

(1) Pence Voices...

fighting the Islamic State group.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence and German Chancellor Angela Merkel are meeting along the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

The two leaders retired behind closed doors after both addressed the Munich Security Conference of foreign diplomats and security officials.

Pence said the US would hold Russia accountable and offered reassurances that the U.S. strongly supports NATO. Merkel pointed to the need to preserve and strengthen multilateral partnerships such as the European Union, NATO and the United Nations.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence is reinforcing the Trump administration's message that NATO members must spend more on defense.

NATO's 28 member countries promised in 2014 to commit to spending 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense within a decade. Pence says in remarks at a security conference in Germany that only the U.S. and four other NATO members are meeting the standard.

President Donald Trump has also called on NATO members to spend more on their militaries.

Pence says the "time has come" for allies to boost spending because the dangers they all face are growing and changing every day.

He adds that failure to meet the spending commitment undermines the alliance's ability to come to each other's aid.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence says the United States will "hold Russia accountable" even as President Donald Trump searches for new common ground with Russia at the start of his presidency.

Pence says at the Munich Security Conference in Germany that with regard to Ukraine, the international community must hold Russia accountable and demand that it honor a 2015 peace agreement aimed at ending the fighting in eastern Ukraine between government forces and Russia-backed separatists.

He's offering assurances of the U.S. commitment to NATO and the European Union in remarks at an international conference of foreign diplomats and defense officials.

Pence's speech comes amid concerns in Europe about Russian aggression and Trump's positive statements about Russian President Vladimir Putin. U.S. Vice President Mike Pence is offering assurances that the United States strongly supports NATO and "will be unwavering in our commitment to this trans-Atlantic alliance." He says President Donald Trump "will stand with Europe."

Pence is addressing the Munich Security Conference in his first overseas trip as vice president.

The vice president's speech was aimed at reassuring skeptical allies in Europe about American foreign policy under Trump along with U.S. willingness to maintain international partnerships.

Pence's trip to Germany comes as Europeans are skittish that Trump may promote isolationist tendencies and not hold Russia accountable. (AP)

(2) MoFA Summons ...

88 people. It was seen as a tactic to pressure Kabul to act against militants who Pakistan says have sanctuaries in Afghanistan.

The Pakistani officials asked to remain anonymous because they are not authorized to brief the media on the record. Earlier, Pakistan closed a border crossing at Torkham, which connects Pakistan to Afghanistan's Nangarhar prov-

ince.

The Islamic State says it was behind the shrine attack and Pakistani security forces have launched nationwide operations that they say has left more than 100 "terrorists" dead. (AP)

(3) China Committed ...

common, comprehensive, co-operation-based and sustainable security concept, and build relations under the principle of "partnership over alliance, dialogue over confrontation." Secondly, Wang said, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, especially those on respecting the sovereignty of all countries, peaceful settlement of disputes and non-intervention in domestic affairs, should be observed.

The system of collective security with the UN Security Council as the core, which is established by the UN Charter, is the guarantee for sustaining peace and should be unswervingly upheld, Wang added.

Thirdly, Wang proposed using comprehensive means to promote peace, citing conflict prevention, peacekeeping and rebuilding as the core elements. The countries concerned and related regional organizations should be consulted before a decision on intervention is made by the UN Security Council. (Xinhua)

(4) ICRC Calls ...

"The ICRC has been active in Afghanistan for three decades, impartially assisting victims of the conflict with medical care, food assistance, family contacts and the dignified handling of human remains. It is a neutral, impartial and independent organization whose sole mission is strictly humanitarian," the statement reads.

The ICRC has suspended its operations in the militancy-hit country following the deadly incident. (Xinhua)

(5) President ...

Donald Tusk and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg were among more than 30 heads of state and government, 80 foreign and defense ministers and other officials expected to attend.

President Ghani, who attended the huddle, held meetings with US and British defence secretaries James Mattis and Michael Fallon and discussed with them Afghan security forces' training and advise mission, regional and international issues and other matters of mutual interest.

The president also met Angela Merkel and talked with her about regional issues. Ghani thanked Merkel for her country's support to Afghanistan in various fields.

The president also held one-on-one meetings with the president of Azerbaijan, the prime minister of Georgia, the president of Croatia, Saudi foreign minister and head of the Micro Soft company.

The president discussed trade, investment and security issues with different heads of states during his meetings. (Pajhwok)

(6) Afghanistan...

active in Pakistan who threaten Afghanistan.

Afghan government regards the Peace Quartet agreement as a comprehensive strategy to combat terrorism and emphasized that now the time has arrived for Pakistan to implement the provisions of the document.

The Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States, and China on the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation process of January 2016 called on all Taliban groups to enter into early talks with the Afghan government in order to resolve differences politically. This came after the QCG's sec-

ond meeting in Kabul draw up the roadmap for peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

The delegations were led by Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, the US Ambassador to Afghanistan Michael McKinley and China's Special Envoy for Afghanistan Ambassador Deng Xijun.

