

US Won't 'Automatically' Play Defender Role for Europe Anymore – Merkel

BERLIN - Europe and the US have been sharing common values for decades, but the former shouldn't count on American military assistance any longer and should look towards other power centers, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has argued. It is 30 years since the end of the Cold War revealed "a new narrative of global power distribution," Merkel told lawmakers in Berlin. "There is a military and economic superpower, the USA," which Europe has been tied up with "through a system of values," she said.

Despite all the differences, "there is still the commonality between us," the chancellor admitted, but warned



against setting one's hopes too high when it comes to the future of US-Europe ties. Merkel added that "we must strengthen the transatlantic bond" and gradually move towards

spending 2 percent of GDP on defense, exactly what the Trump administration wants from Germany and other NATO allies. It is unclear if the appeal is a sign that Merkel

is bowing to US pressure. Washington has consistently demanded that Europe's leading economy ramps up its military spending, with the notorious US Ambassador Richard Grenell trying to push Berlin into Middle Eastern interventions or threatening to relocate Germany-based American troops to Poland.

The German chancellor has long advocated reducing Europe's dependence on the US, at least in terms of foreign and defense policy. Last year, she said it's time for European nations "to take their fate into their own hands," while teaming up with French President Emmanuel Macron who

Neighbor News

President Receives Credentials from Ambassadors of Number of Foreign States

BISHKEK - President Sooronbay Jeenbekov received letters of credence from Ambassadors of Great Britain Charles Garrett, Kazakhstan Kairat Nurpeisov, Malaysia Hendy Assan, and Indonesia Sunario Kartadinata, Trend reports with reference to Kabar which cited presidential press service.

President Jeenbekov congratulated the ambassadors on the beginning of their diplomatic mission in Kyrgyzstan, wished them success in their activities and expressed confidence that they would make a significant contribution to strengthening relations between the countries. Discussing the issues of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with each of the ambassadors, the President expressed readiness and interest in deepening

cooperation in trade and economic, cultural-humanitarian, political spheres, as well as in the development of parliamentary democracy, tourism and investment cooperation. British Ambassador Charles Garrett welcomed the head of state in Kyrgyz and noted the study of the state language of the host country is a sign of respect for the state. He stressed that he is fortunate to have a diplomatic mission in Kyrgyzstan at this very interesting stage of his development.

Ambassador of Indonesia Sunario Kartadinata expressed interest in intensifying cooperation in all areas of mutual interest. He noted that international EXPO exhibitions will be held in Indonesia in the near future and invited Kyrgyz entrepreneurs to take part in them. (Trend)

Iran Says U.S. Must 'Abandon War Mongers' Following Bolton's Dismissal

ISTANBUL - John Bolton's abrupt departure as White House national security adviser will not open the door to direct talks between the United States and Iran, Iranian officials said Wednesday, even as some welcomed his removal as an opportunity to ease tensions. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani urged the United States on Wednesday to "abandon war mongers and warmongering policies," in an apparent reference to Bolton, who pushed for

more aggressive action against Iran. President Trump said Tuesday that he had asked for Bolton's resignation after disagreeing "strongly" with the former diplomat's advice, although it was unclear whether differences over the administration's Iran policy played a direct role in Bolton's dismissal. Trump has said he is willing to meet Rouhani without preconditions, despite having abandoned a 2015 nuclear

... (More on P4)... (14)

China Summons German Ambassador, Accuses 'Foreign Forces' of Intervention in Hong Kong

BEIJING - Beijing previously voiced displeasure at Berlin's reception of Hong Kong opposition activist Joshua Wong, calling it a "disrespectful" act to China.

The German ambassador to China was summoned by the country's authorities on 11 September with Beijing's representative in Germany explaining that it was linked to the reception of Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong, which sent negative signals for the two states'



bilateral relations. The Chinese ambassador further stated that

Beijing has evidence proving that foreign countries have intervened in the events taking place in Hong Kong recently. (Sputnik)

Hong Kong Protesters Pause to Mark Sept. 11



HONG KONG - Hong Kong activists called off protests on Wednesday in remembrance of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and

denounced a Chinese state newspaper report that they were planning "massive terror" in the Chinese-ruled city. Hong Kong has been

rocked by months of sometimes violent unrest, prompted by anger over planned legislation to allow extraditions to China, but broadening into calls for democracy and for Communist rulers in Beijing to leave the city alone.

"Anti-government fanatics are planning massive terror attacks, including blowing up gas pipes, in Hong Kong on September 11," the Hong Kong edition of the China Daily said on its Facebook page, alongside a picture of

the hijacked airliner attacks on the twin towers in New York. "The 9/11 terror plot also encourages indiscriminate attacks on non-native speakers of Cantonese and starting mountain fires." The post said "leaked information was part of the strategy being schemed by radical protesters in their online chat rooms".

The former British colony of Hong Kong returned to China in 1997 under a "one country, ... (More on P4)... (11)

Democratic Debate: Biden and Warren to Face Off as 2020 Race Intensifies

WASHINGTON - Ten candidates. Three hours. One stage. A Texas showdown. This Thursday, Democratic White House 2020 hopefuls meet for round three of the party's presidential debates as the contest for the party's nomination enters a new, more urgent stage.

