U.S. Troop Reduction in Exercise Not Due to North Korea Concerns: Mattis

AMMAN -- A reduction in U.S. troops taking part in a joint exercise with South Korea this year was not due to North Korea concerns, Mattis said Thursday.

Another 20,700 U.S. service members are participating in the exercise this year compared to 21,000 last year, according to Mattis.

With tensions high on the Korean peninsula, China's Pyongyang's main ally and trading partner -- has urged the United States and South Korea to cut back the drills, as has Russia. Cited U.S. Freedom Guard

Merkel Ally Drops Call for Cap on Refugees Entering Germany

BERLIN -- A key ally of Chancellor Angela Merkel has said she no longer supports proposals for a financial cap on refugees for economic and humanitarian reasons.

Christian Social Union leader Markus Söder, who leads the Social Christian and Liberal-Conservative parties coalition, said for an upper limit on the number of refugees expected to enter Germany this year.

Following the massive influx of migrants and refugees into Germany in 2015, the CSU's Söder had tapped to aim for a financial cap on refugees, after the CSU's Söder,

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According to the statement. (Xinhua)

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Iraq Starts Offensive to Take Back Tal Afar from ISIl State

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- Iraqi security forces launched an offensive to retake the city of Tal Afar on Sunday, next in the U.S.-led coalition's campaign to defeat Islamic State militants, Prime MinisterHaider al-Abadi said.

"You either surrender, or die," said a televised speech announcing the offensive, the addicts, the wire.

Iraqi forces in the battle for the West, the strength of battleline Sunni Muslims immigrants, Tal Afar, 30 km west of Mosul in Iraq's far north, experienced cycles of sectarian violence between Sunni Muslims and Shi'ite Muslims after the US-led invasions of Iraq in 2003 and Iran, and thus produced some of Iraq's most severe sectarian strife.

The military is already involved in the fight against ISIl in the region.

The main army in the rest of Islamic State state, it is governed by Iraq, supported by U.S. troops and Shi'ite volunteers in the south, and backed by coalition forces. In the north, the U.S. forces and Shi'ite forces.

Iraqi forces on the ground will join the fight from Aug. 28 to Aug. 29. Visualization computer software designed to prepare the battle for the West, with the help of nuclear-capable North Korea. The United States and South Korea both have troops stationed in South Korea.

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