

Trump Touts Nuke Strength as Tillerson Urges Calm on N.Korea

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump declared the U.S. nuclear arsenal “far stronger and more powerful than ever before,” even as his top diplomat was working to calm the North Korea crisis and insisting there wasn’t “any imminent threat.”

In a series of early-morning tweets Wednesday, Trump reaffirmed his threat from a day earlier by reposting video of him warning that Pyongyang would be “met with fire and fury like the world has never seen” if it made more threats to the U.S. Then he said that his first order as president had been to “renovate and modernize” the U.S. nuclear arsenal. “Hopefully we will never have to use this power, but there will never be a time that we are



not the most powerful nation in the world!” Trump tweeted.

It wasn’t immediately clear what evidence the president had, if any, to support his claim about the nuclear force.

Trump did issue an executive order in his first days in office calling for a review to ensure the U.S. nuclear deterrent is “modern, robust, flexible, resilient, ready” and appropriately tailored for 21st century threats. The White House has not detailed any findings from that evaluation.

A modernization effort started by former President Barack Obama in the early stages, but the force is essentially unchanged from the way Trump inherited it on Jan. 20. (AP)

N.Korea Organizing Rally against UN Sanctions

WASHINGTON — North Korean authorities have organized a giant rally Wednesday as a show of support for their rejection of the latest round of U.N. sanctions. Tens of thousands of people packed Kim Il Sung Square in downtown Pyongyang for the event, which followed a familiar format of speeches from a balcony, with the crowd listening below, standing in organized rows interspersed with placards and slogans.

Kim Ki Nam, member of the Political Bureau and vice chairman of the Cen-

tral Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea, told the crowd that “the U.S. and its allies have fabricated a sanctions resolution again, taking over the United Nations while picking on our ICBM test launch.”

On Twitter Wednesday, Trump said he had pushed to “renovate and modernize our nuclear arsenal.” He then added: “Hopefully we will never have to use this power, but there will never be a time that we are not the most powerful nation in the world!” (AP)

Stop EU Exit ‘Catastrophe’, Says UK Brexit Minister’s Ex-Chief of Staff

LONDON — Britain’s exit from the European Union will be the country’s biggest calamity since World War Two, the former chief of staff to Brexit minister David Davis said on Wednesday, calling for a new political movement to oppose the divorce.

The criticism from someone who, until May, had a ringside seat for Britain’s exit preparations comes at a time when Prime Minister Theresa May’s Brexit strategy is the subject of open political debate after an ill-judged snap election in June badly weakened

her position.

“It’s the biggest calamity for our country since WW2, I’m afraid,” said James Chapman, who ran chief negotiator Davis’s office for nearly a year after the June 2016 EU referendum. He has since moved to work for a public relations firm. Late on Tuesday he tweeted: “Past time for sensible MPs (Members of Parliament) in all parties to admit Brexit is a catastrophe, come together in new party if need be, and reverse it.” Chapman previously



worked as an aide to then-finance minister George Osborne and worked on his campaign for ‘Remain’ in the run up to the referendum.

Before working for Osborne, he was political editor for the Daily Mail, an influential right-leaning newspaper which supported Brexit. (Reuters)

Germany Urges China, Russia to Rein in North Korea



BERLIN — Germany on Wednesday called on China and Russia to dissuade Pyongyang from pursuing policies that

would lead to a military escalation on the Korean peninsula after North Korea said it was considering a missile strike on

Guam. “The goal of the German government is to avoid a further military escalation and to settle the con-

flict in the North Pacific peacefully,” said government spokeswoman Ulrike Demmer.

“China and Russia have a special responsibility to do everything they can to dissuade North Korea from a path of escalation,” she added. Earlier North Korea said it was considering plans for a missile strike on the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam after U.S. President Donald Trump told the North that any threat to his country would be met with “fire and fury”. (Reuters)

Immigration to Australia to Fall Dramatically after Crackdown on Migrant Workers: Report

CANBERRA — Immigration to Australia will dramatically drop after a crackdown on skilled migrant visas, a report released on Wednesday found.