The Houston hothouse will be the first time the party's top contenders appear together on a single night. Among the most highly anticipated face-to-

faces of the evening will be between former vice-president Joe Biden and the Massachusetts senator Elizabeth Warren, who have yet to share a stage in this race.

Warren is jostling with the Vermont senator Bernie Sanders to be the leading progressive alternative to Biden, who has maintained a comfortable lead over his rivals despite a summer of gaffes and miscues.

Beyond the top three ... (More on P4)... (15)

Former Indonesian President Habibie Dies at Age 83

JAKARTA, INDONESIA - Former Indonesian President Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie, who allowed democratic reforms and an independence referendum for East Timor following the ouster of the dictator Suharto, has died. He was 83. His unpopular presidency was the shortest in modern Indonesia's history, but was transformative.

Habibie's son, Thareq Kemal Habibie, said Indonesia's third president died Wednesday at Jakarta's Gatot Subroto army hospital, where he had been undergoing treatment for heart problems since Sept. 1.

He said his father had struggled to survive, "but his heart finally gave up at the end." ... (More on P4)... (16)

Turkish Drones in Libya Are a Strategic and Family Affair

ISTANBUL - A war of drones involving Turkey has escalated in Libya in recent weeks, as Khalifa Hifter's Libyan National Army, backed by Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), continues to target Tripoli. While the appearance of Turkish drones in the war theater is an unequivocal sign of Ankara's support for the Tripoli and Misrata forces, the drone tussle between Turkey and the UAE has an aspect less spoken about, namely a link to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's family.

The Bayraktar TB2 drones that have shown up in Libyan skies are manufactured by the Baykar company, a family business of Erdogan's son-in-law Selcuk ... (More on P4)... (17)

Russia Vows to Retaliate US Sanctions

MOSCOW - Moscow will expand in a retaliatory move the list of U.S. citizens for whom the entry to Russia is limited, a country's top diplomat said on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, the U.S. blacklisted two employees of the Russian Investigative Committee, accusing them of violating the rights of religious organization Jehovah's Witnesses.

"These sanctions against the Russians are a continuation of a completely discred-



ing, disastrous line. It [the U.S.] assumes that we will bend under the pressure of sanctions, but this will never happen. And, of course, we will accordingly expand our restrictive lists for the entry of American

citizens to Russia. We speak openly about it," Ryabkov told reporters in Moscow. As soon as the U.S. "abandons" the practice of expanding blacklist, Moscow will do the ... (More on P4)... (12)

U.N. Investigators Link U.S., Syrian and Russian Forces to War Crimes

GENEVA - Air strikes by U.S.-led coalition forces in Syria have killed or wounded many civilians, indicating that required precautions were ignored and war crimes may have been committed, United Nations investigators said on Wednesday.

Syrian government and allied Russian warplanes are also conducting a deadly campaign that appears to target medical facilities, schools, markets and farmland and which may also amount to war crimes, the report by the U.N. Commission of Inquiry on Syria said.

The investigators also accused Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a jihadist alliance for-

merly known as Nusra Front that is the dominant armed group in Idlib, of firing rockets indiscriminately and killing civilians.

The eight-year-old war has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands and forced 13 million people from their homes, half of whom have left their shattered homeland.

Backed by U.S.-led coalition air power in a fight to oust Islamic State, the Syrian Democratic Forces, which include Kurdish fighters, retook the group's last major stronghold of Hajin in eastern Syria in late December. The ... (More on P4)... (13)

Erdogan Plays Syrian Refugee Card Against Europe

ISTANBUL - I received a text message from a senior Justice and Development (AKP) member as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addressed his party's delegates on Sept. 5. It read, "Are you watching? Wait to see how Erdogan will threaten [US President Donald] Trump through the EU. Let me know what you think."

Erdogan explained if the United States does not agree to work with Turkey on a Syrian safe zone, Turkey will go ahead with it on its own. He announced the deadline as the last week of September, explaining what a burden 3.6 million Syrian refugees have become for the country and that Turkey cannot be forced to carry it alone. He stated that the goal is to relocate at least one million Syrians into the safe zone, saying, "We spent \$40 billion so far" and that the EU's aid was only around three billion euros (\$3.3 billion). Erdogan said he provided detailed construction plans for homes with gardens in the safe zone for relocated Syrians. He suggested that Western powers had embraced the idea and it was time to act.

Erdogan concluded the speech by emphasizing that if the safe zone was not established, Turkey would be forced to open the gates to Europe. He complained about the EU and other countries paying lip service to the struggles of Syrian refugees but not picking up the tab.

In July, Al-Monitor reported about the forced deportations of Syrians, ... (More on P4)... (18)

Tajikistan Strives to Become Regional Electricity Exporter

DUSHANBE - Tajikistan is eyeing to become a regional electricity exporter after the launch of the second of the six turbines being built at the Rogun hydropower plant on Monday local time, Trend reports with reference to AntaraNews.

"The electricity generated from the first and second turbines is not only sufficient to cater to the needs of the people of Tajikistan but also for export," Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon remarked during the launch ceremony of the

second unit of the Rogun hydropower plant.

The president noted that the Rogun hydropower plant will not only fulfill the nation's requirements but also those of the neighboring nations. To prove his intention to become a regional electricity exporter, Tajikistan invited foreign journalists and reputable international news agencies, including Indonesian News Agency ANTARA, to attend the launch ceremony of the Second Unit of the Rogun hydropower plant. (Trend)