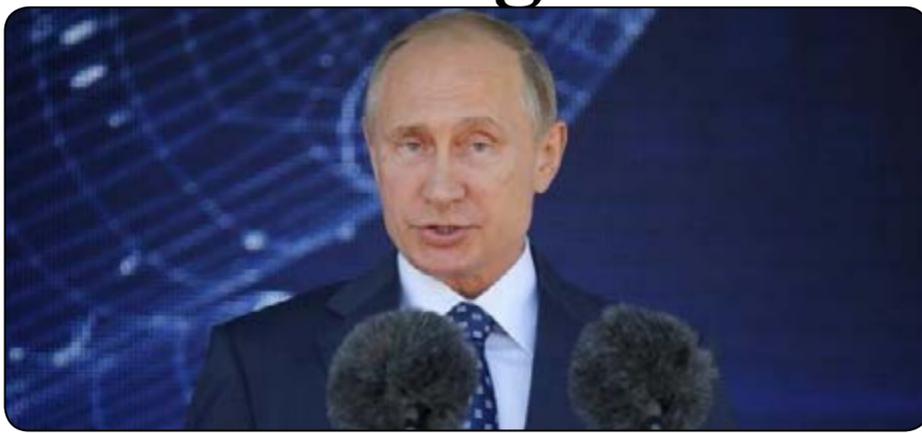


# U.S. Support for Syria Rebels Illegal: Putin

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday branded U.S. support for rebel forces in Syria as illegal and ineffective, saying U.S.-trained rebels were leaving to join Islamic State with weapons supplied by Washington. In an interview with U.S. networks recorded ahead of a meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama, Putin said Syrian President Bashar al-Assad deserved international support as he was fighting terrorist organizations. Obama and Putin are scheduled to talk on Monday after Putin addresses the United Nations, al-



though White House and Kremlin officials have disagreed on what the two

leaders will discuss and even who initiated the meeting.

"In my opinion, provision of military support to illegal structures runs

counter to the principles of modern international law and the United Nations

Charter," he said in an excerpt of an interview with U.S. television networks CBS and PBS released by the Kremlin.

Russia has stepped up its military involvement in Syria in recent weeks, with U.S. officials accusing Moscow of sending combat aircraft, tanks and other equipment to help the Syrian army. Russia's sudden military build-up this month in support of Assad and a refugee crisis that has spilled over from the region into Europe have lent new urgency to attempts to resolve the Syria conflict. (Reuters)

## Xi Reaffirms Support for UN Authority, Urges more Cooperation

UNITED NATIONS - Visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday called for global efforts to defend authority and role of the United Nations and vowed to deepen cooperation with the world body. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, Xi said in his meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the sidelines of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly. On that occasion, the international community should reaffirm the commitment to multilateralism, defend principles and purposes of the UN

Charter, safeguard authority and role of the UN and make joint efforts to promote world peace and common development, Xi suggested. The member states demonstrated their support and expectations for the UN to play a bigger role in world affairs with their leaders gathering in New York, the Chinese president noted. As all parties expect the UN to adhere to political solutions to hot-spot issues in the coming decade, Xi urged the global institution and its Security Council to draw useful experiences from how the Iran nuclear is... (More on P4)... (11)

## Austria Urges Debate on Refugee Spending and EU Deficit Rules

BERLIN - The rising cost of looking after refugees may scupper the budget plans of some European governments, and Brussels should consider exemptions for such spending under its EU deficit rules, Austria's finance minister was quoted as saying. "The short-term costs are high but predictable. More critical is the question of the longer-term effects (on the budgets)," Hans Joerg Schelling told German newspaper Welt am Sonntag, in an interview published on Sunday. He said a lot of refugees would stay in Europe, which

meant governments had to build more houses and schools. "I have my doubts that the budgets that are being planned now will be sufficient," the minister said. Some economists argue that the increased number of refugees will lead to stronger domestic demand, and therefore higher tax revenue. "But you have to keep in mind that this growth push is financed with more spending and more debt," Schelling said. The minister said the European Commission should think about not counting such spending as normal expenditure under its def-



icit rules. "There should be a discussion about whether the high costs for countries such as Germany or Austria and others for the humanitarian measures should be viewed as extraordinary one-time effects," Schelling said. German

Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble has said he still aimed to maintain a balanced budget this year and next. Some lawmakers have questioned whether that will be possible given the rising costs associated with the migrant crisis. (Reuters)

## France Launches Air Strikes Against Islamic State in Syria

PARIS - France said on Sunday it had launched its first air strikes against Islamic State in Syria in an act of "self-defense" to stop the militant group from carrying out attacks inside France. Prime Minister Manuel Valls said on BFM-TV that the strikes targeted Islamic State training centers where militants were being prepared for carrying out attacks in France.

