

# Islamic State has 60-80 Operatives in Europe: Dutch Expert

NEW YORK — Intelligence experts estimate that the Islamic State extremist group has between 60 and 80 operatives planted in Europe to carry out attacks, the Dutch counterterrorism coordinator said Friday.

Dick Schoof said in an interview with The Associated Press that would-be fighters are also heeding messages from the militant group "asking them not to come to Syria and Iraq, but to prepare attacks in Europe."

One result is that over the last six months the number of "foreign terrorist fighters" hasn't grown, he said, but the fact that they're not traveling "does not mean that the potential threat of those who would have traveled is diminished."



Schoof said military operations to oust the Islamic State from its self-declared caliphate in Syria and Iraq are scattering the extremist group's fighters and supporters.

This will probably lead to a gradual increase of refugees that will pose a danger to the national security of the Netherlands and other European countries, he said.

Schoof said even though the Netherlands hasn't been hit by a major attack by Islamic extremists such as those in Belgium and France, "the chance of attack in the Netherlands is real."

"We have seen 294 terrorist fighters go overseas in Iraq and Syria and there are still 190 over there," he said. "And what happened in France and Brussels and Germany could happen to us." (AP)

## MPs Approve 'Most Sweeping' Surveillance Powers

LONDON - Parliament this week gave the green light to new bulk surveillance powers for police and intelligence services that critics have denounced as the most far-reaching of any western democracy.

The Investigatory Powers Bill would, among other measures, require websites to keep customers' browsing history for up to a year and allow law enforcement agencies to access them to help with investigations.

Edward Snowden, the

former US National Security Agency contractor turned whistleblower, said the powers "went further than many autocracies".

"The UK has just legalised the most extreme surveillance in the history of western democracy," he tweeted.

The bill, the first major update of British surveillance laws for 15 years, was passed by the House of Lords and now only needs rubber-stamping by Queen Elizabeth.

Prime Minister Theresa



May introduced the bill in March when she was still interior minister, describing it as "world-leading" legislation intended to reflect the change in online communications.

It gives legal footing to

existing but murky powers such as the hacking of computers and mobile phones, while introducing new safeguards such as the need for a judge to authorise interception warrants. (AFP)

## U.S. Officials Arrive in Australia to Begin Assessing Asylum Seekers

SYDNEY - U.S. officials have arrived in Australia to begin assessing asylum seekers held on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island and Nauru for resettlement in the United States, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said on Saturday.

Australia announced last week it had reached a deal in which the United States would take a substantial number of the 1,200 refugees held at the Australian-funded offshore processing centers, although the election of

Donald Trump has injected uncertainty into the agreement.

Trump started campaigning for the presidency by advocating a blanket ban on Muslims entering the United States, but later adjusted his stance to propose that the ban should apply to people from nations that had been "compromised by terrorism". Many of asylum seekers at the camps are Muslims who have fled conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan ... (More on P4)... (15)

## Yemeni Houthis Say Up to Saudi-Led Coalition to Commit Ceasefire

SANAA - Yemen's Shiite Houthi group said Saturday that it would commit to a ceasefire brokered by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, as long as the Saudi-led coalition observed it.

"According to the principle agreement struck in the Omani capital, we affirm our commitment to ceasefire if the other side abided by the truce and halted all military actions," Houthi-controlled Saba news agency quoted the Houthi forces' spokesman Sharaf Luq-

man as saying, hours after the Saudi-led coalition declared the start of a 48-hour truce from Saturday noon local time (0900 GMT).

It was the second commitment by the Houthis to the ceasefire in two days.

On Thursday, the Houthi group and its ally former President Ali Abdullah Saleh's forces, said they were ready to commit to ceasefire and join a unity government as per the roadmap put ... (More on P4)... (16)

## Merkel Says to Spend More on Infrastructure in Election Year

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel promised on Saturday to increase investment in infrastructure in Europe's biggest economy in 2017, an election year, without resorting to new borrowing.

Germany, which runs a budget surplus, has resisted pressure from European peers to spend more to help boost euro zone growth and last week the European Commission effectively urged Germany to loosen its purse strings next year.

In her weekly podcast,

Merkel - who is expected to announce on Sunday that she will run for a fourth term as chancellor next year - said her government would raise spending on roads, railways and broadband as well as on education.

