

# Turkey Launches Military Operation in Syria's Idlib: Erdogan

ANKARA - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced on Saturday that Turkey was conducting an anti-terror operation in Syria's Idlib. Speaking at the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP)'s meeting in Turkey's western province of Afyonkarahisar, Erdogan said "today a landmark operation is underway in Idlib, and it will continue." "We won't allow a terror corridor along our Syrian border," he stressed, adding that the operation aims to provide Idlib's security. Turkish President said that the operation in Idlib is the follow-up of the Euphrates Shield Operation in northern Syria, which was



launched on Aug. 24, 2016, in a bid to clear Turkey's border from the Islamic State (IS) and other terrorists. "The Free Syrian Army (FSA) is currently carrying out the operation and our soldiers haven't yet entered Idlib," Erdogan said, adding that the name of the operation will be announced. The Turkish army is backing the FSA from within Turkey's borders, while Russian forces are providing air support to the operation, he said. Erdogan said last month that Turkey would deploy troops in Syria's northwest Idlib province as part of a so-called de-escalation agreement brokered by Russia in August. (Xinhua)

## Former French PM Underlines Crucial Role of China, Russia in World Affairs at Greece Forum

RHODES, Greece - International influence is shifting from West to East and "we must build peace with new responsible stakeholders," former French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin said here Friday, underlining the crucial role of China and Russia in world affairs. "International influence is restructuring around regional powers, with a shift from Western to Eastern countries," de Villepin said at a prestigious international forum on the Rhodes Islands in Greece.

The shift can be seen with the Astana process in dealing with the Syrian crisis, as well as initiatives from both China and Russia in easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula, he added. "This has to be a good news because we need both more and new responsible stakeholders in the world community," he said. The Astana process refers to talks held to resolve the Syrian civil war in Astana in January 2017 with Kazakhstan offering its capital as a neutral venue. (Xinhua)

## IMF Urges G20 to Ensure Sustainable Growth Amid Faster Recovery

WASHINGTON - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Friday urged G20 to continue implementing reforms in order to rebalance their economies and ensure the sustainability of growth. "After a slow recovery, growth has strengthened and output gaps are expected to close in about half of the G20 by 2018," said the IMF in a G20 surveillance note which was prepared for the IMF/World Bank annual meetings next week.

"Growth is stronger, but there remain pockets of concern," the IMF added. Many advanced economies continued to see insufficient demand and below-target inflation; some emerging economies are facing challenges from low commodity prices. In both advanced and emerging economies, slow expansion of potential output and stalling productivity growth are threatening the sustainability of higher growth,



said the IMF. The rising public and private debt and stalled external rebalancing also indicated that imbalances remained in G20 economies, the

IMF added. "The current growth momentum is an opportunity to implement these policies and sustain the recovery," said the IMF. (Xinhua)

## Trump to Unveil New Responses to Iranian 'Bad Behavior': WH



WASHINGTON - US President Donald Trump will announce new U.S. responses to Iran's missile tests, support for "terrorism" and cyber operations as part of his new

Iran strategy, the White House said on Friday. "The president isn't looking at one piece of this. He's looking at all of the bad behavior of Iran," Sarah Huckabee Sanders,

the White House press secretary, told reporters. "Not just the nuclear deal as bad behavior, but the ballistic missile testing, destabilizing of the region, Number One state sponsor of terrorism, cyber attacks, illicit nuclear program," Sanders continued. Trump "wants to look for a broad strategy that addresses all of those problems, not just one-offing those," she said. "That's what his team is focused on and that's what he'll be rolling out to address that as a whole in the

coming days." A senior administration official told Reuters on Thursday that Trump was expected to announce he will decertify the landmark international deal curbing Iran's nuclear program, in a step that could cause the accord to unravel. Trump on Friday declined to explain what he meant when he described a gathering of military leaders the evening before as "the calm before the storm," but the White House said his remarks were not meant to be mischievous. (Reuters)

## Merkel Supports German Coalition with Greens, Free Democrats

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel lobbied party members Saturday to stand behind efforts to build a new coalition with the Free Democratic Party and Greens, saying it's the best suited to govern the country. Speaking in Dresden to her party's youth wing, Merkel said she will hold talks with the pro-business FDP and the left-leaning Greens and then present her Christian Democratic Union with a coalition proposal for approval. She dismissed the only other realistic option,

continuing her current coalition with the Social Democratic Party. "It is not in the position to govern at the federal level for the foreseeable future, therefore I advise all of us not to waste further time on it," she said. The Social Democrats came second in the Sept. 24 election with 20.5 percent of the vote, compared to 33 percent for Merkel's conservative bloc. Party leaders immediately said they would not seek another coalition with Merkel and would instead go into opposition. (AP)

