

China's Xi Tells Military to Prepare for War as US Navy Warns of High Seas Encounters

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping told military officials responsible for the disputed South China Sea to be better "prepared for war" as tensions with the US are rising. Beijing may be bracing for a worst-case scenario with the US.

Xi made the blunt remarks last week as he was meeting the Southern Theatre Command, the military officials responsible for one of China's five strategic war zones. The calls were made on Thursday as part of his four-day visit to Guangdong province, but the Chinese state media reported them only on Friday.

"It's necessary to strengthen the mission... and concentrate preparations for fighting a war," President Xi said. "We need to take all complex situations into consideration and make emer-



gency plans accordingly. One of the key responsibilities of the Southern Theater Command is protecting China's interests in the South China Sea, where Beijing claims

sovereignty over a number of islands. The sea is of strategic importance to Chinese trade. The US rejects the territorial claims and has been sending so-called Freedom of Navigation mis-

sions through the waters and airspace, which Beijing considers its own, as a gesture of defiance. (Russia Today)

UK's May Denies Good-News Budget Signals an Early Election

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May insisted Tuesday that this week's austerity-easing budget does not signal an impending election. Treasury chief Philip Hammond announced boosts to public spending and an income tax cut for millions of British workers on Monday, in the first significant loosening of purse strings in eight years. May said the budget shows that "austerity is coming to an end," but she denied it was meant to pave the way for a

snap election in the coming months. Britain's next general election is not due until 2022, but speculation is growing that May could call one early, soon after the country leaves the European Union on March 29. Speaking in Oslo, May said "we are not preparing for another general election. That would not be in the national interest." May was attending the Northern Future Forum in the Norwegian capital with counterparts from the five Nordic and three Baltic countries. (AP)

NATO's Stoltenberg Calls on Russia to Comply with INF Nuclear Treaty

OSLO - Russia's deployment of new nuclear-capable missiles in Europe is jeopardizing a key arms control treaty that helped end the Cold War, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told a news conference in Norway on Tuesday. President Donald Trump said on Oct. 20 that Washington planned to quit the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, signed in 1987, amid what he sees as Russian violations of the agreement.



"The problem is the deployment of new Russian missiles. There are no new U.S. missiles in

Europe, but there are more Russian missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, and those missiles put the INF treaty in jeopardy," Stoltenberg said. (Reuters)

Pentagon Sending 5,200 Troops to Border Week before Midterms



WASHINGTON — The Pentagon said it's sending 5,200 troops to the Southwest border in an extraordinary military operation ordered

up just a week before midterm elections in which President Donald Trump has put a sharp focus on Central American migrants moving

north in slow-moving caravans that are still hundreds of miles from the U.S. The number of troops being deployed is more than double the 2,000 who are in Syria fighting the Islamic State group. Trump, eager to keep voters focused on illegal immigration in the lead-up to the elections, stepped up his dire warnings about the caravans, tweeting, "This is an invasion of our Country and our Military is waiting for you!" But any migrants who

complete the long trek to the southern U.S. border already face major hurdles — both physical and bureaucratic — to being allowed into the United States. In an interview Monday, Trump said the U.S. would build "tent cities" for asylum seekers. "We're going to put tents up all over the place," told Fox News Channel's Laura Ingraham. "They're going to be very nice and they're going to wait and if they don't get asylum, they get out." (AP)

World Shares Mixed on Worries over More US Tariffs

SINGAPORE — World markets are mixed after U.S. President Donald Trump said he might impose more tariffs on Chinese goods, though he said he was ready to strike a "great deal" with Beijing over trade. KEEPING SCORE: In Europe, Britain's FTSE 100 added 0.2 percent to 7,042. But Germany's DAX fell 0.2 percent to 11,316 and the CAC 40 in France sank 0.2 percent to 4,980 after weak eurozone growth figures. Wall Street was poised for an optimistic open. Futures for the Dow were up 0.4 percent and the broader S&P 500 futures added 0.5 percent. EUROPEAN GROWTH: The eurozone economy expanded by only 0.2 percent in the July-September period — half the previous quarter's rate and below expectations for another reading of 0.4 percent. ASIA'S DAY: Japan's Nikkei 225 index jumped 1.5 percent to 21,457.29 after official data showed that the unemployment rate eased to 2.3 percent in September, from 2.4 percent a month earlier. (AP)

Merkel Looks to Africa to Cement a Legacy Shaped by Migration

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel hosts African leaders on Tuesday in a drive to tackle underdevelopment on the continent that helped to spur mass migration, shaping the later years of her long premiership.