Despite the increase in spending next year, "there will be no new debts at the cost of future generations", Merkel said.

She also said money spent on integrating migrants was "a good investment" as it would mean they would be able to use Germany's education system



and then join the workforce.

Fears about the integration of almost 900,000 migrants last year, many from war zones in the Middle East, have dented Merkel's popularity but her government

argues that many will in the long run be a valuable part of the labor force.

Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble has planned a balanced budget for the next four years. (Reuters)

## 50 Migrants Escape from Repatriation Center in Istanbul

ISTANBUL - Some 50 migrants escaped on Saturday from a repatriation center in Istanbul, local media reported.

The migrants waiting to be deported at the Kumkapi Repatriation Center located in Istanbul's Fatih district first set fire to the duvets and beds, the Hurriyet daily said.

Around 50 of them managed to run away after breaking the door, the daily said, noting the police opened fire into the air in an attempt to stop them.

The police have launched an investigation, the press reports said. (Xinhua)

## Putin's Anti-Doping Tsar Lobbies for Russia, Pushes Reform

MOSCOW — As far as Vladimir Putin's anti-doping troubleshooter is concerned, Russia's doping problems are nothing more than a "glitch."

Brought out of retirement by Putin to lead Russia's future strategy on doping, 81-year-old Vitaly Smirnov is being called on to use his contacts from five decades in Olympic politics to lobby for Russian interests and play down the accusations of state-sponsored cheating.

Even as Smirnov tries to build bridges with the IOC and World Anti-Doping Agency, and plans to address WADA's board on Sunday, Smirnov vehemently denies that the Russian government ran an industrial-scale doping program and cover-up, including at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. "What has happened is a glitch. It doesn't have roots in any kind of practice which was happening ... (More on P4)... (18)

## Iraqi Forces Kill 43 IS Militants in Attacks South of Mosul

MOSUL - Iraqi security forces on Saturday repelled attacks of Islamic State (IS) militants in south of Mosul, killing 43 IS militants and capturing 11 others, security sources said.

In one attack, some 200 IS militants overnight attacked security forces near the town of Qayyara after they crossed the Tigris River with boats from an IS-held area in the eastern side of the river, Mohammed al-Baiyati, head of the security committee of Nineveh's provincial council, said in a statement.

The security forces and allied Sunni paramilitary tribal fighters fought heavy clashes with the attackers over the night until the early morning when a



federal police force arrived the scene and drove out the extremist militants, leaving some 40 IS militants killed and 11 others captured, Baiyati said. Three policemen, including an officer, were also killed in the battles, the source added.

In a separate incident, five Sunni tribal fighters were

killed in an ambush by IS militants near the town of Shirqat, some 280 km north of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, a local security source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity. Afterwards, the tribal fighters chased the IS militants and killed three of ... (More on P4)... (17)

## UNHCR, UNICEF Join Hands on Refugees Response in Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA - The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) have agreed to enhance their partnership in responding to needs of refugees and host communities in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia currently hosts 783,340 refugees, 58.3 percent of whom are children under 18, including 38,502 unaccompanied and separated children, according to a statement from UNHCR late Friday.

As of September, Ethiopia had seen a new influx of South Sudanese refugees fleeing renewed violence and food shortage, it said.

More than 39,000 new arrivals have been recorded with 64 percent of them being children, said the statement.

Clementine Nkweta-Salami and Gillian Mellsop, representatives of UNHCR and UNICEF respectively, on Friday signed the agreement ... (More on P4)... (19)

## New Gov't Fully Stabilizes Serbia in First 100 Days: PM

BELGRADE - The biggest achievement of the government so far were full stabilization and progress of the Serbian economy, along with progress in European integration and good relations with both Eastern and Western countries, Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said Saturday.

Addressing the conference at the Zvezdara Park of Science and Technology in Belgrade at a presentation of the government's achievements in the first 100 days of their mandate, Vucic said that Serbia's security is on a high level.

"Serbia is one of the pillars of regional stability. It is firmly set on its European course, at the same time protecting its independence, sovereignty and good relations with all our friends - Russia, China, Turkey, the United States and other countries," Vucic said.

The Current government of Serbia was elected on Aug. 11 in the parliament following the victory of the coalition around Vucic's Serbian Progressive Party at the April 24 snap elections.