## Russian Aerospace Force Destroy in Syria 120 Terrorists from Tajikistan, Iraq, N. Caucasus

MOSCOW - Within past 24 hours, the Russian Aerospace Force destroyed in Syria 120 terrorists coming from Tajikistan, Iraq and North Caucasus, and a team of 60 foreign mercenaries, spokesman of the Russian Defense Ministry Igor Konashenkov said on Saturday. "In the strikes on Abu Kamal, the military destroyed a base and about 40 terrorists coming from Tajikistan and Iraq, as well as seven off-road vehicles with high-caliber weapons," he said. "Near the Meayadin compound, they destroyed a command post of terrorists and up to 80 militants, including nine militants coming from the North Caucasus. There also, they destroyed 18 off-road vehicles with high-caliber weapons and three arms depots." (TASS)

## U.S. to Limit Access to Contraceptives

WASHINGTON - The U.S. government said Friday that it will limit access to contraception drugs, raising a debate between liberals and conservatives over women's rights. The new rule announced by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) allows more employers and insurers to cite religious or moral beliefs to avoid providing free contraceptives to women. The new rule is both an undercut to the Affordable Care Act and a move to appeal to social conservatives, who make up the chunk of the voter base for U.S. President Donald Trump and are mostly against contraception. The move immediately drew criticism from Democrats, who say the new rule infringes on women's rights. (Xinhua)

## Merkel, Juncker Discuss Catalan Crisis: EU Official

BRUSSELS - German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker have discussed the Catalan crisis in a phone call, an EU official told Reuters on Saturday, in a sign of growing unease over potential disruption across Europe. The call signals fresh concern over a possible declaration of independence next week by the Catalan regional parliament and the reaction of the Spanish government, which could exacerbate what is already



Spain's worst political crisis for decades. Juncker spoke to Merkel from India on Friday on the sidelines of an EU-India summit. "They discussed the situation in Spain, among other things," the EU official said, without add-

ing details. Concern is growing in EU capitals about the negative impact of the crisis on the Spanish economy, the fourth largest in the euro zone, and on possible spillovers to other economies of the bloc. (Reuters)

## Refugees Still Arriving from Myanmar to Bangladesh, 2,000 Per Day: IOM

GENEVA - It is estimated that refugees are still arriving from Myanmar to Cox's Bazar on the other side of the border in Bangladesh at a rate of 2,000 per day, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said Friday. IOM spokesperson Joel Millman told a press briefing here Friday that the number of refugees fleeing Myanmar since Aug. 25 to Bangladesh now stand at 515,000. According to IOM, the Bangladeshi government had allocated a further 1,000 acres of land in addition to the 2,000 acres it had already made available on Sept. 14. Officials planned to use

the vast site to accommodate all the Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, both new and old arrivals, in one settlement, said the IOM spokesperson, adding that at close to 700,000 people, it would become "the world's largest refugee camp." "An estimated 218,000 people were already in need of urgent nutrition support, including 145,000 children under the age of 5 years and thousands of pregnant and lactating women," Millman told the briefing. So far IOM said it had already delivered 310,000 litres of clean water to refugee sites, but that remained "a drop in the ocean" in the context of daily needs. (Xinhua)

## EU Exports to Russian Declined 10.7 Pct Following Sanctions: Austrian Study

VIENNA - Economic sanctions between the European Union (EU) and Russia in early 2014 following the Ukraine conflict have led to a decline of 10.7 percent in EU exports to Russia until 2016, a new Austrian study has revealed.