Merkel announced on Monday she would retire from politics by 2021, sending shockwaves across Europe and starting a race to succeed her.

She needs the Compact with Africa summit to show that progress has been made in addressing the aftermath of one of the defining moments of her 13 years in power: her 2015 decision to open Germany's doors to more than a million refugees. (Reuters)

Greece Will Suffer Catastrophe within 3-4hrs If It Wages War with Turkey — Erdogan Adviser

ISTANBUL - A controversial adviser to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has issued a sobering warning to Greece, saying it "will end up in a catastrophe" within hours if it decides to wage war on Ankara.

Perhaps having some 'insight', known only to the adviser, Yigit Bulut stated: "Greece will end up in a catastrophe within three to four hours if it wages a war against Turkey." Notably, the suggestion comes from someone who once said Greece is not a challenge to Turkey as "it would be like a fly picking a fight with a giant." Bulut's boastful remarks — made recently on local TV — came amid another round of tensions between Turkey and Greece. (Russia Today)

Russia's Only Aircraft Carrier Damaged as Floating Dock Sinks

MOSCOW - Russia's only aircraft carrier was damaged and a giant floating dock sank after a crane crashed onto the vessel as it was undergoing repairs near the Arctic city of Murmansk on Tuesday.

Four people were injured and one person is missing after the accident involving the Admiral Kuznetsov at the PD-50 floating dock, the largest in Russia one of the largest in the world, local authorities and media said.

"We are assessing the extent of the damage. A crane fell onto the deck from a height of about 15 meters (45 feet)," the head of Russia's United



Shipbuilding Corporation Alexei Rakhmanov told the TASS news agency.

"It is clear there is damage to the hull and the deck. Fortunately, it happened on those parts that are not vital to the work of the ship." Local media said the floating dock holding

the vessel had sunk. The accident occurred at 3:30am at the repair shipyard near Murmansk, the governor of Murmansk region Marina Kovtun said in a video she posted on social media. "Unfortunately, one person is still not found," she said. (AFP)

Turkey Rejects Syrian Accusations over Idlib Deal

BEIRUT - Turkey rejected on Tuesday Syrian government accusations that it is not meeting its obligations under an agreement to create a demilitarized zone around the insurgent-held Idlib region, saying the deal was being implemented as planned. The agreement forged in September between Russia, President Bashar al-Assad's most powerful ally, and Turkey, which backs

the rebels, staved off a major government offensive into the opposition-held region in northwest Syria. Russian President Vladimir Putin said after a four-way summit on Syria with Turkey, Germany and France on Saturday that Ankara was fulfilling its obligations in Idlib, which with adjacent areas is the last stronghold of the anti-Assad insurgency. (Reuters)

Brexit Dims Outlook for Both Sides of Spain-Gibraltar Border

GIBRALTAR - It's morning rush hour at the border between Spain and Gibraltar and virtually all the traffic is flowing from the downtrodden Spanish city of La Linea de la Concepcion into the wealthy British territory.

After a quick check of their identity papers, hundreds of people walk briskly across the only runway at Gibraltar's airport to their jobs in the tiny British enclave perched on a rocky outcrop on Spain's southern tip.

Gibraltar has close to full employment and it has long been a lifeline for people who live in the adjacent area of Spain known as "El Campo de Gibraltar", which has one of the European Union's highest jobless rates. But when Brexit comes, it could mean tighter controls at what would be a new border between Britain and the European Union which could jeopardise the easy flow of people that has benefited both Gibraltar and "El Campo".

