

NATO Chief Says Nuclear Buildup Unlikely despite US Threats

BRUSSELS — NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Wednesday that he does not expect a nuclear buildup in Europe even as tensions rise over U.S. threats to pull out of a Cold War-era missile agreement amid allegations that Russia is violating the pact.

The United States insists that Russia's 9M729 missile system contravenes the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and NATO allies agree that is probably the case. The pact between Moscow and Washington bans an entire class of weapons — all land-based cruise and ballistic missiles with a range from 500-5,500 kilometers (310-3,410 miles). Experts say the Russian system would operate at lower altitudes, making it tough to bring down. It could also reach targets across



Europe and even the U.S. west coast if stationed in Siberia. Despite concerns about its capabilities,

Stoltenberg said he does not "foresee that allies will deploy more nuclear weapons in Europe as

a response to the new Russian missile." But he added that the 29 nations in the world's biggest military alliance are now assessing "the implications of the new Russian missile for our security."

"We don't want a new Cold War. We don't want a new arms race," he said at a news conference announcing the start of NATO's biggest military exercises since that era of tensions ended in 1991.

The Trident Juncture maneuvers in Norway — which shares a border with Russia — will involve around 50,000 personnel, 65 ships, 250 aircraft and 10,000 vehicles. The hypothetical scenario involves restoring Norway's sovereignty after an attack by a "fictitious aggressor." (AP)

Neighbor News

Iran's Rouhani: Khashoggi Murder Unthinkable 'Without US Backing'

TEHRAN — Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi's "heinous murder" would have been unthinkable "without US backing," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday.

"I don't think that any country would dare do such a thing without US backing," Rouhani said in remarks to cabinet broadcast on state television.

Rouhani said that before Khashoggi's murder "it would have been unthinkable that in this day and age we would witness such an organized felony."

"It is extremely significant that an institution planned such a heinous murder."

"The tribal group that is ruling that nation (Saudi Arabia) has a security

margin. That security margin is that it relies on US backing. It is this superpower that is backing them."

Khashoggi, a government critic who was living in self-imposed exile in the United States, was murdered inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2 as he organized the paperwork for his marriage to his Turkish fiancée.

The case has triggered an international outcry against Saudi Arabia. US President Donald Trump on Tuesday ridiculed Riyadh's response as "one of the worst cover-ups" in history. The Sunni kingdom and Shiite Iran are fierce rivals which have long been engaged in a struggle for influence in the Middle East. (AFP)

Pakistan Gets \$6 Billion from Saudis, Still Needs IMF Loan

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan has negotiated a \$6 billion assistance package of loans and deferred payments from Saudi Arabia in hopes of resuscitating its flagging economy, struggling under the weight of a whopping \$18 billion deficit.

Analysts say the Saudi infusion will allow Islamabad to breathe a little easier as it seeks a critical loan from the International Monetary Fund.

The deal was signed Tuesday by Pakistan's Finance Minister Asad Umar and his Saudi counterpart, Muhammad Abdullah Al-Jadaan, on the sidelines of an international investment forum underway in Riyadh.

It came as Pakistan's new Prime Minister Imran Khan attended

the high-profile conference, despite calls from Pakistani human rights activists to boycott the venue in protest of the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul — a slaying that has shocked the international community.

Many business executives, officials and others have pulled out of the gathering, known as the Future Investment Initiative Conference, which was the brainchild of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and which runs through Thursday.

Khan, who took power following general elections in July, inherited an economy in shambles, with foreign exchange reserves barely sufficient to cover a month's worth of the country's import bills. (AP)

Turkmenistan Welcomes EU's Investment Interest in Trans-Caspian Pipeline Project

ASHGABAT — The European Union has shown great interest in the construction of the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, the message says.

The delegation of Turkmenistan was represented by Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, who held a series of meetings, in particular with the Vice-President of the European Commission for Energy Union Maros Sefcovic, as well as a working meeting with representatives of the Directorate-General for Energy of the European Commission and others. (Trend)

Uzbekistan Adopts 17 National Sustainable Development Goals

TASHKENT — The Government of Uzbekistan issued a Decree on Measures to Implement the National Goals and Objectives for Sustainable Development until 2030, Uzbek media reported.

The document puts 17 national goals for Uzbekistan, each of which includes several tasks. The government approved a road map to achieve the goals.