The study from the Austrian Institute of Economic Research (WIFO) says that when factoring in a weakening of the Russian economy, the decline was even as greater as 15.7 percent annually over the given time frame. It says in 2013 total EU exports to Russia amounted to 120 billion euros (140 billion U.S. dollars), which by 2016 had collapsed to just 72 billion euros (84 billion U.S. dollars). The study attributes about 40 percent of the lost exports, or about 30 billion euros (35 billion U.S. dollars) in total value, to the results of the sanctions. And the waning also led to Russia slipping from the fourth-most important trading partner of the EU to the fifth, behind the U.S., Switzerland, China, and Turkey. In Austria alone, the sanctions are estimated to have caused a decline in exports to Russia of 9.5 percent, and cost about 1 billion euros (1.17 billion U.S. dollars). Most affected, however, was Cyprus, which saw a massive 34.5 percent collapse in exports to Russia between 2014 and 2016, while exports of Greece (down 23.2 percent) and Croatia (down 21 percent) were also notably impacted. (Xinhua)

## Neighbor News

### Iranian President Defends Nuclear Deal, Says Trump can not Undermine it

BEIRUT - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani defended the nuclear deal with Western powers Saturday and said that U.S. President Donald Trump could not undermine it. Under the 2015 deal, Iran agreed to limit its disputed nuclear program in return for the easing of economic sanctions. However, Trump is expected to announce soon that he will decertify the deal, a senior administration official has said, in a step that potentially could cause the accord to unravel. "In the nuclear negotiations and agreement we reached issues and benefits that are not reversible. No one can turn that back, not Mr. Trump or anyone else," Rouhani said at a ceremony at Tehran University marking the start of the university academic year, according to state media. "Even if 10 other Trumps are created in the world, these are not reversible."

Trump, who has called the pact an "embarrassment" and "the worst deal ever negotiated", has been weighing whether the deal serves U.S. security interests as he faces the Oct. 15 deadline for certifying that Iran is complying with its terms. The prospect of Washington reneging on the deal has worried some of the U.S. allies that helped negotiate it, especially as the world grapples with another nuclear crisis, North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile development. If Trump does not certify that Iran is in compliance, the U.S. Congress will have 60 days to decide whether to reimpose sanctions waived under the deal. U.N. inspectors have verified Iranian compliance with the terms. Rouhani said Saturday that if the United States violated the deal then it would hurt its own reputation in the international community. (Reuters)

### Pakistani Forces Foil Major Terrorist Plot

ISLAMABAD - Pakistani security forces have foiled a major terrorism plot in southwestern Balochistan province, a statement from the army said on Saturday. The paramilitary force Frontier Corps seized 1,300 kilograms of explosives during an intelligence-based operation conducted in Grandani, Kohlu and Naseerabad areas of Balochistan, which was being planned to be used for terrorist activities in the province, a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations said. Besides explosives, weapons and ammunition,

including sub-machine guns, rockets, hand grenades, maps of important areas and communication equipment were also recovered, the statement said. The intelligence-based operation conducted in Balochistan is part of the on-going major operation codenamed "Radd-ul-Fasaad" or reject discord in English. The operation was launched in February this year after a series of terrorist attacks killed over 100 people. The operation mainly focuses on what the security officials calls as the sleeping cells of the terrorists and their facilitators. (Xinhua)

### Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan Sign New Set of Documents

TASHKENT - Delegations of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan signed new documents. The signing ceremony was held amid the second day of Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev's visit to Tashkent. The documents include an Agreement between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on Confidence-Building Measures in the Border Areas, an Agreement on the Intergovernmental Use of the Orto-Tokoy (Kasan-say) Reservoir in the Jalal-Abad Region of Kyrgyzstan, a Memorandum of Understanding between Uzbekhydro-energy and the National Energy Holding Company of Kyrgyzstan to construct Kambaratinskaya HPP 1, as well as a contract for supply of electricity in 2017-2018 from Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz presidential press service said in a message Oct. 7. On the first day of the visit, the countries signed a Declaration on Strategic Partnership, Strengthening Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Trust, and 12 other documents. (Trend)

### Turkmenistan: Economy, Finance Ministries Merged to Save Money

ASHGABAT - Turkmenistan has merged two key ministries in the latest of a series of cost-cutting measures undertaken to lift the economy out of the doldrums. While declining to publicly acknowledge that it has a problem, Turkmenistan evidently continues to suffer from cashflow problems. On October 6, state media reported that President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov reversed a decision he took nine years by creating a single entity out of the Economy and Development Ministry and the

Finance Ministry. When Berdimukhamedov created the two ministries in 2008, he argued that it would allow for a "new approach to creating a financial and economic strategy." Turkmenistan has never, however, developed much of an economic strategy beyond relying heavily on its natural gas exports, which generate far less revenue now than they did in 2008. The new ministry will be headed by Batyr Bazarov, who formerly headed the Economy and Development Ministry and the