

# ASEAN Defense Ministers Agree to Step up Counter-Terrorism Measures

CLARK, the Philippines - The defense ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) nations agreed on Monday to step up counter-terrorism measures to prevent pro-Islamic State (IS) militant groups from gaining a stronghold in Southeast Asia. At the end of their annual security meeting, the ASEAN ministers stressed the need to strongly address the "threat of radicalism" by making the peoples of the ASEAN aware of the perils of violent extremism. In a joint declaration issued at the end of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting



Photo: Facebook @aseansecretariat

(ADMM), the ASEAN ministers emphasized the need "to enhance regional cooperation through intelligence and information sharing, increasing surveillance, and promoting awareness among the public about the threat of radicalism." They also vowed to collectively combat terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations in accordance with the ASEAN Convention on Counterterrorism and ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on Counterterrorism as well as identify ways to strengthen counterterrorism cooperation among ASEAN defense establishments." (Xinhua)

## U.S. Defense Chief Says to Discuss Regional Security with Allies, ASEAN Nations

WASHINGTON - U.S. defense chief James Mattis said Sunday en route to the Philippines that he will discuss regional security challenges with his counterparts of U.S. Asian allies and Southeast Asian nations there, the Defense Ministry said in a press release. Mattis will participate in an ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM+) to be held on Oct. 23-25, to discuss issues with his counterparts of Japan, South

Korea, India and ASEAN countries. The United States and ASEAN this year marked the 40th anniversary of their cooperation. The 10-member regional bloc groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Mattis said the bloc has played a strong role in Southeast Asia's peace, stability and economic prosperity since it was founded five decades ago. (Xinhua)

## UK Says its Democracy is Secure after Suggestion of Foreign Meddling in Brexit

LONDON - Britain's democracy is one of the most secure in the world and will remain so, a spokesman for Prime Minister Theresa May said on Monday in response to a question about a suggestion that there may have been foreign interference in the Brexit vote. Opposition lawmaker Ben Bradshaw last week urged the government to look into reports by an advocacy group suggesting that the origin of some Brexit campaign funds was unclear.

Bradshaw said in parliament the issue should be investigated "given the widespread concern over foreign and particularly Russian interference in Western democracies". At a regular briefing with reporters, May's spokesman was asked if the prime minister was concerned about the reports. "I am not aware of those concerns," he said. "More broadly, as we've always said, the UK democratic system is amongst



one of the most secure in the world and will continue to be so." The Electoral Commission, which regulates political finance in Britain, said in April it was investigating campaign spending by pro-Brexit organizations. (Reuters)

## North Korea Threat is 'Critical, Imminent,' Japan Tells U.S., South Korea



CLARK FREEPORT ZONE, Philippines - The threat from North Korea has grown to a "critical and imminent level" and the United States, Japan and South Korea must address the matter, Japa-

nese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera told his U.S. and South Korean counterparts in talks on Monday. Onodera's remarks underscored the deep concern in Tokyo after North

Korean weapons tests, including test firing missiles over Japan, as Pyongyang seeks to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of reaching the United States. His comments broke from more measured language on Monday by U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and South Korean Defense Minister Song Young-moo, as the three met on the sidelines of a gathering of Asian defense chiefs in the Philippines. "(The) threat posed by North Korea has grown to the unprecedented, critical and imminent level.

Therefore, we have to take calibrated and different responses to meet with that level of threat," he said, speaking through a translator, at the start of talks in the Philippines. South Korea's Song also acknowledged that "North Korea's provocative behavior is becoming worse and worse," in public remarks before reporters were escorted out of the meeting room. Mattis renewed sharp criticism of North Korea's tests, saying they "threaten regional and global security." (Reuters)

## Trump to press China on North Korea, trade on Beijing visit

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump will urge Chinese President Xi Jinping to fully implement U.N. Security Council resolutions against North Korea and take other steps to pressure Pyongyang when he travels to China next month, a senior White House official said on Monday. Isolating North Korea further is a key goal for Trump on what will be his longest foreign trip to date. His Nov. 3-14 trip will include visits to Japan, South Korea, China, Vietnam and the Philippines.

