

14 Security Council Member Criticize US Action on Jerusalem

UNITED NATIONS — One by one, 14 members of the U.N. Security Council spoke out against President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel at an emergency meeting on Friday, some with regret and some with anger at the 15th member, the United States. It wasn't the first time that the U.S. stood alone in defending its close ally, Israel, in the U.N.'s most powerful body. Over decades, it has vetoed many council resolutions that it viewed as harmful to Israel. But this was a



rare rebuke for an action the United States took that in the eyes of the rest of the council and most of the world clearly violates U.N. resolutions and decisions that Jerusalem is an issue to be resolved by Israel and the Palestinians in peace negotiations on a two-state solution. The Trump administration has been working on a new Mideast peace proposal and U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley told the council that the U.S. is more committed to peace "than we've ever been before — and we believe we might be closer to that goal than ever before." (AP)

Senior Aide to Trump to Leave White House

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Donald Trump's deputy national security adviser, Dina Powell, will step down from her position early next year, the White House said Friday. "Dina Powell has been a key, trusted advisor in this administration," White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement Friday. Sanders said Powell "has always planned to serve one year before returning home to New York, where she will continue to support the president's agenda and work on the Middle East."

Powell, who started to serve the administration in March, is expected to be one of several aides to leave the White House at the one-year mark of Trump's presidency. Powell, 44, has been in Trump's inner circle and a key aide to National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster. She has played a key role in Trump's Middle East agenda, along with the president's senior adviser and son-in-law, Jared Kushner. "Dina has been an invaluable member of President Trump's team," McMaster said in a statement. (Xinhua)

Britons can Change Terms of Brexit to Diverge from EU: Pro-Brexit Minister Gove

LONDON — British voters will be able to change the terms of the country's relationship with the European Union after leaving the bloc if they don't like the final Brexit deal, senior cabinet minister and pro-Brexit lawmaker Michael Gove said on Saturday. Britain and the EU achieved "sufficient progress" in Brexit negotiations on Friday to allow them to move on to discussing future trade ties, in a move welcomed by Gove and other Brexit supporters in Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party.

However, while Gove, who is Britain's environment minister, reiterated his support for May, he gave succour to critics of the deal by saying that if Britons were dissatisfied with the terms of Brexit, future governments could change it. "The British people will be in control. By the time of the next election, EU law and any new treaty with the EU will cease to have primacy or direct effect in UK law," Gove wrote in a column in the



Daily Telegraph. "If the British people dislike the arrangement that we have negotiated with the EU, the agreement will allow a future government to diverge." Britain is due to exit the EU in March 2019. The next election is not scheduled until 2022, though there has been speculation in British media that it could come earlier, given May's lack of a parliamentary majority and deep divisions within her party about Brexit. (Reuters)

Terrorism Remains Major Threat to Regional Security: Bahraini FM



MANAMA — Terrorism sponsored by states or non-governmental organizations continues to significantly threaten regional security and

stability, said Bahrain's foreign minister on Saturday. "Hezbollah's terrorist activities in Lebanon provides a model for what might happen if a terrorist

organization takes control of the political decision," said Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa at the Manama Dialogue 2017 conference. "This is in addition to the smuggling of weapons and explosives and training of terrorists to carry out terrorist operations in Bahrain, Kuwait and other countries," he added. The situation is further worsened by Iran's interference, said the foreign minister. "Iran undermines regional security and destabilize governments of other

countries, as well as supports terrorist militias to implement its own agenda," he said. He also stressed that the decision taken by the four Arab countries including Bahrain to boycott Qatar is a result of the decades-long attempts of some countries to destroy the security and stability of other countries. "The decision came after decades of attempts to undermine national security of Bahrain and to overthrow its government," he said. (Xinhua)

