

# Erdogan, Putin Say Trump's Jerusalem Decision Harms Regional Peace, Stability

ANKARA - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin discussed on Thursday the latest developments in Jerusalem over the phone, state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

Erdogan and Putin agreed that the U.S. decision on Jerusalem will negatively impact the peace and stability in the region, Anadolu quoted a presidential source as saying.

The two leaders also highlighted the importance of UN Security Council on solving the dispute.

Earlier in the day, Erdogan criticized U.S. President



Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, saying the move was "throwing the region into a circle of fire." Thousands of people holding flags of Palestine and banners on Thursday demonstrated in front of the U.S. Embassy and consulates in Turkey's main cities, protesting against the Jerusalem decision made by Trump.

A day earlier, Trump formally recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and instructed the State Department to begin the procedure of moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. (Xinhua)

## Jerusalem's Final Status to be Decided by Israelis, Palestinians: Tillerson

PARIS - Any final decision on the status of Jerusalem will depend on negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on Friday, appearing to add nuance to President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

"With respect to the rest of Jerusalem the president ... did not indicate any final status for Jerusalem," Tillerson said, speaking at a news conference in Paris alongside French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. "He was very

clear that the final status, including the borders, would be left to the two parties to negotiate and decide," Tillerson said.

Trump announced this week that the United States was recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, overturning decades of U.S. policy which had left the city's status to be determined via negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. Israeli officials have lauded Trump's move, while saying that in their minds Jerusalem has always been Israel's capital. (Reuters)

## Macron Calls for Non-Interference in Lebanon to Avoid Escalation

PARIS - French President Emmanuel Macron called on foreign powers on Friday to stop interfering in Lebanon's politics to preserve the country's stability and peace in the region. Macron's comments were made at a meeting in Paris of the international support group for Lebanon, which brings together the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - Britain, France, China, Russia, and the United States - in addition to the European Union (EU), the Arab League, Italy and Germany. The inter-

national gathering "must show the will of the international community to see the policy of regional disassociation put into place effectively by everyone in the country," Macron said at the opening remarks.

"For Lebanon to be protected from regional crises, it's essential that all Lebanese parties and regional actors respect the principle of non-interference," he added. Lebanon, where a fragile balance between several ethnic groups, is already delicate, had risked a new political crisis after its Prime Minister Saad



al-Hariri announced from Saudi Arabia his resignation on Nov. 4.

The resignation was widely seen as Saudi Arabia's show of force to stem the influence of Iran, its arch rival, in Arab countries, mainly in Lebanon. (Xinhua)

## Germany's SPD Votes for Coalition Talks with Union, Re-Elects Schulz as Leader



BERLIN - Germany's SPD Party on Thursday voted to enter into exploratory talks for the formation of a new government coalition with Chancellor Angela Merkel's Conservatives Union. About 600 SPD

members on Thursday gathered for the federal party congress and voted with a large majority by raising their arms to enter exploratory talks that could eventually end Germany's political crisis.

The SPD motion said the "open-ended" talks will start next week and would lead to three options: a new grand coalition, the acceptance of a minority government led by Merkel, or snap elections if no government can be formed.

SPD Chairman Martin Schulz called for talks with the Union before the motion was submitted to the congress for vote. "We do not have to rule at all costs. But we must not want to reign at any cost," he said in his speech. SPD's stance is of great importance after the so-called "Jamaica

coalition" talks between the Union, the Free Democratic Party and the Greens failed. Merkel is facing the worst political crisis as no new government could be formed for the time being since the Sept. 24 German federal elections. Suffering the lowest vote rates since 1949, SPD had repeatedly ruled out a grand coalition again with the Union after the current one, but it faced increasing pressure from the public after the collapse of the Jamaica coalition exploratory talks last month. (Xinhua)

## China Says DPRK, U.S. Should Solve Problems through Talks

BEIJING - China said Friday that as parties directly involved in the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States should solve their problems through talks and dialogue. "China always maintains that the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is a security issue in essence, and the core is the contradiction between the DPRK and the United States," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang. Geng was commenting on Russian

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's recent remarks that he had passed a message to the U.S. side that the DPRK was open to direct talks with the United States. Geng said that China has been making efforts for the United States and the DPRK to solve their differences through talks.