In the statement issued by the QCG, they said: "taking note of the joint statement of January 11, 2016 and building on the outcome of the first meeting of the QCG, the group discussed and made progress on a roadmap towards initiating peace talks with Taliban groups that reflects the shared commitments of the QCG member countries."

The QCG once again emphasized the need for an end to the senseless violence against the Afghan people.

They said in the statement that the four nations agreed that all forms of terrorism presents a grave threat to countries, the region and the world.

"The members indicated their commitment to a robust effort to eliminate all forms of terrorist groups, regardless of their national origin, operating in their respective territories," read their statement.

"The QCG member countries agreed that friendly, mutually respectful and cooperative relations between the member states of QCG are necessary to create an enabling environment for the peace process in Afghanistan, which will help ensure the security, stability, prosperity, and interests of the region."

In conclusion the QCG said they had agreed to continue regular meetings to advance the Peace and Reconciliation process in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(7) Daesh Suffered ...

soldiers in National Army and among Police and say that security forces have been present at battlefields.

"In the Afghan National Army there is no ghost soldiers. There is no ghost soldier," Shahim said.

"I confirm Shahim's remarks. He said there are not ghost soldiers in national army and I also say there is no ghost soldier among police," Abdul Rahman Rahman, deputy minister of Ministry of Interior said. (Tolonews)

(8) Pakistan ...

the Sasrkanod district, said Abdul Ghani Musamim, the governor spokesman.

He said one of the rockets hit a civilian house, killing two member of a family - a 15-year-old boy and a woman. Earlier, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) summoned the Pakistani ambassador in Kabul and lodged protest over the shelling by Pakistani forces and closure of the border. (Pajhwok)

(9) Taliban Trying...

to be captured by the rebels under a deal following clashes in which more than 10 border police were killed.

Pajhwok tried to contact Haqyar and seek his comment about the allegations but he refused to talk. (Pajhwok)

(10) 4 Villages ...

The Taliban said they retreated from the said villages in response to elders' request and denied Taliban casualties in the operation. (Pajhwok)

(11) Gold, Firewood ...

Wazirabad Fuel Station, said a liter of petrol cost 45afis and the same quantity of diesel 41afis, registering no change. The price of sugar went down during the week but of flour slightly increased. Food Traders Union head, Fazal Rahman, said the price of 49 kilograms

of Kazakh flour increased from 1,120afis to 1,130afis.

But the rate of 49kg of Pakistani sugar decreased from 2,260afis to 2,230afis due to its high imports. The price of 24.5kg of Pakistani rice stood at 1,600afis and 16-kg tin of Khurshid ghee 1,100afis, the same prices of last week's.

Haji Rahmatullah, a tea seller in Kabul Mandavi, said a kilogram of Madina green tea cost 240afis and the same amount of African black tea 260afis, the same rates as of last week's.

Ahmad Sharif, who owns a grocery store in Taimani neighborhood, said a 49kg bag of Kazakhstani flour was sold for 1,230afis, 49kg sack of Pakistani sugar for 2,330afis.

He sold 16-litre tin of Khurshid ghee for 1,180afis, 24.5kg sack of Pakistani rice for 1,800afis, a kilo of Madina green tea for 280afis and the same quantity of African black tea for 300afis -- higher than wholesale prices.

The prices of gold also increased. Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold increased from 2,250afis to 2,300afis and the same quantity of Russian variety from 1,750af to 1,800afis.

According to moneychangers' union in Sara-i-Shahzada, one US dollar was accounted for 67.45afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 625afis against last week's 66.85afis and 618afis. (Pajhwok)

(12) Hidden Reasons...

terrorist problem is getting deeper in Pakistan and its structures. For instance, Lashkar-e-Taiba or Jaish-e-Mohammed have influenced Pakistan's military and their families," Nabil said.

In reaction to Pakistan officials' recent remarks, a number of former Afghan government officials and political figures have urged government to respond to the attacks from Pakistan.

"When they cross the border and carry out operations on Afghanistan soil, the Afghan government must take serious military reaction against them. Even if they enter one meter onto Afghanistan soil," said Anwar ul Haq Ahadi, chairman of the New National Front party.

Former Afghan ambassador to Britain, Ahmad Wali Massoud also said Pakistan and Afghanistan have failed to ensure peace. He urged the citizens of both countries to do their best in bringing about peace in the region.

"When insurgents can cross borders and link up with each other in Afghanistan or Pakistan, why cannot civil organizations build relationships for peace?" he asked.

Although Pakistan has said the attack on the shrine was masterminded on Afghanistan soil, the United States and NATO, the two strategic allies of Afghanistan have been silent so far. (Tolonews)

(13) Shaheen to ...

the South Korean team and Bangladesh's Chittagong Abahani as the top defenders of the championship. Our team continues their efforts to win the championship because they could not win in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup qualifying round held in Tajikistan," Faiz stated.

"The team is in good shape and mood. All players are ready to win the matches in the Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup 2017," he added.

Shaheen Asmayee will compete in group "B" of the championship. Chittagong Abahani Ltd., Mohammadan SC Limited of Bangladesh, and Monag Marshyangdi Club of Nepal are the three rivals of Shaheen in the group stage. Eight teams -- three local and

five foreign clubs -- split into two groups for the tournament and will compete in the group stage.

