70 billion) - to open up talks on a future trade deal. (AFP)

No Figure on Cost of Brexit Offered to Unlock Talks: British Minister

LONDON - Britain will not offer a figure or a formula for how much it believes it owes the European Union, Brexit minister David Davis said on Sunday, after the EU demanded that London spell out its approach to the final bill to unlock talks.

With no movement in the negotiations to unravel more than 40 years of union, Britain may miss a December deadline to move the talks to a discussion of future trade ties, which businesses say is vital for them to make

investment decisions.

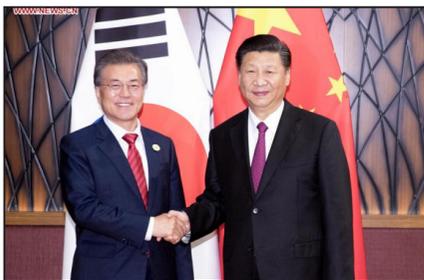
Both sides are frustrated by the lack of progress, and last week, the EU negotiator, Michel Barnier, said Britain had two weeks to spell out how far it would "honor its obligations" to break the deadlock.

But Davis told Sky News the EU had agreed Britain would not need to offer "a number or a formula" for the financial deal when London accepted the bloc's schedule for the talks - first a discussion about the divorce and second, about future ties.



"In every negotiation, each side tries to control the timetable. The real deadline on this is, of course, December," Davis said, referring to the next EU summit, taking place in Brussels on Dec. 14-15, when Britain hopes the bloc will launch the next phase of the talks. (Reuters)

Chinese, S. Korean Presidents Meet on Ties, Peninsula Situation



DA NANG, Vietnam - Chinese President Xi Jinping met here Saturday with South Korean President Moon Jae-in on bilateral ties and the Korean Peninsula situation.

During the meeting on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting, Xi told Moon that China and South Korea are close

neighbors that can not move away and are natural cooperation partners. The two countries share broad common interests in promoting their economic and social progress, and in realizing regional peace, stability and prosperity, said Xi.

He added that friendly exchanges and win-win cooperation have always been the main theme of China-South Korea diplomatic relations since they were forged 25 years ago, while China places importance on its relations with South Korea. China stands

ready to join hands with South Korea to push for the healthy and steady development of bilateral ties, Xi said, as good bilateral ties are in accordance with the trend of history and time, as well as the common expectation of the two peoples.

Noting that the China-South Korea relations are at a crucial stage, Xi said both sides need to respect each other's core interests and major concern, maintain political mutual trust, and enhance communication and coordination. (Xinhua)

U.S. to promote 'universal access' to fossil fuels at climate talks

WASHINGTON - The United States hopes to promote wider use of fossil fuels at a global meeting on climate change next week, a White House official said, reflecting the gaping divide between Washington and the rest of the world on the issue of global warming.

President Donald Trump's administration has envoys at the U.N.-sponsored talks in Bonn, Germany, even though the United States has decried the Paris Agreement climate accord and has begun a years-long process

to withdraw from it. While a small State Department team has been on the ground for technical negotiations since the talks opened last week, the administration is sending another delegation for the second week that will include senior White House advisers.

One of the three main priorities for the administration will be promotion of "universal access to affordable, reliable energy, including highly efficient fossil fuels," the official told reporters in a briefing. (Reuters)

Hundreds for Catalan independence in Brussels

BRUSSELS - Several hundred people rallied in Brussels on Sunday to back the independence push in Catalonia, slam the EU and demand Spain release jailed regional officials. Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont, who is in self-imposed exile in Belgium, was a no-show at the demonstration that included pro-independence European Parliament members and several members of the exiled regional government.

"Democracy in Spain is not only sick, it is practically dead," Spanish MEP Josep-Maria Terricabras, who backs Catalan independence, told the demonstrators.

"I think that it is absolutely terrible that the European institutions don't understand that when you attack democracy you cannot applaud (Spanish Prime Minister Mariano) Rajoy and institutions in Spain that are outside the law," he added.

The protest, just metres from the European Union's main institutions, came a day after hundreds of thousands of Catalans protested the jailing of regional officials for their push for independence from Spain.

In Brussels, protesters held photos of the jailed officials, as well as signs saying "Shame on you" for the EU's failure to lend support to Catalonia.

Flags from Belgium's Dutch-speaking region of Flanders were also prevalent at the protest, with sympathy deep for the Catalanian cause among Flemish nationalists. The EU was "founded to not see the return dictatorship and facsim in Europe," said the ousted Catalan Minister of Health Antoni Comin.

As Comin spoke, the crowd interrupted with chants of "Libertad (freedom)" and "All not here" in reference to the jailed regional officials in Spain. (AFP)

Turkey Has Completed Purchase of Russian Missile Defense: Defense Minister

ISTANBUL - Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 surface-to-air missiles has been completed but Ankara is discussing a further deal with a European consortium to help it develop its own missile defense system, Defense Minister Nurettin Canikli said.

The decision by NATO member Turkey to buy the S-400s from Moscow has been seen by some of its Western allies as a snub to the alliance. The deal has also raised concern because the weapons cannot be integrated into NATO defenses.



A senior NATO commander told Reuters last week that the alliance would continue to press Ankara to buy weapons that could work together with NATO systems, adding that so far no S-400s had been delivered to Turkey. [nL5N1N-E7DI]

"It is finished, the S-400 missiles have been bought. The rest is just details now," Canikli said in televised comments in the Black Sea town of Giresun. (Reuters)

Trump Attaches Great Importance to Cooperation with Russia, China on Korean Peninsula Issue

HANOI - U.S. President Donald Trump told a press conference here on Sunday that Russia and China can help on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue.