He said that China also welcomes other parties, including Russia, to make efforts to bring the Korean peninsula nuclear issue back to dialogue and consultation as soon as possible. (Xinhua)

## S. Korean President Calls for Preparation for Early Transfer of Wartime Operational Control from U.S.

SEOUL - South Korean President Moon Jae-in called on key military commanders on Friday to prepare for the early transfer of wartime operational control from the United States.

Moon invited major commanders of the country's military to his office for lunch, saying conditions should be rapidly prepared for the transfer of wartime operational command of South Korean forces from Washington.

The South Korean leader said the transfer would depend on whether his country's military secures a leading capability for the South Korea-U.S. combined defense, according to the presidential Blue House.

South Korea's wartime command was handed over to the U.S. forces after the 1950-1953 Korean War broke out. The country won back its peacetime operational control in 1994.

Seoul and Washington had agreed to the conditions-based transfer of wartime operational control of South Korean troops from Washington to Seoul when South Korea's military is capable of leading the combined defense on the Korean Peninsula.

Moon said the military should strengthen its core capability to realize the "responsible defense" under which South Korea's military takes responsibility for the defense of its own country.

Moon has emphasized that any war must not break out on the peninsula again. Moon told the military commanders that they had a given mission of keeping peace and prosperity on the peninsula, saying strong security and responsible defense cannot be separated from peace and prosperity on the peninsula. (Xinhua)

## Britain, EU Reach Crucial Deal to Open Next Phase of Brexit Talks

BRUSSELS - The European Commission has found sufficient progress in the first phase of the Brexit talks and will recommend to the European Council to open the second phase, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said Friday.

He made the remarks during a joint press conference with British Prime Minister Theresa May who arrived in Brussels before dawn for her second meeting in a week with him to secure a deal for Britain's divorce from the bloc.

"This is a difficult negotiation but we have now made a first break-



through. I am satisfied with the fair deal we have reached with the United Kingdom. If the 27 Member States agree with our assessment, the European Commission and our Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier stand ready to begin work on the second phase of the negotiations immediately," said Junck-

er. For his part, Barnier said, "The Commission's assessment is based on the real, genuine progress made in each of our three priority areas. By agreeing on these issues, and settling the past, we can now move forward and discuss our future relationship on the basis of trust and confidence." (Xinhua)

## Spike in Radioactivity Unrelated to Nuclear Plant: Russia

MOSCOW - Russian authorities denied Friday that a radioactivity spike in the air over Europe resulted from a nuclear fuel plant leak in the Urals, saying their probe has found no release of radioactivity there.

Andrei Ivanov of Russia's Rosatom state nuclear corporation said that an inspection of the Mayak plant has proven that it wasn't the source of Ruthenium-106, a radioactive isotope spotted in the air over Europe and Russia in late September and early October.

France's nuclear safety agency said last month that increased levels of Ruthenium-106 were recorded over most of Europe but posed no health or environmental risks. The Russian panel that involved Rosatom experts has failed to identify where the isotope came from, but alleged that it could have come from a satellite that came down from orbit and disintegrated in the atmosphere. Nuclear safety expert Rafael Arutyunian said Ruthenium-106 could be used in satellite power sources. (AP)

## China, Russia Seek Closer Military Cooperation

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin met a top Chinese military official here Thursday on improving military cooperation between the two countries.

Military cooperation plays an important role in Russia-China relations and the two countries should continue to strengthen their partnership in joint military drills, army games and personnel training, Putin said.

He made the remarks at a meeting with Zhang Youxia, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and vice chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission.

Putin said Russia prioritizes relations with China in its foreign policy and praised the high-level strategic coordination between the two countries.

