

## China Says US Treats Latin American Like It's 'Backyard'

BEIJING - Beijing has fired back at the U.S. after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo criticized China's role in Venezuela as prolonging the crisis there. China's foreign ministry said Monday that Pompeo's accusations were "unfounded" and "deliberately drove a wedge" between China and Latin America.

Foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang accused the U.S. of treating Latin America like "its own backyard to pressure, threaten and even subvert political power in other countries at every turn."

Pompeo said last Friday that China's financing of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government helped "precipitate and prolong" the country's crisis.



Hyperinflation, shortages of food and medicine and other hardships have forced more

than 3 million Venezuelans - about one-tenth of the population - to flee the coun-

try in the last few years. (Fox News)

### New Zealand PM Ardern's Approval Rating Rises to Highest Since Taking Office

WELLINGTON - New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who was praised at home and abroad for her handling of the Christchurch mosques shooting last month, received her highest approval rating since taking office in a widely watched poll on Monday.

The 1 NEWS Colmar Brunton political survey showed 51 percent of respondents said Ardern was their preferred prime minister, climbing seven percentage points from the last poll

in February. Its first political survey since a lone gunman killed 50 Muslim worshippers at two mosques in Christchurch on March 15. Ratings for Ardern's rival, opposition National Party leader Simon Bridges, dropped one percentage point to five percent.

Party vote results also showed Ardern's Labour Party rising three percentage points to 48 percent while the National's rating dropping to ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

### Finland's Center-Left Social Democrats Narrowly Top Poll

HELSINKI - Finland's center-left Social Democratic Party is facing the tough task of trying to form a government coalition after becoming the Nordic country's largest party by an extremely narrow margin following Sunday's highly fragmented parliamentary election.

With all votes counted Monday, the party led by Antti Rinne took 17.7% of votes and 40 seats in the Eduskunta legislature, far from the 101 seats needed for a majority. Right behind



came the populist Finns Party with 17.5%, while the conservative National Coalition party took the third spot with 17% of votes. Outgoing Prime

Minister Juha Sipilä's Center Party was fourth with 13.8%. Tackling climate change and reforming Finland's social and health care

system were key topics in the vote where established parties lost support to populists in line with an overall European trend. (Fox News)

### Merkel Calls Netanyahu, Stresses Need for Two-State Solution



BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel has congratulated Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu on his re-election and stressed the need to work toward a two-state

Merkel also expressed her willingness to work closely and trustingly

solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Merkel's office said stressed in a phone conversation Monday the continued relevance of a two-state solution, which she said should be the goal of international efforts.

with the incoming Israeli government. During the final stretch of his election campaign, Netanyahu pledged for the first time to annex parts of the occupied West Bank in a desperate bid to rally his right-wing base. Netanyahu has reneged on election eve promises before, but should he follow through on this one, it would mark a dramatic development and potentially wipe out the already diminishing hope for Palestinian statehood. (Fox News)

### India's Jet Airways Flying Just 7 Planes Amid Investor Talks

NEW DELHI - India's ailing Jet Airways drastically cut back its operations on Monday amid talks with investors on purchasing a controlling stake in the debt-laden airline. Once India's largest carrier, Jet Airways is currently operating only seven of its 14 aircraft, and is flying only domestic routes, according to spokesman Gaurav Sahni. A recovery plan led by government-owned State Bank of India and other creditors has

so far been unable to staunch the bleeding at the airline, which had 119 aircraft on Dec. 31, when the company first defaulted on some of its \$1.5 billion in debt. Also on Monday, Jet Airways pilots demonstrated in Mumbai after deciding against a strike, saying they had not been paid in four months and asking India's government for a lifeline. "The appeal is to the prime minister to save Jet Airways, to save ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

### Russia-Germany Gas Pipeline Seeks New Route in Baltic Sea

COPENHAGEN, Denmark - The developers of a natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany applied Monday for a third route south of Denmark's Baltic Sea island of Bornholm, as they try to overcome objections from the country. The Danish Energy Agency says Nord Stream 2 has applied for an alternative route in the seas south-east of Bornholm in Denmark's exclusive economic zone. It could not say when a permit might be granted but said only one can be granted.

The Switzerland-based Nord Stream 2 confirmed it had been asked to submit an application for another route. It said in a statement that asking for a third route ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

### Egypt, Greece, Cyprus Conduct Joint Naval Drills in Mediterranean

CAIRO - Naval forces from Egypt, Greece and Cyprus started joint exercises on Monday, at a military base of Alexandria in the Mediterranean, Egypt's armed forces said in a statement.

The joint drills, named Medusa-8, will last for several days, aiming to "boost military cooperation among the three countries," said Tamer al-Refai, spokesperson of the armed forces. Main units from the Egyptian Navy helicopter carrier ENS Anwar El Sadat, a Type 209 submarine and a number of F-16 jets took part in the drill. In 2015, Egypt and Greece held their first joint exercise Medusa 5. Egypt regularly holds joint military exercises with ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

### EU Centrists Set to Lose MEP Seats to Eurosceptics, Russia again Accused of Meddling

LONDON - Anti-establishment Eurosceptic parties are preparing to make a splash during next month's European Parliament election. But some see their rise as evidence of successful interference by Russia.

The 750 MEP seats will be up for grabs in May, and various anti-establishment forces on either side of the political spectrum are forging alliances to gobble up the shares currently held by centrists. Adding to the confusion is Britain, which will take part in the election despite supposedly



working hard to leave the EU.

But for some European and international officials, the problem seems to be Russia secretly supporting Eurosceptics - not the disconnect between political elites and the

people they are meant to represent. Blaming the looming electoral failure on Kremlin trolls (without offering a shred of evidence, of course) is as tempting in 2019 Europe as it was in 2016 America. (RT)

### Hunt Tells Japan's PM Britain Determined to Avoid No-Deal Brexit

TOKYO - British foreign minister Jeremy Hunt reassured Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Monday that the British government was determined to avoid a no-deal exit from the European Union.