In particular, Uzbekistan intends to reduce poverty. Also, one of the goals of Uzbekistan is to strengthen food security, improve diet. Uzbekistan also plans

to promote a healthy lifestyle among the population. Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education is also a national goal of the country.

It is planned to implement measures to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women. Ensuring access to affordable energy for all, promoting economic growth through increased productivity, building resilient infrastructure, industrialization and innovation, and reducing domestic inequalities are included in the national goals. (Trend)

Malaysia to Charge Former PM Najib, Ex-Treasury Head in Graft Probe

KUALA LUMPUR — Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak and his ex-head of Treasury will be charged on Thursday in connection with the misuse of government funds, the anti-graft agency said, the latest charges in a widening crackdown on corruption.

Najib and former Treasury secretary-general Mohamad Irwan Serigar Abdullah were questioned by anti-graft investigators on

Wednesday to help conclude the probe, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) said in a statement.

The two will be brought to a Kuala Lumpur court on Thursday to be charged, the MACC said.

"Both of them will be charged together in connection with an investigation into several cases of criminal breach of trust involving Malaysian government funds," it said. (Reuters)

BEIJING — The U.S. will not send a high-ranking official to attend a major investment fair in China next month, an embassy official said Wednesday, in a move underscoring worsening trade friction between the world's two largest economies.

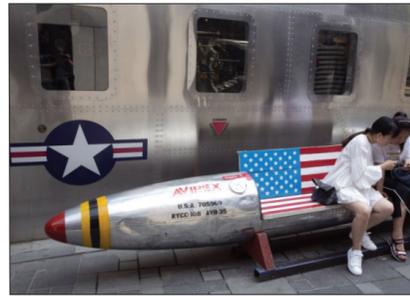
Speaking on routine condition of anonymity, the official said, "China needs to make the necessary reforms to end its unfair practices that are harming the world economy."

"The U.S. government has no current plans for high-level U.S. govern-

ment participation" in the expo, the official said. "We encourage China to level the playing field for U.S. goods and services."

State media reported that the first-ever China International Import Expo scheduled for Nov. 5-10 in the financial hub of Shanghai has attracted more than 2,800 companies from 130 nations.

The fair aims to advertise China's importance as a market for foreign goods and recent moves to encourage trade and investment amid accu-



sations that it discriminates against foreign companies and unfairly demands they hand over crucial technology.

The event comes as the

U.S. has raised tariffs to up to 25 percent on \$250 billion of Chinese goods with the possibility of more such measures to come. (AP)

No US High-Ranking Officials to Attend China Investment Fair

EU Ready to Call Brexit Summit When 'Decisive Progress' Made: Tusk



STRASBOURG — European Council President Donald Tusk told the European Parliament on Wednesday that he would be ready to call a special summit on

Brexit whenever negotiators said "decisive progress" had been made toward a deal.

Briefing lawmakers on last week's regular summit, Tusk recalled

that EU leaders had agreed that they would meet again to endorse a deal if their negotiator Michel Barnier judged that enough progress toward a deal had been made. A meeting penciled in for Nov. 17-18 is still on hold.

"I stand ready to convene a European Council, if and when the Union negotiator reports that decisive progress has been made," Tusk said. "The Brexit talks continue with the aim of reaching a deal," he added, saying no one

wanted talks to fail. He repeated that he believed leaders would extend Britain's status-quo transition period after Brexit in March if London asked for that -- an issue May raised at the summit.

"It was made clear by the UK that more time is needed to find a precise solution," Tusk said. "Therefore, there is no other way but to continue the talks. Leaders expressed their full trust and support for Michel Barnier." (Reuters)

Malaysia PM to Discuss Insurgency in Visit to Thailand

BANGKOK — Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad on Wednesday began a two-day visit to Thailand during which he is expected to discuss peace talks in Thailand's southern border provinces where a Muslim separatist insurgency has been raging for over a decade.

Malaysia has been a facilitator between rebel groups and the Thai government but so far little progress has been made. Almost 7,000 people have died in the insur-

gency in Thailand's three southernmost provinces since 2004.