Erdogan Seeks to Lead Muslim Response on Jerusalem

ISTANBUL — Turkey's leader is seeking to spearhead Islamic reaction to the US declaration on Jerusalem, but it is uncertain if he can coordinate a meaningful response among often disunited Muslim nations. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who regards himself as a champion of the Palestinian cause, had fulminated against President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital even before it was officially announced this week. Erdogan described the status of the city, whose eastern sector Palestinians

see as the capital of their future state, as a "red line" for Muslims. With Trump disregarding such warnings, the Turkish president used his position as the current chairman of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to call a summit of the pan-Islamic group. "He is seeking to garner an international response," said Ziya Meral, resident fellow at the British Army's Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, noting Erdogan had spoken to Muslim allies and non-Islamic leaders. (AFP)

UN Officials' Visit Promotes Mutual Understanding: DPRK

PYONGYANG — The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) said in a press release Saturday that a visit by senior United Nations (UN) officials helped promote understanding between the country and the UN Secretariat. The press release, issued by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on the last day of the visit, said both sides acknowledged that the visit "contributed to promoting trust between the two sides" and that they "agreed to have regular exchanges of opinions through frequent exchanges of visits at various levels." Jeffrey Feltman, the UN's under-secretary-general for political affairs who was accompanied by two colleagues, visited Pyongyang from Dec. 5 to 9. According to the press release, the official met with both the DPRK's foreign minister and its vice foreign minister. During the meetings, they discussed bilateral cooperation between the country and the UN as well as the situation on the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK side said the current tense situation on the peninsula "is entirely ascribable to the U.S. hostile policy and nuclear threat and blackmail against the DPRK," said the press release, which also condemned the U.S.-South Korea joint military drills. It said the UN official expressed concern over the escalation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula and the willingness to de-escalate the situation. The official also visited a children's foodstuff factory and a hospital in Pyongyang, according to the press release. (Xinhua)

European States Push U.S. for Detailed Middle East Peace Proposals

UNITED NATIONS — Britain, France, Germany, Sweden and Italy called on the United States on Friday to put forward detailed proposals for peace between Israel and the Palestinians and described as "unhelpful" a decision by President Donald Trump to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Trump's reversal of decades of U.S. policy on Wednesday sparked a Palestinian "day of rage" on Friday. Thousands of Palestinians demonstrated, scores were hurt and at least one was killed in clashes with Israeli troops. Amid anger in the Arab world and



concern among Washington's Western allies, the United Nations Security Council met on Friday at the request of eight of the 15 members — Britain, France, Sweden, Bolivia, Uruguay, Italy, Senegal and Egypt. In a joint statement after the meeting, Britain, France, Germany, Sweden and Italy said

the U.S. decision, which includes plans to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv, was "unhelpful in terms of prospects for peace in the region." Egypt's U.N. Ambassador Amr Aboulatta said the U.S. decision would have "a grave, negative impact" on the peace process. (Reuters)

Iraq Declares Liberation of all Iraqi Lands from IS Group

BAGHDAD — Iraq declared Saturday the liberation of all Iraqi lands from Islamic State (IS) militants after seizing the whole border areas and desert in western Iraq, the Iraqi military said. "The liberation of all Iraqi lands from the IS has been completed and our heroic forces have tightened their grab on the Iraqi-Syrian border," Lt. Gen. Abdul Amir Rasheed Yarallah, commander of western Iraq operations, said in a brief statement. The army forces and the paramilitary Hashd Shaabi brigades, backed by Iraqi helicop-

ter gunships, managed to take control of the whole desert areas between the provinces of Nineveh and Anbar, Yarallah said. The troops took control of over 90 villages and cleared 16,000 sq km in the last operation during the past 24 hours, he said. The Iraqi forces are now in control of some 183 km from the Iraq-Syrian border, Yarallah added. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi confirmed in a speech at the International Media Conference in Baghdad that "our forces are in complete control of the Iraqi-Syrian border." (Xinhua)

