Arab League Calls for Multinational Force to Fight Militants

CASABLANCA - The Arab League called for the creation of a regional force to combat militants as countries long facing a growing threat from Islamic State and other groups.

The ultra-radical group has taken over swathes of Iraq and Syria and vast territories in other countries like Egypt and Libya. It has also shown an intent to move into the region. Its hold in the Gulf is already strong, both politically and militarily.

The United States leads a coalition that is fighting to expel the group from Syria, with Washington saying Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan and Bahrain have participated in it and are considering playing a major role in fighting IS-led militants in Egypt, the most populous Arab state, which would come on the heels of the militants beheading 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians. But there has been no cooper-

Putin Says Plan to Take Crimea Hatched Before Referendum

Washington - Supporters of Presid- ent Barack Obama’s trade agenda are betting opponents’ demands to bar Chile and Peru from the Trans-Pacific Partnership are not powerful enough to block the deal.

First, they say, it’s not clear that Chi-

China’s Economy to Bottom Out in 2015: Economist

BEIJING - China will likely see its growth slow to 6.5 percent in 2015 as the world economy struggles to recover from the financial crisis and, although 2014 was a strong year for the country, it is likely that the growth rate will fall this year. According to the International Monetary Fund’s World Economic Outlook, China’s growth will slow from 7.4 percent in 2014 to 6.5 percent in 2015, with most economists expecting that the country’s economy will continue to slow in 2016.

Pakistan Tests Nuclear-Capable Long-Range Missile

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has successfully tested a nuclear-armed ballistic missile capable of carrying a warhead with a range of over 900 kilometers, officials said Monday.

The test was conducted at the country’s Rohri proving ground, where the military has tested several missiles and other weapons. The test is seen as a significant development in Pakistan’s missile program, which is one of the most advanced in the world.

The successful test, officials said, demonstrates Pakistan’s ability to respond to threats from neighboring countries and to assert its regional nuclear capability.

Renaissance General Sworn in As Libya’s Army Chief

Libya’s new military leader was sworn in as the country’s army chief Monday, a day after a UN-backed government was sworn in as the country’s first legitimate government.

The new army chief, General Khalifa Haftar, was appointed by the UN-backed government and has been involved in fighting against the Islamic State and other militant groups in Libya. He has been a key figure in the country’s security efforts and has been praised for his role in fighting against the Islamic State.

The UN-backed government, which is based in the eastern city of Tripoli, has been struggling to assert its authority over the country. The new army chief has been tasked with unifying the military and working with the various factions in the country to establish a stable government.