

'Trump Seeks to Threaten Entire World'



This file photo taken on June 15, 2014 shows aircrafts pictured on the flight deck of the US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington off the coast of Hong Kong. (Photo by AFP)

TEHRAN(Press TV) - The new U.S. administration is after strengthening American nuclear power to threaten the entire globe even though it has obligations under nuclear disarmament treaties to limit its nuke capabilities, says Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center from New York.

Trump's plan for expanding U.S. nuclear power "means, continue and escalate the threats on the entire world and to do so by creating nuclear threats," Flounders told Press TV on Friday night.

In an interview with Reuters on Thursday, the new U.S. chief executive said he opposes a "one-sided" nuclear deal with Russia

that would limit the deployment of atomic warheads.

The U.S. has continued to carry out war games using nuclear weapons on aircraft carriers, Trident submarines and even in South Korea, she noted.

The United States and the then Soviet Union signed a bilateral treaty on reduction and limitation of strategic offensive weapons dubbed START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty). The treaty expired on December 5, 2009 and former U.S. President Barack Obama signed the New START in Prague on April 8, 2010.

According to the analyst, "The United States is the only country that has ever used nuclear weapons

and the only country that regularly and continually over a period of 70 years has threatened to use nuclear weapons and has refused again and again for total disarmament."

She further said, "The greatest threat to our (U.S.) national security is the Pentagon war machine and that's true domestically and it's true around the world."

The expert also asked, "Why is the Pentagon war machine and military expenditures always at the top?"

In 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a military budget of \$618.7 billion for the 2017 fiscal year. Trump also pledged a massive increase in military spending.

Romania: Thousands Attend Pro-Government Rally

BUCHAREST (AP) — Thousands of people turned out for a pro-government rally in southern Romania, hoping to boost the popularity of the center-left government following massive anti-corruption protests.

Braving pouring rain, supporters of the ruling Social Democratic Party gathered Saturday in the town of Targoviste, a party stronghold, and sang patriotic songs to voice their support for the two-month-old government of Premier Sorin Grindeanu.

Supporters waved Romanian flags and banners reading "My vote counts" and "We dare to believe in Romania."

A crowd-funded ISSPOL survey published on Feb. 14 showed support for the Social Democrats had dropped to 31 percent, down from 46 percent in the elections.

In recent weeks tens of thousands have demonstrated, after Grindeanu decriminalized some forms of official misconduct. He eventually withdrew the decree but protests continued.

Libya Gov't Secures Ceasefire After Tripoli Clashes

TRIPOLI (AFP) - A ceasefire went into force early Saturday in the Libyan capital after two days of fighting between rival gunmen injured nine people and forced residents to cower indoors, the government said.

The fighting between two rival armed groups in eastern Tripoli erupted on Thursday after one accused the other of kidnapping four of its members, the Tripoli-based news agency LANA reported.

It said families trapped in the conflict zone of Abu Slim appealed to the authorities to intervene to halt the violence which closed down the city centre.

The UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) said it had successfully brokered a ceasefire between the two groups, with help

from town elders from Tarhuna and Gharian south of Tripoli.

An agreement has been reached to set up three committees to follow up on the accord, the GNA said in a statement released overnight.

One committee will be tasked with enforcing the ceasefire, another consisting of health ministry officials will follow up the condition of those wounded and the third will assess damage, the statement said.

The Libyan Red Crescent on Friday said nine people had been injured in the fighting. There was no official casualty toll.

LANA said the fighting with heavy weapons in the centre of Tripoli erupted Thursday and raged throughout the day. A truce was reached, but quickly collapsed and clashes continued on Friday.

Malaysia Warns North Korea to Cooperate With Investigation



Police officers patrol outside the forensic department at Kuala Lumpur Hospital in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — Malaysian police said Saturday that they would issue an arrest warrant for a North Korean diplomat if he refuses to cooperate with the investigation into the deadly attack on North Korean ruler Kim Jong Un's exiled half brother.

The investigation has unleashed a serious diplomatic fight between Malaysia and North Korea, a prime suspect in the Feb. 13 killing of Kim Jong Nam at Kuala Lumpur's airport. Friday's revelation by Malaysian police that the banned chemical weapon VX nerve agent

was used to kill Kim raised the stakes significantly in a case that has broad geopolitical implications.

Police said Saturday that they would conduct a sweep of the airport terminal where Kim was killed to check for possible traces of VX.