US Presses Russia to Comply with Nuclear Missile Treaty

WASHINGTON — The United States is reviewing military options, including new intermediate-range cruise missile systems, in response to what it says is Russia's ongoing violation of a Cold War-era pact banning such missiles, the State Department said on Friday. Washington is prepared "to cease such research and development activities" if Russia returns to compliance with the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement. Nauert also hinted at possible economic sanctions, saying the United States is "pursuing economic and military measures intended to induce the Russian Federation to return to compliance." The warning was the Trump administration's first response to U.S. charges first leveled in 2014 that Russia had deployed a ground-launched cruise missile that breaches the pact's ban on testing and fielding missiles with ranges of 500-5,500 kms (310-3,417 miles). U.S. officials have said the Russian cruise missile is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead, and that Moscow has refused to hold in-depth discussions about the alleged breach. Russia has denied it is violating the accord. In a statement issued before Nauert's, the Russian foreign ministry said it was ready for talks with the United States to try to preserve the treaty and would comply with its obligations if the United States did. In a statement marking the 30th anniversary of the treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union, the ministry said Moscow considered "the language of ultimatums" and sanctions unacceptable. (Reuters)

Neighbor News

China Must Accelerate Implementation of Big Data Strategy: Xi

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping has urged the country to accelerate implementation of big data strategy to better serve social and economic development and improve people's lives. Efforts should be made to advance national big data strategy, improve digital infrastructure, promote integration and sharing of digital resources, and safeguard data security, Xi said during a collective study session of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee's Political Bureau on Friday. "We should target cutting-edge technology and mobilize prime resources to make breakthroughs in developing core big data technology, and accelerate building an independent and controllable industrial chain, value chain and eco-system of big data," said Xi,

who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee. He called for building high-speed, mobile, ubiquitous and safe information infrastructure, integrating government and social data resources, and improving the collection of fundamental information and important information resources in key areas. The market should play a key role in the mission, and data must work as a bridge to integrate production, study and research. A group of pioneering companies and a varied and diverse talent workforce should be established, he said. Xi underscored the importance of building a digital economy with data as a key factor, highlighting the fact that research on and use of big data is indispensable in building a modern economy. (Xinhua)

Zardari, Imran Damaging Democratic System: Saad

LAHORE — Pakistan Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique Saturday alleged that PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and PTI chairman Imran Khan are damaging democratic system by crossing limits. Talking to media after inaugurating a private showroom at Cavalry Ground here, he said that both politicians were competing each other in using dirty language against their opponents. He said that prosperity comes with struggle and virtues instead of crime, adding that nothing was happened in hurry and one had to wait for progress. He said that the PML-N was the largest party of the country, adding that PPP and PTI tried well to damage it but both the parties would failed in

their designs. "Some of our opponents can join hands even with the "Satan" against us," he added. The minister said that once upon a time politics was practiced on pro and anti-Bhutto and now it was being practiced on pro-Nawaz and Anti-Nawaz. He said that all institutions should work within the limits of constitution, adding that four times martial law was imposed in the past. "We have paid price for democracy and still we are paying price for it," he added. "We have not stepped back from our demand of rule of constitution in the country," he said. He said it was his pray that may the general elections be held on time. (Monitoring Desk)

Iran FM, Britain Foreign Secretary Discuss JCPOA, Economic Ties in Tehran

TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Britain's Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson have held talks in the Iranian capital about a landmark nuclear agreement reached between Tehran and the P5+1 group of countries more than two years ago. According to a statement by Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the top Iranian and British diplomats discussed on Saturday the implementation of the nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and commitment of all signatories to the deal, whose future has been thrown into doubt by US Presi-

dent Donald Trump. Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China — plus Germany signed the nuclear agreement on July 14, 2015 and started implementing it on January 16, 2016. Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions imposed against Tehran. UK Prime Minister Theresa May on November 30 affirmed her country's support for the nuclear agreement in the face of the US administration's harsh rhetoric and threats to "terminate" it. (Presstv)

Turkmenistan Creates State Commission for Food Security

ASHGABAT — Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov has signed a decree establishing the State Commission for Food Security. The commission is established to further increase the country's food abundance, provide the

domestic market with a wide range of high-quality products, according to the document. Turkmenistan was awarded a special prize by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for achievements in the field of food security. (Trend)