"I worry they will demand some sort of work visa. No one knows what will happen," said Miguel Pereira, 53, who has commuted to a job at a tobacco warehouse in Gibraltar from the adjoining city of La Linea for over three decades.

An electrician by training, the married father of two said he would try to find work in the same field in La Linea if working in Gibraltar becomes unviable. (AFP)

Neighbor News

Turkey to Stand by Pakistan at All World Forums: Ambassador Ihsan Mustafa

ISLAMABAD - Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul has reiterated his country's unflinching support to Pakistan on all issues from Kashmir to FATF and said that "Pakistan was the only country for which Turks would have full faith always". While addressing the participants of a grand reception to observe the 95th anniversary of Turkey, the ambassador said, "For us, the Turks, that option is time-tested, signed and sealed by each and every respective citizen and thus obvious; Pakistan." "Turkey

regarded Pakistan as its brother and would always support it at international forums either including Kashmir issue," he added. The grand reception was arranged at the Turkish Embassy and was attended by politicians, diplomats, armed forces personnel and journalists. Defence Minister Perwaiz Khattak, who was the chief guest for the occasion reciprocated the views expressed by the ambassador that "Turkey and its great people would always carry a special place in the hearts of Pakistanis". (Monitoring Desk)

Hurt by Iran Sanctions, South Korea Asks US for Waiver

TEHRAN - New sanctions on Iran will harm South Korean companies, the Asian nation has told the US, asking for "maximum flexibility" on its request for a waiver.

South Korea is one of Asia's biggest customers of Iranian oil, but US introduction of new sanctions against Tehran on November 4 is threatening new shipments.

South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha phoned US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo late Monday to ask for an exemption, the ministry said in a statement. "Minister Kang re-

quested the US side exert maximum flexibility so that South Korea can secure an exemption to minimize the damage to our companies," the statement said.

Trump has pledged to bring Iran's oil exports down to zero, but a tightening market and rallying prices have forced American officials to hint at possible waivers to those customers who cut down on their shipments.

On Monday, Pompeo said he had noted Seoul's position and would continue discussions on the matter, the South Korean statement said. (Press TV)

Turkmenistan Makes Presentation at World Investment Forum in Geneva

ASHGABAT - The government delegation of Turkmenistan has taken part in the World Investment Forum (WIF-2018) in Geneva, organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Turkmen Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The World Investment Forum is the leading global platform for investment and development, which is held every two years. Turkmenistan presented its economic opportunities, investment potential and acquainted the forum participants with major interna-

tional projects implemented in the country in the fields of energy, transport and industry, the message says.

Also, a high-level event on attracting direct foreign investments in landlocked countries was held within the forum. Turkmenistan ranks fourth in the world in terms of natural gas reserves and at this stage, sells this raw material to China and Iran, the report of British Petroleum (BP) company says.

At the same time, Russia, the traditional buyer, stopped purchasing gas from Turkmenistan in 2016. (Trend)

Iranian, Turkish, Azeri Foreign Ministers Meet in Istanbul

TEHRAN - Iranian, Turkish, and Azerbaijani foreign ministers have held their sixth trilateral meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, to discuss matters of common interest.

The meeting was held among Mohammad Javad Zarif of Iran, Mevlut Cavusoglu of Turkey, and Elmar Mammadyarov of Azerbaijan at the historic Dolmabahce Palace in Istanbul on Tuesday. The meeting was held behind closed doors, but the top diplomats were expected to hold a press conference later. Earlier reports had said the meeting would be focusing on a wide scale of economic, commercial, and technical issues. In the economic area, the ministers were expected to address

such issues as transit, transportation, energy, and customs.

Issues concerning political and regional cooperation, especially further contribution to regional peace and stability, were also reportedly on the gathering's agenda.

Prior to the meeting, Zarif held bilateral talks with his Turkish and Azeri counterparts. The last three-way meeting of the type was held in the Azeri capital of Baku late last year, and the one before that in the northern Iranian city of Ramsar in April 2016.

The Iranian foreign minister arrived in Istanbul on Monday, also attending the inauguration ceremony for Turkey's newest airport in the city. (Press TV)