He said Russia and China should further improve communication and coordination to maintain regional and global peace and stability as they hold the same or similar positions in many issues. Zhang said the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination is ascending to higher levels thanks to efforts made by the two presidents. Ties between the two militaries have been expanding and deepening with effective practical cooperation, said Zhang.

He said that China is ready to work with Russia to implement the consensus between the two presidents, support each other, and jointly safeguard security interests of both countries and help maintain world peace and stability. (Xinhua)

## Neighbor News

### Xi Stresses New Concepts to Guide Economic Work in 2018

BEIJING - China should implement new concepts and focus on new targets in its economic work next year, Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC), has said.

Xi made the remarks at a symposium attended by representatives of non-Communist parties and those without party affiliations on Wednesday.

"The essential feature of the economy at the present stage is that it is in a transitional period from a phase of rapid growth to a stage of high-quality development," Xi said.

"From the present to the near future, high-quality development is the fundamental requirement in determining development ideas, formulating economic policies and implementing macro-control measures," he said. Achieving high-quality development is imperative for China to maintain sustainable and healthy development of the economy and society, according to Xi. It is also imperative to adapt to the shift of the principal contradiction facing society and to fully build a modern socialist country, he said. (Xinhua)

### China Warns of Imminent Attacks by "Terrorists" in Pakistan

BEIJING - China on Friday warned its nationals in Pakistan of plans for a series of imminent "terrorist attacks" on Chinese targets there, an unusual alert as it pours funds into infrastructure projects into a country plagued by militancy.

Thousands of Chinese workers have gone to Pakistan following Beijing's pledge to spend \$57 billion there on projects in President Xi Jinping's signature "Belt and Road" development plan, which aims to link China with the Middle East and Europe.

Protecting employees of Chinese companies, as well as individual entrepreneurs who have followed the investment wave along what is known as the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor, has been a concern for Chinese officials. "It is understood that terrorists plan in the near term to launch a series of attacks against Chinese organizations and personnel in Pakistan," the Chinese embassy in Pakistan said in a statement on its website.

The embassy warned all "Chinese-invested organizations and Chinese citizens to increase security awareness, strengthen internal precautions, reduce trips outside as much as possible, and avoid crowded public spaces". It also asked Chinese nationals to cooperate with Pakistan's police and the military, and to alert the embassy in the event of an emergency. (Reuters)

### Muslim World Needs another Intifada in Defense of Quds: Tehran Conference

TEHRAN - Senior Muslim figures attending the international Islamic Unity Conference in Tehran have slammed a US decision to recognize Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's "capital," calling for a new intifada (uprising) against the scheme targeting the occupied Palestinian city.

In their final statement, the participants in the 31 International Islamic Unity Conference condemned US President Donald Trump's Wednesday remarks about al-Quds and his order to relocate the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem al-Quds.

The three-day event attended by around 520 dignitaries, ministers, scholars, university professors, and representatives from various associations concluded in Tehran on Thursday. The statement emphasized the need to counter "the new US policy of Judaizing the Noble al-Quds and dominating sacred places of the Muslims."

"Accordingly, the Muslim world needs a new Palestinian intifada, which is supported by all the countries favoring freedom and human rights as well as all political powers." (Presstv)

### Uzbekistan to Co-Op with Russia, Montenegro in Audit Sphere

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan will cooperate with Russia and Montenegro in the introduction of international audit standards, the press service of the Uzbek Chamber of Auditors reported Friday.

The parties signed the relevant agreements on Dec. 7.

The agreement on cooperation with Russia was signed by Lyudmila Kozlova, head of the self-regulatory organization of auditors "Russian Union of Auditors" and Nematulla Karimov, head of the Supervisory Board of the Chamber of Audi-

tors of Uzbekistan. The agreement was signed for the introduction of international standards of financial reporting and audit into the national accounting system with the use of advanced foreign experience. A similar document was signed by Nematulla Karimov with Scekic Rade, executive director of the Institute of Accountants and Auditors of Montenegro.

Today, Uzbekistan is actively pursuing reforms to bring accounting and audit in line with international standards. (Trend)