"We recognize that Japan has many investments employing hundreds of thousands of people in the U.K. We want strong cooperation to continue," Hunt told Abe at the Japanese leader's residence in Tokyo. Japan is one of Britain's biggest for-

eign investors, building cars and other products in a country it has viewed as a gateway to the broader European market.

Britain's decision to leave the EU has raised concern in London that Japanese firms will shift operations elsewhere if tariff-free trade ends with the rest of the European bloc. Hunt is also visiting Toyota Motor Corp, which plans to build a new car model with Suzuki in Britain, during his trip to Japan. (Reuters)

### South Korean President Calls for 4th Summit with Kim Jong Un

SEOUL, South Korea - South Korean President Moon Jae-in said Monday he's ready for a fourth summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to help salvage faltering nuclear negotiations between the North and the United States.

Moon's comments came after Kim issued his harshest criticism yet of South Korea's diplomatic role last week, accusing Seoul of acting like an "overstepping mediator" and demanding that it diverge from Washington to support the North's position more strongly.

Moon met Kim three times last year and also brokered nuclear talks between North Korea and the U.S. following tensions created by the North's nuclear and missile tests and the exchange of war threats by Kim and President Donald Trump.

But there are fears in Seoul that the hopeful developments of 2018 could be undone because of the mismatched demands between Washington and Pyongyang over sanctions relief and disarmament, which have derailed a high-stakes Trump-Kim meeting and prolonged a stalemate in negotiations.

It's difficult for Moon to make further progress on inter-Korean engagement without some level of sanctions relief, which Washington says won't come until unless Kim commits to verifiably relinquishing his nuclear facilities, weapons and missiles. Kim has shown no signs that he's willing to give ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

## Neighbor News

### Pakistan Wants Cordial Ties with All Countries, Faiths: President

ISLAMABAD - President Dr Arif Alvi Monday said Pakistan wanted cordial ties with all the countries and faiths and always desired peace in the region.

Addressing a ceremony held here to celebrate Baisakhi, a religious and cultural festival in Sikhism, organized by the Pakistan Television (PTV), he said having sacrificed a lot during the war against terrorism, Pakistan had learnt the value of peace.

The event was attended by a huge number of people from Sikh pilgrims coming from across Pakistan, India and other countries, besides diplomats and senior officers from the

Evacuee Trust Property Board.

He said Pakistan was now a peaceful and secure country and would continue its efforts for regional peace.

He said in his maiden address, Prime Minister Imran Khan had talked for peace with India. He said it took long to heal up the damages caused by the wars always incited by the miscalculations.

He said in his address at the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had said that in Pakistan everyone would be free to go to the worship place of his faith. (Monitoring Desk)

### Zarif's Reminder to E3: No Prohibition on Enrichment Under JCPOA

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has reminded the Europeans that a 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, does not prohibit the country from enriching uranium.

Zarif's reprimand in a Monday tweet came after French Ambassador to the US Gerard Araud said Tehran should not need to be "massively enriching uranium after the JCPOA."

"Reminder to our E3 partners in #JCPOA: There is NO prohibition on the enrichment of uranium by Iran under #NPT, JCPOA or UNSCR 2231," Zarif tweeted, addressing France, Germany and Britain.

The three European countries opted to remain in the nuclear deal after US President Donald Trump abandoned it last May and reimposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Araud tweeted Saturday that "sanctions could be reimposed" on Iran once the nuclear deal expires after 10 years, prompting the Islamic Republic to summon France's ambassador to Tehran.

"Neither now, nor in 2025 or beyond. Might be useful for European partners to actually read the document they signed on to, and pledged to defend," Zarif retorted on Monday. (Press TV)

### Uzbekistan, China Plan to Create Joint Investment Fund

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan and China are planning to create a joint investment fund within the framework of the global initiative "One Zone, One Way", Trend reports via Uzbek media.

The parties agreed on the implementation of that project during the international investment forum in the Khorezm region of Uzbekistan.

Speaking to the participants, the secretary general of the China Cultural Investment Fund Jiancheng Zhu proposed to create a fund for investment in bilateral cooperation between China and Uzbekistan, to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries.

This initiative was also discussed later during negotiations with the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan Adham Ikramov.

The parties studied the possibility of implementing joint projects in Uzbekistan, which are capable of taking the cooperation of the two countries to a new level. The head of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry positively accepted the idea of creating a joint investment fund and expressed a desire to discuss this project in detail during further negotiations.

Chinese side proposed that the creation of the fund should be initiated by the governments of the two countries. (Trend)

### 'Nabdat Initiative' Begins Campaign in Tajikistan

DUSHANBE - The medical team of the 'Nabdat Initiative', organized by the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Humanitarian and Charity Establishment, a branch of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives, in cooperation with the Dubai Health Authority, DHA, began conducting surgeries on a number of sick children, as part its campaign in Tajikistan, reports Trend referring to

From 12th to 21st April, with the participation of leading DHA doctors and technical staff, the initiative will examine over 300 children suffering from various heart diseases, and conduct

100 open heart and therapeutic catheter surgeries on sick children aged one month to 18 years.

Humaid Mohammed Al Qatami, Director-General of the DHA, highlighted the key values, principles and humanitarian message of the initiative, which aim to treat sick children from various countries, ease their pain and suffering, and give them hope.

He also praised the cooperation and strategic partnership between the Charity Establishment and the DHA, as well as their ongoing efforts, through the initiative to help children suffering from heart deformities in many countries. (Trend)