"We are hitting Daesh because this terrorist organization prepares its attacks against France from Syria. We are acting in self-defense," Valls said, using an Arabic name for Islamic State. The announcement came a few hours before President Francois Hollande was to join world leaders for the start of the United Nations general assembly in New York. "Our



country thus confirms its resolute commitment to fight against the terrorist threat represented by

Daesh (Islamic State). We will strike each time that our national security is at ... (More on P4)... (13)

## Iran Ready to Bolster Ties with EU: President Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iran's President Hassan Rouhani says the Islamic Republic has always maintained "good" relations with the European Union, urging both sides to revive and strengthen bilateral ties. The EU followed an "incorrect and wrong" path by imposing sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program, Rouhani said in a Saturday meeting with President of the European Council Donald Tusk in New York on

the sidelines of the 70th annual session of the UN General Assembly. "Members of the European Union have suffered the most during the sanctions time, and in the new (post-sanctions) era, we should repair and expand Iran-EU relations in order to make up for the past," Rouhani added. He noted that Iran and the EU should draw plans for "considerable" development of mutual relations ... (More on P4)... (12)

## Syrian Refugees have "Devastating Impact" on Development: Lebanese PM

UNITED NATIONS - Lebanese Prime Minister Tammam Salam said here Saturday that huge crowds of refugees has had a "devastating impact" on his country's development.

He told the ongoing UN Sustainable Development Summit that his country hosts over 1.2 million registered Syrian refugees, representing a third of Lebanon's population. "This has had a devastating impact on development, economic activity, social progress and the environment -- over stretching the capacity of our national institutions in health care, education, energy, water, sanitation and security," Tammam said. Lebanon is one of Syria's neighboring countries to receive a massive influx of Syrian refugees since March 2011, when a political crisis broke out in the Middle East country.

Lebanon has not received enough financial support from the international community to help it cope with the cost of the crisis which has cost about one third of its gross domestic product (GDP), he said.

"The international response (has been) inadequate to address a crisis of this magnitude and duration," he said. Meanwhile, Tammam welcomed aspects of the UN's new Sustainable Development Goals -- adopted by UN member states here Friday -- which focused on the impact of forced migration due to conflict.

"We welcome the recognition of forced displacement of people as a result of spiraling conflict, violent extremism and terrorism in the (Sustainable Development Goals)," said Tammam, "and the recognition of the need to strengthen the resilience of host communities, particularly in developing countries." (Xinhua)

## After Success with Iran, Pope, Next stop for Obama is UN

WASHINGTON - Serious challenges await President Barack Obama at the U.N. General Assembly this week after his recent successes on Iran and with Pope Francis. Those burdens include the threat from Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria, the Syrian civil war and the ensuing refugee crisis, and Russia's moves in Ukraine and, more recently, in Syria. Obama was set to arrive later Sunday for three days in New York, and perhaps the most anticipated moment was to come Monday evening -- a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Pu-

tin on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders. It will be their first face-to-face meeting in nearly a year. Both leaders also were to address the assembly's opening session on Monday. The U.S. and Russia have quibbled over who requested the meeting and what the focus will be. Putin wants to talk about Syria; Obama wants to concentrate on Ukraine. Despite administration efforts to turn Putin into an international pariah after Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine in March 2014, Obama believes not engaging with the Russian leader "would be wrong" given the pressing issues in Ukraine and Syria. (AP)

## Iraq Steps Up Anti-IS Coordination with Iran, Syria, Russia

BAGHDAD - Iraq, Russia, Iran and Syria have agreed to set up an intelligence committee in Baghdad, a spokesman said Sunday, a further sign of Moscow's growing role in the region's conflict. Iraq welcomed the creation of the new cell as a chance to help harmonise often competing efforts in the fight against the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group. "It's a committee coordinating between the four countries, with representatives of each

country, in the field of military intelligence and aimed at sharing and analysing information," Saad al-Hadithi, a spokesman for Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's office, told AFP. He said the cell would focus on "monitoring the movements of terrorists... and degrading their capacity". A statement from Iraq's Joint Operations Command said the deal with Moscow comes amid "growing concern over the presence of thousands of Russian terrorists engaged in criminal acts with Daesh (IS)." (AFP)

## UN Plays Proactive Role in Promoting Peace, Development

SINGAPORE - The United Nations is playing a proactive role in promoting global peace and development, Oh Ei Sun, senior fellow with S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies of Singapore Nanyang Technological University has said.

"The important role that the United Nations is playing could be providing a platform of forum, thus urgent issues of the world could be discussed and addressed," Oh told Xinhua on Saturday.