Don Pathan, a security analyst based in southern Thailand, said Malaysia has to be part of the dialogue because it has a stake in the border violence and most residents in the region identify as Malay Muslims. Thailand is predominantly Buddhist. "And this wave of conflict has been going on for the past 14 years. What can they do in 18 months?" Don said. (AP)

Saudis Deny Permission to Search Consulate Well

ISTANBUL — Saudi authorities denied permission to Turkish police to search a well in the garden of the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul as part of a probe into the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, state media reported Wednesday.

Turkish police this month searched the consulate twice, and the residence of the Saudi consul general, to gather evidence into what President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said was a "savagely murder" of Khashoggi.

The Washington Post contributor and Riyadh critic was killed inside the Saudi consulate on October 2, which he had visited to obtain documents for his marriage to a Turkish woman. (AFP)

India's FBI-Style Police Agency Hit by Infighting, Government Orders Probe

NEW DELHI — India's government on Wednesday ordered a probe at the country's top crime fighting bureau after its two senior officers accused each other of bribery and interference in police investigations.

The weeks-long public spat between Alok Verma, director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and his second-in-command, Rakesh Asthana, has embarrassed an agency that serves a similar role as the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. The CBI is leading several high profile investigations such as the \$2 billion fraud at Punjab National Bank involving fugitive diamond billionaire Nirav Modi, and loan defaults by liquor baron Vijay Mallya. (Reuters)

Irish Gov't Approves Excavation of Orphanage Mass Grave Site

LONDON — Ireland's government has approved a forensic excavation of a Catholic-run orphanage where a mass grave containing the remains of hundreds of children was discovered.

Children's Minister Katherine Zappone announced Tuesday the excavation and recovery of remains. There will be a respectful burial where possible, she said.

The excavation, which will begin after legislation is passed, follows a report from a judge-led commission that confirmed last year that the former Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, County



Galway, had an underground sewage structure divided into 20 chambers containing "significant quantities of human remains."

Church-run homes in Ireland housed orphans, unmarried pregnant women and their babies for most of the 20th cen-

tury. The institutions have been subject to intense public scrutiny since a local historian in 2014 tracked down death certificates for nearly 800 children who had died as residents of the facility — but could find a burial record for only one child. (AP)

Qatari Fuel Supplies to Gaza Resume: Power Station

GAZA CITY (Palestinian Territories) — Israel on Wednesday allowed a resumption of Qatari-financed fuel deliveries to Gaza after a 12-day halt it imposed over heavy border clashes, the Palestinian territory's sole power plant said.

A spokesman for the plant said eight truckloads were expected to cross from Israel during the day, under a UN-brokered deal to ease hardship in the Israeli-blockaded enclave that had been

suspended on October 12. Fuel shortages have restricted Gaza's two million residents to four hours of electricity a day from the public network.

Under the agreement backed by the United States, Qatar, a longtime supporter of the Islamist movement Hamas which rules Gaza, is to pay \$60 million for fuel to be trucked into the territory over six months. (AFP)

World Markets Mixed as Investors Monitor Earnings

SINGAPORE — World markets were mixed on Wednesday as traders mullied the impact of tariffs on corporate America after big industrial companies admitted that they were facing rising costs. Investors are looking to new company earnings for further clues.

KEEPING SCORE: The CAC 40 in France was up 0.8 percent at 5,006 and Germany's DAX added 0.4 percent to 11,314. Britain's FTSE 100 picked up 0.8 percent to 7,012. Wall Street looked set for a bleak open, though, with the contract for the S&P 500 down 0.6 percent and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average off 0.4 percent.

THE DAY IN ASIA: Japan's Nikkei 225 index rose 0.4 percent to 22,091.18 as a private survey pointed to a recovery in manufacturing in October. The Shanghai Composite index, which closed more than 2 percent lower on Tuesday, added 0.3 percent to 2,603.30. India's Sensex jumped 0.6 percent to 34,055.47. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index dropped 0.4 percent to 25,249.78 and the Kospi in South Korea gave up 0.4 percent to 2,097.58. Australia's S&P-ASX 200 lost 0.2 percent to 5,829.00. Otherwise, shares were lower across the region apart from in Singapore.

U.S. EARNINGS: Sentiment has been dampened as large U.S. companies kicked off a busy earnings week with warnings of rising costs related to tariffs. Heavy equipment maker Caterpillar posted a larger profit and revenue than expected in the third quarter. (AP)