Every match has three points and finally two teams of each group will be qualified for semi-finals.

In a press conference on February 17, Boir Igamberdiev and Amirudin Sharifi, Shaheen Asmayee's coach and captain, talked about the team's preparations and stated that Shaheen will go on the ground with yellow jersey in all Sheikh Kamal fixtures.

Shaheen conducted their first exercise at Chittagong, Bangladesh on February 17.

The second and third fixtures of Shaheen will be on February 22 and 24.

The Shaheen and Chittagong Abahani face-off will start at 8:30pm Kabul time at M.A Aziz Stadium in Chittagong district of Bangladesh. (Tolonews)

(14) Salang Pass,...

170 people were killed and 125 others injured as result of avalanches and snowstorms in the southern Salang region.

Separately, the highway of Heart-Qala-I-Naw was also closed in Sabzak Pass in Badghis province by heavy rain and snowfall.

Fakhruddin, a driver of the highway in a telephone contact with Pajhwok said that eight vehicles, including his, were stuck in the snow last night and the passengers were kept in a nearby Afghan National Army (ANA) base.

He said the thickness of snow had reached to 80 centimeters in Sabzak Pass. A contact with Badghis officials for comment in the regard could not be established. (Pajhwok)

(15) Tough U.S....

Estonia, Greece, Poland, Britain and the United States. In total, 22 members saw an increase in defense budget in 2016. (Xinhua)

(16) Pence Says...

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, scepticism of the 2015 deal to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions and an apparent disregard for the future of the European Union have left Europe fearful of the seven-decade-old U.S. guardianship of the West. (Reuters)

(17) Russian FM...

cold-war institution, has led to an unprecedented level of tension over the last decades in Europe.

"Judging by some statements at the Munich Security Conference, the Cold War has not ended yet," the minister said. Responding to a question on alleged election interference in the U.S. and France, Sergey Lavrov said: "give us some facts." (Xinhua)

(18) British Ex-PM...

expose relentlessly what this cost is, to show how the decision was based on imperfect knowledge which will now become informed knowledge," Blair added.

Questioned at the meeting on whether he thought there should be a second referendum in Britain, Blair responded: "All I'm saying is that if a significant part of that 52 percent (who voted leave) show real change of mind, however you measure it, we should have the opportunity to reconsider this decision." (Xinhua)

(19) Foreign, Defense...

of Hokkaido, called the Northern Territories in Japan and the Southern Kurils in Russia. The decades-old territorial spat has prevented the two countries from signing a post-World War II peace treaty and hindered diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries. (Xinhua)

(20) Expect More ...

speaker of Lithuanian's parlia-

ment on Tuesday.

"It is clearly fake news and I believe we should expect more of this," Pavel, told Reuters in an interview, citing conversations with the German and Lithuanian defense ministers. Estonia's Foreign Minister Sven Mikser also blamed Russia and said he expected more "hostile propaganda" over the troop presence.

Pavel said Russia was "not pleased" by the deployment of NATO troops closer to its border. (Reuters)

(21) China, U.S. ...

of great significance. During the conversation, Wang said the U.S. side had made it clear that it would continue to honor the one-China policy and the two leaders agreed that China and the United States could be great partners and should promote greater development of their bilateral relationship from a new starting point.

This key consensus has safeguarded the political basis of Sino-U.S. relations, charted the course of the relationship in the new era, and created the necessary pre-conditions for the two nations to engage in strategic cooperation on bilateral, regional, and global issues, Wang noted.

Wang said that China and the United States, both shouldering the responsibilities of securing world stability and enhancing global prosperity, had more common interests than disputes. (Xinhua)

(22) Trump on...

denying news reports about chaos in his White House and alleged possible contacts of his team with Russia. After the lengthy press conference, Trump's team sent out an email survey asking people to respond with how they feel about the media.

"Instead, you -- the American people -- are our last line of defense against the media's hit jobs," one line in the email read. (Xinhua)

(23) Chinese FM...

continuous growth of bilateral trade.

"The two countries have same or similar positions on many international affairs," Videgaray said. (Xinhua)

(24) Iran Says ...

and Turkey with the support of Iran in December 2016, is largely working, Zarif said, warning against committing further mistakes in Syria by the United States.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari announced that the next round of negotiations between the Syrian government and the rebels is planned to be held in Kazakhstan within less than a month, Tasnim News Agency reported on Friday. (Xinhua)

(25) Presidential...

that it is also planned to develop industry, widely implement advanced technologies and take the necessary steps to ensure the dynamic development of the national economy," the Neutral Turkmenistan newspaper quoted Berdimuhamedov as saying.

In foreign policy, Turkmenistan's national interests on international arena will be consistently protected, according to Berdimuhamedov. (Trend)

(26) Tajikistan,...

despite the impact of the global financial and economic crisis, has been characterized sustainable, as well as activation of the work of the Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, organization of Business Forum, intensification of activity of the Council of Tajikistan and Turkey have been named effective ways of strengthening bilateral relations. (AKI)