The previous government presided by Vucic was dissolved on his own request two years ahead of schedule so that people would allow them a fresh term to finish all EU-related reforms by 2020 and lead the country to its full membership.

Pointing out to the progress of the country's economy, Vucic said Serbia is much more efficient in collecting taxes, reducing public indebtedness as well as that it managed to cut unemployment by 9 percent.

"Growth was also marked in manufacturing ... (More on P4)... (20)

## Nieghbor News

### Iran Optimistic Oil Prices can Rise

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's oil minister is saying \$55 per barrel is achievable for crude if both OPEC and non-OPEC (producers) cooperate.

Bijan Zanganeh said Saturday on state TV, "If non-OPEC (producers) cooperate, I think we can reach around \$55," per barrel.

Benchmark Brent crude rose to \$46.86 per barrel on Friday.

"Signals I am receiving are increasing the possibility of reaching an agreement," said Zanganeh.

Speaking after meeting with visiting OPEC Secretary-General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, Zanganeh reiterated that his country will push for more production.

Iran has been trying to increase its production after the lifting of international sanctions over its nuclear program in January, and said it would only consider a ceiling once it starts producing its pre-sanctions volume of 4 million barrels per day. It currently produces 3.85 million. (AP)

### China's Climate Envoy Says Marrakech Conference Successful

MARRAKECH - The Marrakech climate summit is successful, yet further negotiations should be carried out soon to ensure the implementation of the Paris Agreement, China's top climate envoy said here Saturday.

"I think the conference is a success, yet we still have a lot more to work on," Xie Zhenhua, China's special representative on climate change affairs, said after the closing session of the 22nd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP22). He said the outcome documents were as a whole

"balanced," but many developing countries were not satisfied, because although most of the issues of concern to developing countries were covered in the documents, arrangements for areas like developed countries' climate efforts before 2020, and adaptation funding, and capacity building for developing countries, were "not strong enough."

"There are still some issues ended up waiting consolidation and perfection," Xie said in remarks delivered after adoption of the outcome documents, expressing the hope that due attention will be paid to those ... (More on P4)... (21)

### Economic Ties with Pakistan Beneficial for US: Report

WASHINGTON - The US State Department has said in a report that America's economic partnership with Pakistan directly benefits the United States by creating well-paying jobs at home.

The report noted on Thursday that Pakistan was a growing country of over 190 million and a partnership with it promoted US businesses and exports, and advanced scientific progress in critical areas.

The document follows reports in the US media that the partnership only benefits Pakistan, which gladly accepts US

economic and military assistance but pays little attention to Washington's strategic interests in that region.

Media reports accused Pakistan of continuing to support religious extremists targeting US forces and their Afghan allies in Afghanistan.

The State Department report does not address these allegations but dispels the impression that this is a one-sided relationship which only benefits Pakistan.

The report includes data from the Department of Commerce to support its claim. (Monitoring Desk)

### Turkmenistan, Latvia to Hold Business Talks in Riga

ASHGABAT - The next meeting of the Turkmenistan-Latvia intergovernmental commission on economic, industrial, scientific and technical cooperation will be held on Nov. 21-22 in Riga, the Turkmen government said in a message Nov. 19.

During the meeting, it is planned to discuss the opportunities of expanding the cooperation in

transportation and communication sector, in the spheres of agriculture, construction, healthcare, as well as through the commerce and industry chambers and business structures of the two countries.

The sides will speak about the cooperation on the overland transit and logistics of common ... (More on P4)... (22)

### Uzbekistan, Turkey Set to Boost Economic Cooperation

TASHKENT - Erdogan and Mirziyoyev Interim president of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is in Tashkent on a working visit, discussed a road map on bilateral relations yesterday, reported RIA Novosti. The two leaders reviewed further development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey and the important regional and international matters. Turkey is one of the important partners of Uzbekistan, said the report. Bilateral trade between the countries in 2015 made \$1.2 billion.

The figure in this year is expected to exceed \$1 billion. However, the sides noted that these figures do not reflect the potential of cooperation of the countries and vowed to increase the volume of trade turnover 2-3 times in the coming years.

The talks of the leaders also addressed the issues of creation of free economic zone in Samarkand region, development of tourist infrastructure, construction of hotels in Samarkand and implementation of joint projects in the food and textile industries. (AKIpress)