The Australian government, led by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, in April abolished and replaced the temporary work visa, known as the 457 visa, which allowed businesses to employ migrants with expertise in areas that there was a shortfall among Australian workers. Approximately 200,000

migrants arrive in Australia each year but Bob Birrell from the Australian Population Research Institute said that figure would fall by tens of thousands after the 457 change. Under the new system, migrant workers would need two years of relevant experience in the field before coming to Australia while employers would be forced to pay training levies. “These new rules are going to change things. It will make it tougher and will give some disincentives. (Xinhua)

Indian PM Calls for Resolve to Fight Corruption, Poverty, Illiteracy

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday called for resolve to fight corruption, poverty and illiteracy in the country. Addressing a special session of the Parliament, Modi said that corruption, poverty and illiteracy are the greatest challenges the country is facing today. India needs to overcome these challenges and a common resolve is needed for this, Modi said, adding, “We need to bring a positive change in this regard.” “We all together will empower the poor with their rights and we will do it; We all will together ensure employment to the youths and we will do it,” he said. “We will together eliminate all hurdles for women empowerment and we will do it,” he stressed. (Xinhua)

France Opens Anti-Terrorist Inquiry after Hit-And-Run on Soldiers

PARIS — French counter-terrorist investigators have been asked to probe an incident in which a car rammied into a group of soldiers in a Paris suburb on Wednesday, a source in the judiciary said. A judicial source told Reuters that the department had taken up the matter and was working alongside colleagues from the DCSI internal intelligence agency — a move that in France shows the matter is being treated as a probable act of terrorism. A statement from French Armed Forces Minister Florence Parly added that police forces were looking for a suspect on the run after the incident, in which police said six soldiers were injured, two of them seriously. (Reuters)

Putin Vows to Continue Ensuring Abkhazia’s Security, Independence

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday visited the Georgian breakaway region of Abkhazia and assured it of Moscow’s continued military support to guarantee security and independence, the Kremlin press service said.

“In general, we have things to discuss. The bottom line is that we have very special relations with Abkhazia. We reliably guarantee its security and independence. I am sure this will continue,” Putin said during a meeting with the leader of the Republic of Abkhazia Raul Khadjimba.



Putin promised to continue joint work to beef up Abkhazia’s defense capabilities and make sure that both citizens and tourists in the republic could feel “reliable protection.”

For his part, Khadjimba said Abkhazia with Russia’s support is making progress in socioeconomic

development and infrastructure construction, and resolving defense and security issues.

He said the amount of funds for investment programs, which are supported by Russian banks, will exceed 2.5 billion rubles (41.83 million U.S. dollars) this year. (Xinhua)

German Lawmaker Wants Security Guarantees to Visit Turkey

BERLIN — A German lawmaker from the far-left Left party wants security guarantees from the German foreign ministry before embarking on a NATO-led trip to visit soldiers serving at an air base in Turkey next month.

Disputes over access to German soldiers at Turkish bases have heightened tensions between the NATO allies. Germany warned its citizens about traveling to Turkey after Ankara’s arrest of 10 human rights activists last month, including a German, in a security crackdown. Left Party lawmaker Alexander Neu told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zei-

tung newspaper he was worried about his safety given Turkey’s “absurd” claim that he had contacts to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which is classified as a terrorist group in Germany and the European Union. “It has to be clear that I will be able to get out of Turkey,” said Neu, who was not immediately available to comment. The German foreign ministry said it would do all it could to ensure that seven German lawmakers, to be picked by the parliamentary defense committee, could go ahead with the visit. But it said Turkey had ultimate control over who to let in. (Reuters)

China, Japan Ruling Parties Hold Talks on Improving Ties

TOKYO — Senior members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Japan’s ruling coalition, formed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior partner the Komeito party, met here at the sixth China-Japan ruling party talks on improvement of bilateral ties.

During the talks which wrapped up on Wednesday, Song Tao, head of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, urged the two sides not to forget their original intention when normalizing bilateral ties 45 years ago.

Song said that on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the normalization of China-Japan diplomatic relations, the meeting under an exchange mechanism was aimed at implementing the important consensus between their leaders and pushing forward bilateral relations in the right direction.

The two sides should make joint efforts, based on the spirit of four major political documents between China and Japan, to properly handle sensitive issues, including the Taiwan and historical issues, and firmly safeguard the political foundation of bilateral ties, said Song.