China, Pyongyang's sole major ally, has said it will strictly enforce U.N. Security Council sanctions banning imports of coal, textiles and seafood, while cutting off oil shipments to the North. China accounts for more than 90 percent of trade with the isolated country. But a senior White House official who briefed reporters ahead of the trip said China needs to do more to comply with two U.N. Security Council resolutions that were approved unanimously, including with China's support. (Reuters)

## Trump's trip to DMZ remains undecided: White House official

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump's possible trip to the Demilitarized Zone separating the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and South Korea during his upcoming Asia tour next month is "still being worked out," said a White House senior official on Monday. Trump is "most likely to visit" Camp Humphreys, a military base about 60 km south of Seoul, capital of South Korea, said the official on condition of anonymity. The time limit may not permit Trump to do both, the official added. Trump's travel to Asia is slated for Nov. 3 to 14. It will be his first trip to the region since becoming president, during which he will attend a meeting of leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies in Vietnam. He will also join gatherings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the Philippines. (Xinhua)

## UAE signs deal with partners to develop innovation zone

DUBAI - The United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed 12 memorandums of understanding on Monday with a number of future partners to develop an innovation and manufacturing area, UAE state news agency WAM reported. "We launched the 2071 Area to be the region of the future innovation and manufacturing laboratories, and today we have signed 12 agreements with our partners in 11 vital sectors for implementation," said the Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, who attended the signing ceremony in Dubai's Emirates Towers. (Xinhua)

## After Election Win, Abe Prioritizes North Korea, Aging Japan

TOKYO - Fresh off a decisive election victory, Japan's leader pledged Monday to tackle what he called Japan's two national crises: the military threat from North Korea and an aging and shrinking population. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said at a news conference that he is committed to protect the Japanese people's prosperity and peace from any contingency. He also referred to Japanese people who were abducted years ago and are believed to still be held by North Korea. "I will pursue



decisive and strong diplomacy to tackle North Korea's missile, nuclear and abduction issues and put further pressure to get it to change its policy," he said. His ruling coalition got voters' endorsement to stay in power in elec-

tions for Japan's more powerful lower house Sunday. Abe said Japan's decreasing population and aging is "the biggest challenge" for his Abe-nomics policy aimed at Japan's economic recovery from deflation. (AP)

## EU States Fail to Agree Reform of Labor Rules Sought by France's Macron

BRUSSELS - The 28 European Union states failed to agree in a first round of talks on Monday on reforming the bloc's labor rules that poorer countries value but French President Emmanuel Macron dismisses as undercutting his workers. The case pits wealthier countries against poorer peers keen to preserve current rules that allow their citizens to work elsewhere in the bloc for salaries higher than they would get at home but still lower than the local labor force. Macron has put reforming the so-called posting of workers directive high on the EU's agenda and is backed by Germany,

Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, among others. "It's about fairness on the labor market," the EU's top jobs official, Marianne Thyssen, said on arriving for labor ministers' talks. "I am all in favor of freedom of movement but it must be organized in a fair way.... The internal market is based on rules, it's not a jungle." There was no agreement after the first session during which nearly all EU states spoke on the matter. Officials and diplomats said, however, the bloc's current chair Estonia will offer more compromise proposals later in the day to try get a deal. (Reuters)

## Germany Seeks to Deter Refugees with New Myth-Busting Website

BERLIN - The German government is attempting to deter refugees with a new myth-busting website about illegal migration to Germany published on Monday.

The official website "RumoursAboutGermany.info" will contradict false information provided by human traffickers to refugees with facts about Germany's immigration policies. The information on the website will be available in Arabic, French and German.

"We want to prevent that people who are already in a difficult situation make the journey (to Germany) on the basis of false hopes and expectations," the German Foreign Office said in a statement. The Foreign Office had therefore decided to "oppose rumors with objective information".

