

# Mending Russia-U.S. Ties Not to be "Quick and Easy": Kremlin

MOSCOW - Mending the soured relations between Russia and the United States under the new U.S. administration of Donald Trump will not be a "quick and easy" process, the Kremlin said Wednesday.

Relations have nearly hit "rock bottom" during the Obama Administration, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

While Moscow expects to resume dialogue with Washington, the spokesman added it will be a "difficult and definitely not a quick process."

Earlier this month, in their first telephone conversation after Trump's victory in the election, Russian President Vladimir Putin and the U.S. President-elect agreed to make joint efforts to normalize their current battered ties. (Xinhua)



## Amid Uncertainty, UK Treasury Chief to Offer Bleak Outlook

LONDON - Britain's Treasury chief is likely to offer a stark outlook for the country's finances Wednesday when he outlines his priorities in the first budget update since the U.K. voted to leave the European Union.

As Philip Hammond delivers the biannual economic statement to lawmakers, the level of uncertainty is particularly high, with talks on Britain's EU exit yet to even start.

He can take some solace in the resilience of the British economy in the months following the seismic June 23

referendum. It has not fallen into recession, as some feared.

"My #AutumnStatement today is focused on preparing & supporting the economy as we begin writing a new chapter in our country's history," he wrote on Twitter.

But government finances have tightened significantly, leaving little room for spending increases that experts say are needed to help the lower- and middle-income families that are struggling with ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

## Germany, France Seek Four-Way Talks on Eastern Ukraine Conflict

BERLIN/KIEV - Germany and France have invited Ukraine and Russia to meet in Minsk next week for four-way talks aimed at kick-starting peace talks on the crisis in eastern Ukraine, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on Wednesday.

Steinmeier said he hoped the foreign ministers from all four countries could meet next Tuesday, weeks before U.S. President-elect Donald Trump is due to take office.

"Even if we don't manage



to find the big solution for the crisis, talks like these are simply necessary to make sure the situation doesn't get out of control," Steinmeier told parliament.

It remains unclear how Trump, who has promised to improve ties with Russia, will respond to continued fighting between Ukrainian troops and Russian-backed separatists.

Interfax Ukraine quoted Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin as saying he had spoken with Steinmeier about the possible meeting on Nov. 29.

The four countries last met in the so-called 'Normandy Format' in October in an effort to kick-start implementation of the 2015 Minsk peace deal. European diplomats worry that Russia, emboldened by Trump's ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

## Russian Tankers Defy EU Ban to Smuggle Jet Fuel to Syria

LONDON - Russian tankers have smuggled jet fuel to Syria through EU waters, bolstering military supplies to a war-torn country where Moscow is carrying out air strikes in support of the government, according to sources with knowledge of the matter.

At least two Russian-flagged ships made deliveries - which contravene EU sanctions - via Cyprus, an intelligence source with a European Union government told Reuters. There was a

sharp increase in shipments in October, said the source who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

A separate shipping source familiar with the movements of the Russian-flagged vessels said the ships visited Cypriot and Greek ports before delivering fuel to Syria.

The Russian defence and transport ministries did not respond to requests for comment. A spokeswoman for EU foreign ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

## Hollande to Announce Decision on Possible Presidential Bid on Dec. 10

PARIS - French President Francois Hollande will make known on Dec. 10 whether he will seek a second five-year term in next year's presidential election, officials here said Tuesday.

"The president said he would give his response (on a possible presidential bid) on Dec. 10," Didier Guillaume, head of the Socialist group in the senate and a close ally of Hollande, told Public Senat television late on Tuesday.

Government spokesman Stephane Le Foll said Wednesday in an inter-

view with news channel BFMTV that there is no doubt Hollande will launch a presidential bid, but declined to give a date for the announcement.

"It's he who will announce the date and the decision," he said.

During a recent prime-time interview, Hollande had said he would announce his decision by the end of 2016.