Oh, who has worked in international bodies under the UN before, said that the UN has established a mechanism that decisions related to urgent issues could be implemented, most prominently in peacekeeping, such as in Korean Peninsula denuclearization talks.

Furthermore, the UN has made great contributions on various regional issues, Oh said, adding "The UN is taking very proactive roles in its peacekeeping operations, such as previously in East Timor, nowadays in the border between India and Pakistan and so on."

Looking forward, Oh expected that the UN will continue to proactively promote peace and sustainability, development and prosperity. As both the United States and China are permanent members of the Security Council of the UN, the two countries could and have cooperated with each other in addressing various security and strategic challenges in the world.

"The United States and China have made sort of agreement with each other, laying basis for reduction of carbon emissions. The other countries in the world under UN's guidance, I hope they will also follow suit, and we will have a better world for our future." said Oh. (Xinhua)

## Neighbour News

### IAEA Praises Pakistan's Nuclear Security Record

ISLAMABAD - Director General (DG) International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Yukiya Amano praised Pakistan's impressive nuclear security record spanning over four decades of nuclear power plant operation. In a meeting with Pakistani Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry in New York on the sidelines of the 70th United Nations General Assembly, Amano said the IAEA stood ready to help Pakistan and other countries achieve Sustainable Development Goals. The DG IAEA said the organisation had an important role to play in the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. He appreciated the excellent cooperation between Pakistan and

the IAEA, adding that IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme with Pakistan was one of its largest in the world. The DG IAEA praised Pakistan's impressive nuclear security record over more than four decades of operating nuclear power plants and expressed satisfaction at the implementation of IAEA safeguards measures by Pakistan. Thanking Amano for the mutually beneficial cooperation Pakistan enjoyed with IAEA as one its founding members since 1957, the Aizaz said that Pakistan deeply valued the role played by IAEA in the development of peaceful uses of nuclear technology. He added that Pakistan attached the highest priority to nuclear safety and security as a national responsibility

### Chinese President Calls for Closer Cooperation with Romania

NEW YORK - China stands ready to further promote all-round practical cooperation with Romania, Chinese President Xi Jinping said here Saturday when meeting with his Romanian counterpart Klaus Iohannis. Stressing the need to pursue substantial results, Xi said China is willing to work with Romania to boost cooperation in energy and infrastructure development within the framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative and push for progress on key projects. The Belt and Road Initiative, which was announced by Xi in 2013, is aimed at promoting connectivity, cooperation and common prosperity along the ancient land and maritime trade routes. Xi pointed out that China

and Romania have a time-honored friendship and bilateral cooperation enjoys broad prospects, and called upon the two sides to strengthen coordination on the direction and key aspects of the development of bilateral ties. It is also necessary for the two countries to deepen people-to-people exchanges and expand cooperation in tourism, culture, art, publication and other areas, so as to consolidate public support for bilateral relations, he added. Recalling that Romania is one of the earliest countries to establish diplomatic ties with the People's Republic and has always firmly supported China on issues involving its core interests and major concerns, Xi said the Chinese people cherish the friendship with the Romanian people. (Xinhua)

### UN Rights Report on Iran Lacks Legal Standing: Foreign Ministry

TEHRAN - Iran's Foreign Ministry has rejected a recent report by the United Nations (UN) on the situation of human rights in Iran, saying the report lacks "legal standing."

"A report that has been issued [in line] with the political aims of certain countries lacks legal standing," Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham said on Sunday. Reports on human rights situations, Afkham said, "must be prepared based on [information obtained from] authoritative and valid sources; this is while this report has in many instances cited non-impartial and biased sources and even

ones with ulterior motives." "Iran had presented documented and definitive responses to the draft of the report, and it was expected that the submitted response -- which had been prepared with the aim of informing the compilers of the [UN] report of the realities of human rights in Iran and helping compile a balanced and fair text -- would be appropriately considered in the final text," Afkham said.

"The final report has 'wrongly judged' the situation of human rights in Iran and has missed the opportunity for an 'impartial assessment and analysis' of the situation." (PressTV)

### Uzbekistan, UN Mull Co-Op Areas

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov met the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the UN Headquarters in New York.

It was earlier reported that the Minister Kamilov is heading an Uzbek delegation at the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly. Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan said the meeting discussed the promising areas of cooperation between Uz-

bekistan and the UN. The sides also mulled the issues on the agenda of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly, as well as the Uzbek side's proposals to the submitted draft consolidated report on sustainable development goals for 2016-2030.

UN's secretary-general, for his part, expressed support for the country's efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Aral Sea ecological disaster. (Agencies)