Amongst others, the website lists the "seven biggest lies of traffickers" spread about migration to Germany. These include fabricated claims such as that Germany has "reserved 800,000 places" for refugees from Afghanistan, that each refugee receives "welcome funds" of 2,000 euros upon arrival, or that every refugee is gifted a house by the German government. "RumoursaboutGermany.info" further exposes as "complete nonsense" suggestions by traffickers that refugees who did not like their new life in Germany would simply be given a visa to travel to Canada by Berlin. The new website forms part of a broader information campaign first launched by the German government in 2015 to regain control over the narrative of migration. (Xinhua)

## Nieghbor News

### China Sets New Targets in Fight Against Pollution

BEIJING - China has set new targets in its fight against pollution, as it aims to strike a balance between humans and nature. Yang Ganjie, the Minister of Environmental Protection, revealed during a press conference held at the 19th CPC National Congress that the country wants to make notable achievements in the reduction of pollution by 2020, as well as realizing a fundamental improvement in its ecological environment by 2035, the paper.com reports. According to Yang, all 338 cities now being

monitored should have 80 percent good-air-quality days by 2020, with "fundamental improvement" meaning PM2.5 density is reduced to 35 microgrammes per cubic metre in terms of air quality - even in critically polluted areas. As for the relationship between environmental protection and economic development, Yang believes there can be a positive correlation in the long run. From a macro perspective, he noted that the unemployment rate had not declined despite the closure of pollution emitting factories in recent years. (Agencies)

### Tillerson Urges European Firms to Join Sanctions on Iran

RIYADH - U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Sunday expressed hope for European firms to impose sanctions on Iran, Al Arabiya local news reported. He made the remarks in a press conference on the sideline of his visit to Saudi Arabia. He also called on Iranian army to withdraw from Iraq, welcoming the Saudi-Iraqi coordination council which would be formed soon, describing it as a way to move Iraq forward. "We are looking for a strong Iraq and this could be through good

neighboring ties," he confirmed. The U.S. official also expressed his country's interest in protecting the Gulf unity. Meanwhile, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeiri highlighted that the two sides discussed the Iranian threats in the region and the Qatari crisis. He said that Saudi would negotiate with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt, who severed ties with Qatar in June for terrorism support allegations, over the next step about Qatar. (Xinhua)

### Top U.S. Diplomat Rex Tillerson Likely to Arrive in Pakistan on Tuesday: Media

ISLAMABAD - The U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is likely to pay a stopover visit to Pakistan on Tuesday to discuss joint efforts against terrorism and expanding economic ties between the two countries, local media reported Monday. The visit of Tillerson is on invitation of Pakistani Foreign Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, the Radio Pakistan said. During his one-day tour, the U.S. secretary of state is expected to meet Pakistani Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Foreign Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa. "Pakistan-U.S. relations, stability in Afghanistan and regional security issues will be discussed during the meetings," said local TV channel of Geo News, adding that

U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis is also expected to visit Pakistan in December this year. Tillerson started his week-long five-nation tour on Friday from Saudi Arabia that would also take him to India, Qatar and Switzerland. Tillerson's visit to Islamabad came after a three-day U.S. visit of his Pakistani counterpart earlier this month. Asif met high-ranking U.S. officials, discussing the Pak-U.S. relations and President Donald Trump's new strategy for South Asia. In September, Abbasi met with Trump and vice U.S. President Mike Pence during the United Nations General Assembly session. Both sides expressed resolve to stay engaged and carry forward bilateral relationship. (Xinhua)

### Turkmenistan, Tajikistan Discuss Preparations for High Level Meetings

ASHGABAT - Delegation of Turkmenistan led by the Deputy Foreign Minister was on a working visit to Dushanbe October 18-20, the Turkmen foreign ministry said. Within the framework of the visit, the delegation was received by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan N. Zohidi and the head of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan Sh. Niyozov. The talks focused on preparation for the visits at the highest level. The parties also stressed the need for further development of cooperation between the foreign ministries of the two countries and noted the importance of continuing positive contacts in

the issues of interaction within authoritative international organizations. During the discussion of issues of trade and economic cooperation, the sides expressed interest in developing relations in the energy and transport sectors. Speaking about the cultural and humanitarian component of the relationship, it was noted the commitment of the sides to the development of cooperation in the fields of education, science and sports. During the visit to Tajikistan, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan was received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan S. Aslov. (AKI)