Traditionally, the incumbent head of state represents his party in an election, without a contest. But prospects of a primary have been raised due to



Hollande's record-low approval ratings.

French pollsters predicted the Socialist leader would lose in the first round of the upcoming elections if he sought re-election.

Opinions polls also showed Hollande, who is trying to improve the country's employment rate, would lose to his former economy minister ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

## Hungarian and Albanian Ministers Urge EU to Speed up Enlargement

BUDAPEST - Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto and Albanian Minister of European Integration Klajda Gjoshaj on Wednesday urged the European Union to accelerate its enlargement process.

When addressing a news conference here on Wednesday following a meeting between the two officials, Szijarto said that speeding up enlargement could enable the EU to overcome many difficulties and that inclusion of the West Balkans ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

## IS-Held Mosul Completely Cut off: Iraqi Officials

BAGHDAD - Iraqi-led forces have cut off the Islamic State group's last supply line from Mosul to Syria, completing the isolation of the jihadist stronghold, security officials said Wednesday.

Hashed al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation) paramilitary forces reached the road linking Tal Afar to Sinjar, west of Mosul, and linked up with Kurdish forces there, the officials said.

"Hashed forces have cut off the Tal Afar-Sinjar road," senior Hashed commander Abu Mahdi al-Mohandis said on social media, referring to two towns on the road linking Mosul to Syria.

A Kurdish security official told AFP that Hashed forces had linked up with other anti-IS forces, including Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) fighters, in three villages in the area.

Iraqi forces launched a major offensive on October 17 to retake Mosul, which is the country's second city and where jihadist supremo ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

## Erdogan Plays Down Europe's Impending Vote on Turkish Membership Talks

ISTANBUL - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday that his country will not recognize the result of an upcoming European vote on freezing negotiations with Turkey over its accession to the European Union.

"There will be a meeting at the European Parliament tomorrow, and they will vote on EU talks with Turkey," Erdogan said at a meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation held in Istanbul.

"I'm saying this in advance: this vote has no value for us, whatever the



result is," he added.

European parliamentarians on Tuesday called on the European Commission to impose a temporary freeze on accession talks with Turkey.

The European Parliament

## Philippines, U.S. Agree to Scrap Two Major Joint Military Exercises

MANILA - The Philippine military said Wednesday two major joint exercises with U.S. troops will be scrapped and there will be 258 joint military exercises, including small ones, between the two sides next year.

The two scrapped war games are the Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX) and Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT), two naval exercises that includes territorial defense trainings, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Gen. Ricardo Visaya told reporters.

Visaya said the U.S. officials respected the AFP's proposal to reduce the exercises based on the directive of President Rodrigo Duterte after talking with U.S. Pacific Command chief Adm. Harry Harris on Tuesday in their ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

## Moscow Hopes Missiles in Kurils won't Affect Talks with Tokyo

MOSCOW - The Kremlin said on Wednesday it hoped that the deployment of missile systems in the disputed Southern Kuril Islands in the Pacific would not affect Moscow's negotiations with Tokyo.

"This should in no way harm the fast trends that there have developed in our relations with Tokyo in terms of thorough preparations for president Putin's forthcoming visit to Japan and the continuing contacts over ways of advancing bilateral relations," TASS news agency quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying.

Russian media have reported that Moscow had deployed Bastion and Bal coastal defense ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

## 7th Hamburg Summit Opens to Address Issues on China-Europe Economic Relations

HAMBURG - The 7th Hamburg Summit "China Meets Europe" opened here on Wednesday, drawing senior officials, entrepreneurs and leading scholars from China and the European Union (EU) to discuss key issues on China-Europe economic relations.

Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said in his opening speech that China is of special importance to Germany as well as to the whole of Europe, adding that the two countries have built a very successful partnership in the last four decades.