Experts say the nerve agent used in the attack was almost certainly produced in a sophisticated state weapons laboratory and is banned under an international treaty. But North Korea never signed that treaty, and has spent decades developing a complex chemical

weapons program.

Malaysia said earlier in the week that Hyon Kwang Song, a second secretary at the North Korean Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, was wanted for questioning. But authorities acknowledged at the time that he has diplomatic immunity and that they couldn't compel him to appear.

On Saturday, Malaysia's tone changed.

Abdul Samah Mat, the police chief leading the investigation, said authorities would give the diplomat "reasonable" time to come forward. If he doesn't, he said, police will issue a notice compelling him to do so.

Lawyer Sankara Nair, however, noted that diplomats have immunity privileges even in criminal cases.

Malaysia hasn't directly accused the North Korean government of being behind the attack, but officials have said four North Korean men provided two women with poison to carry it out.

The four men fled Malaysia shortly after the killing, while the women — one from Indonesia and the other Vietnamese — were arrested.

France's Hollande Fires Back at Trump Over Paris Comments



French President Francois Hollande.

PARIS (Reuters) - French President Francois Hollande fired back at Donald Trump on Saturday after the U.S. president remarked in a speech that a friend thought "Paris is no longer Paris" after terrorist attacks.

Hollande said Trump should show support for U.S. allies.

"There is terrorism and we must fight it together. I think that it is never good to show the smallest defiance toward an allied country. I wouldn't do it with the United States and I'm urging the U.S. president not to do it with France," Hollande said.

"I won't make comparisons but here, people don't have access to guns. Here, you don't have people

with guns opening fire on the crowd simply for the satisfaction of causing drama and tragedy," Hollande said, responding to questions during a visit at the Paris Agric fair.

During a speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference on Friday, Trump repeated his criticism of Europe's handling of attacks by Islamist militants saying a friend "Jim" no longer wanted to take his family to Paris.

More than 230 people have died in a series of assaults in France since the beginning of 2015, and the country has been under a state of emergency rules since November the same year.



TEHRAN (Press TV)—Deadly clashes have broken out between Azerbaijani troops and Armenian separatists over the breakaway Karabakh region, authorities on both sides say.

Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said in a statement that Armenian forces "attempted an intrusion into Azerbaijani territory along the Karabakh frontline" in the early hours of Saturday.

Armenian officials reported their own version of the clashes, accusing Azerbaijani forces of attacking separatist positions along the southeastern and eastern sectors of the frontline.

MATOPO HILLS (AP) — Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe celebrated his 93rd birthday Saturday amid granite hills where ancient spirits are said to dwell, defying calls to resign after nearly four decades in power in a region known for opposing the man who says he'll run again in 2018 elections.

Thousands of government supporters, some wearing clothing adorned with Mugabe's image, converged in Matabeleland for a birthday bash and show of strength for the ruling ZANU-PF party, beset by squabbling in the past year as the elderly president weakened and factions, one including his wife Grace, sparred ahead of an expected power vacuum.

Mugabe, a former rebel leader who took power after independence from white minority rule in 1980, declared a few days ago that most Zimbabweans think nobody can replace him. The longevity of the world's oldest head of state is a source of heartache for Zimbabwe's splintered opposition and uncertainty for investors, leaving the economically struggling country in limbo.

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is warning Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza against seeking a fourth term, saying such a move risks deepening the crisis in the African country.

In a report obtained by AFP, the UN chief says he is "very concerned" by recent statements by Nkurunziza, in power since 2005, suggesting he could seek a fourth term in office, which would require changes to the constitution.

"An attempt by the president to seek a fourth term in office under the current circumstances would risk intensifying the crisis and undermining collective efforts to find a sustainable solution," wrote Guterres in the report sent to the Security Council.

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A son of boxing legend Muhammad Ali was held for questioning for two hours at a Florida airport upon returning from Jamaica because of his Arabic-sounding name, U.S. media reported. Muhammad Ali Jr., 44, who was born in Philadelphia and has a U.S. passport, was traveling with his mother Khalilah Camacho-Ali, the late sports icon's second wife, friend and lawyer Chris Mancini told the Louisville Courier-Journal.

Mancini told the newspaper that both were held for questioning on the Fort Lauderdale International Airport on February 7 because of their Arabic-sounding names.

Camacho-Ali however was released after she showed US Customs agents a photo of herself with her ex-husband. Ali Jr. however had no such photo -- and according to Mancini was held for nearly two hours and repeatedly asked "Where did you get your name from?" and "Are you Muslim?"