"Frankly, Russia and China in particular can help us with the North Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) problem which is a world-wide truly great problem," Trump said here at a joint press conference along with

Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang. "It's very important to get along with Russia, get along with China, get along with Vietnam..." to solve a lot of problems, including those relating to Syria, the DPRK, Ukraine and terrorism, said Trump.

After talking with Quang, Trump wrapped up his first visit to Vietnam and left for Manila to attend the 31st ASEAN summit. (Xinhua)

Trump Tries to Clarify Stand on Russian Meddling in U.S. Election

HANOI - U.S. President Donald Trump tried to clarify his stand here on Sunday on whether he believed Russia meddled in the U.S. presidential election last year. At a joint press conference with Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang here on Sunday, Trump tried to distance himself from his previous remarks by saying that he believed his intelligence agencies.

On Saturday in Vietnam's Da Nang city, Russian President Vladimir Putin told Trump that he did not meddle with the election, and then Trump told reporters he believed Putin.

Trump's remarks drew criticism back home for choosing Putin's side over the U.S. intelligence agencies, as they have long claimed Russia meddled in U.S. presidential election in 2016.

"I believe that he (Trump) feels that he and Russia did not meddle in the election. As to whether I believe it or not, I am with our agencies," Trump said, adding that he believed in U.S. intelligence agencies.

However, Trump also said stronger U.S. ties with Russia would benefit the world because many matters need resolving with the participation of such countries as Russia and China, including those on the Korean Peninsula, Syria, Ukraine and terrorism.

The U.S. president said he believed "having Russia in a friendly posture as opposed to always fighting them is an asset." "People don't realize that Russia has been very, very heavily sanctioned," Trump said. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

China-ASEAN Cooperation Inspires ASEAN's Ties with Dialogue Partners

MANILA - When leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its dialogue partners gather here on Monday, they will once again look to the progress of cooperation between China and ASEAN which has inspired ASEAN's external relations.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary since the founding of ASEAN. In the past half a century, the ever-growing ASEAN has become a representative force to maintain regional peace and security and to push forward multi-polarization in the world.

Among ASEAN's dialogue partners, China has built an all-round and mutually beneficial partnership with the 10-nation bloc, setting an example as the most

dynamic and substantial partnership.

The flourished relations between China and ASEAN started 26 years ago when then Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen was invited to the opening ceremony of the 24th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 1991.

Since the establishment of the relations, China has persisted in supporting ASEAN's community building effort, its centrality in regional cooperation and its bigger role in regional and global affairs.

Political mutual trust between China and ASEAN has been strengthened over the decades, together with fast-paced growth in economic ties as well as closer people-to-people exchanges. (Xinhua)

Iran Rejects Macron Call for Talks on Iranian Missiles

DUBAI - Iran rejected on Sunday a call by French President Emmanuel Macron for talks on Tehran's ballistic missiles, saying they were defensive and unrelated to a nuclear agreement with world powers.

On Thursday, Macron said during a visit to Dubai that he was "very concerned" by Iran's ballistic missile program, mentioning a missile fired from Yemen and intercepted by Saudi Arabia earlier this month. He raised the prospect of possible sanctions with regard to those activities.

"There are negotiations we need to start on Iran's ballistic missiles," Macron said.

But Iranian Foreign Min-

istry spokesman Bahram Qassemi rejected that possibility. "France is fully aware of our country's firm position that Iran's defense affairs are not negotiable," he said. "We have told French officials repeatedly that the nuclear deal is not negotiable and other issues will not be allowed to be added to it," Qassemi said, according to a statement on the ministry's website.

The United States accused Iran on Tuesday of supplying Yemen's Houthi rebels with a missile that was fired into Saudi Arabia in July and called for the United Nations to hold Tehran accountable for violating two U.N. Security Council resolutions. (Reuters)

'Pakistan Aims to Boost Economic Cooperation with Qatar'

DOHA - Pakistani Federal Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal has said that Pakistan intends to increase cooperation with Qatar in economic and education sectors.

"During my interactions with Qatar Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani and other dignitaries, we discussed ways of expanding bilateral economic relations as well as enhanced cooperation in the education sector," Ahsan Iqbal said while talking to media at a reception held at Pakistan Embassy.

The minister was on an official visit to Qatar to attend 'First Major Event Safety and Security Conference' held in Doha last week.

The minister said that authorities in Qatar were happy with the positive contribution of the Pakistani community in the development of Qatar. To a question, Ahsan said that Pakistan was producing cheap electricity with LNG being imported from Qatar to meet its growing energy needs.

Earlier addressing the Pakistani community, he lauded Qatar's decision of granting the visas to Pakistanis on arrival. "It is a great step, we appreciate it and will try to reciprocate the decision made by Qatar government," he added. (Monitoring Desk)

Turkmenistan to Carry out Denationalization of Several Enterprises

ASHGABAT - Proposals on objects and facilities subject to privatization, as well as on enterprises for denationalization have been presented to President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. He ordered to carry out relevant work jointly with the Supreme Chamber of Control.

Earlier, it was reported that separate state enterprises related to the spheres of energy, transport and communications, as well as infrastructure facilities could be included in the list of privatized facilities. (Trend)

increase the efficiency and profitability of industrial production, as well as the dynamic development of private entrepreneurship, said President Berdimuhamedov.

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