He said Germany continues to be China's most important partner in Europe and has opted for political cooperation with China in recent decades. "Cooperation, rather



than confrontation, should characterize the relationships between countries, even when their political and economic systems differ," said Schroeder, who was also the honorary chairman of the conference this year. In today's world, there is no country that can master ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

## Nieghbor News

### China, Russia Pledge to Enhance Military

BEIJING - China attaches great importance to military cooperation with Russia and is ready to strengthen bilateral strategic mutual trust, said top political advisor Yu Zhengsheng on Wednesday.

Yu, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, made the remarks when meeting with Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu in Beijing.

This year is the 15th anniversary of the China-Russia Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation and the 20th anniversary of the China-Russia strategic partnership of coordination.

China-Russia ties are at their best in history, said Yu, adding that the partnership not only benefits the two peoples, but meets the needs of safeguarding regional and ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

### Khursheed Accuses Imran of Dividing Opposition

LAHORE - Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Syed Khursheed Shah has criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf for what he says dividing the opposition ranks to the advantage of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Talking to the media outside late PPP leader Jahangir Badar's residence here on Tuesday, he alleged that PTI Chairman Imran Khan through his "divisive policies" strengthened the prime minister.

"All opposition parties had unanimously decided to launch a joint movement if the bill they had drafted for Panama Leaks probe was not accepted by the ruling PML-N. But, the next day Imran unilaterally decided to lock down Islamabad," Mr Shah said.

He said that "we" (the PPP) had been facing dictators but "they" (the PTI) got frightened by a ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

### Iran Rejects 'Absurd' Israeli Charge of Terrorism

TEHRAN - Iran has responded to an Israeli letter to the United Nations, which accused the Islamic Republic of flouting UN Security Council resolutions and sponsoring terrorism.

In a letter to the council on Tuesday, Israel's UN envoy Danny Danon leveled a series of accusations against Iran, including smuggling of weapons to Lebanon's Hezbollah on board commercial flights.

"The letter, once again, contains a flurry of baseless and unsubstantiated accusations that are leveled against my country without, as usual, a shred of evidence," Iran's Ambassador to the UN Gholam-Hossein Dehqani said.

The Israeli accusation of Iran's violation of Security Council resolutions, Dehqani said, "is equally baseless and this time amusing too, as it amounts to an innovative in-bulk leveling of ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

### Turkmenistan Reveals Results of Parliamentary Election

ASHGABAT - The Central Election Commission of Turkmenistan reported that the parliamentary election in some constituencies of the country was held in accordance with principles of free choice, transparency and openness, the Turkmenistan TV channel reported on Wednesday.

A high voter turnout (more than 90 percent of the total number of the voters) was observed at the election.

"The newly elected MPs were given ID cards," the TV channel reported.

Serdar Berdimuhamedov, Govher Bayramova and Yusupkuli Ishayev are among the newly elected MPs, according to the TV channel.

In accordance with the constitution of Turkmenistan, the country's parliament adopts laws, makes changes and additions to the basic law, approves the state budget, addresses issues of holding a national referendum, appoints the president election, the parliamentary election, as well as members of representative bodies.

The Turkmen parliament also ratifies and denounces international treaties, decides on changing of the state border and the administrative-territorial division of the country. (Trend)

### Uzbekistan, Russia Seek to Boost Military Cooperation

TASHKENT - The Russian government proposed the President Vladimir Putin to sign the agreement on development of the military and technical cooperation between Russia and Uzbekistan, reported the Russian official internet-portal of legal information.

The government in a statement offered to approve the project developed by the Uzbek side, which was agreed with the Russian Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other bodies. The project proposes to develop the military and technical cooperation between Uzbekistan and Russia, according to the decree of the government dated November 18, 2016.

The agreement aims to deepen the mutually beneficial cooperation in military-technical sphere, improve the equipment of the defense system with the advanced weapons and military equipment, support the scientific and technical and industrial potentials of the two countries and etc.

The Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation of Russia and the Ministry of Defense of Uzbekistan have been determined as relevant bodies on implementation of the named agreement. (AKIpress)