He also called on the two sides to enhance exchanges in all fields, discuss cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative and expand cooperation foundation between the two sides. Toshihiro Nikai, secretary general of the LDP, and Yoshihisa Inoue, secretary general of the Komeito Party, spoke highly of the Chinese delegation attending the ruling party talks on Aug. 7-9. (Xinhua)

Neighbor News

China Warns against Stoking Korea Tensions after Trump ‘Fury’

BEIJING — China responded to US President Donald Trump’s apocalyptic “fire and fury” threat against North Korea by pointedly warning on Wednesday against any rhetoric that could inflame tensions over Pyongyang’s weapons programmes. Calling the situation on the Korean Peninsula “complicated and sensitive”, China’s foreign ministry issued a statement warning that parties involved in the impasse should avoid “words and actions that escalate the situation”.

The ministry had been asked to respond to Trump’s comment on Tuesday that North Korea would “be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen” if it did not refrain from further bellicose threats

against the United States. Trump’s warning came as Pyongyang said it was considering a missile strike near the US territory of Guam and after US media reported North Korea may have successfully miniaturized a nuclear warhead, considered a key step in becoming a full nuclear power. Trump’s words marked a sharp intensification of Washington’s rhetoric over the North’s nuclear and missile programmes, which saw a seventh set of United Nations sanctions imposed on it at the weekend, and appeared to echo Pyongyang’s own trademark threats. Trump’s tone was markedly different to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson’s assurances last week that Washington was not seeking regime change in Pyongyang. (AFP)

Pakistan’s Skydiving PM Seen Soothing Military, Energy Fears

ISLAMABAD — Family links to Pakistan’s powerful military and a cabinet stint championing the use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) will probably help new prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi navigate thorny relations with the army and curb rolling blackouts. How Abbasi, the co-founder of a budget airline and a skydiving fan, tackles those two issues may define his tenure as he seeks to tilt the next general election, due in mid-2018, toward the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party. Ousted leader Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the Supreme Court last month and within days had installed Abbasi as a temporary prime

minister. Sharif then had a change of heart about plans to elevate his brother as long-term leader. With Abbasi, 58, now likely to stay on until the election, the opposition is training its crosshairs on him while voters seek clues as to what he can accomplish in less than a year as the leader of a nuclear-armed nation of 190 million. US-educated Abbasi has been frank about Sharif’s role as the power behind the throne but those close to him expect a slightly different approach to the army. “He is going to repair the relationship and have a better communication channel to the army than Nawaz,” said a senior PML-N official. (Reuters)

U.S. to be “Loser” if Violating Nuke Deal, Warns Iran’s Nuclear Chief

TEHRAN — If the United States violates the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, it will be the “loser” as Iran will keep all options on the table, Iran’s nuclear chief warned on Tuesday.

“The U.S. will be the loser if it goes against the JCPOA,” Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), was quoted by the state-run news agency IRNA as saying. JCPOA is short for the Iranian-U.S. nuclear deal formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was signed last year by the two countries after years of tough negotiations on the controversial Iranian nuclear program. The deal was signed under the auspices of other world powers, including

Britain, China, France and Russia, which are permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany.

Under the deal, the U.S. eased economic sanctions on Iran in exchange for its commitment to peaceful use of nuclear energy. Tehran will reciprocally respond to Washington’s violations of the international deal, Salehi warned in an interview with the Lebanese TV news channel Al Mayadeen. Washington has to bear responsibility for its actions that violate the nuclear deal, because the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has verified Iran’s peaceful nuclear program by releasing seven reports to confirm Tehran’s commitment, Salehi added. (Xinhua)

Presidents of Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan Discuss Cooperation

ASHGABAT — President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev as part of 2-day official visit of the Turkmen President to Baku discussed bilateral ties of the countries, the state news agency of Turkmenistan reported. Berdimuhamedov arrived in Baku on August 8. The face-to-face meet-

ing of the heads of states addressed the issues of implementation of joint energy and transport projects, as well as trade and cultural cooperation. The Presidents also raised the issue of regional and international issues. Following the talks, they signed a package of documents on expansion of the Turkmen-Azerbaijani cooperation. (AKI)