

Merkel says US calling European cars a threat is 'frightening'

Munich, Germany

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Saturday labelled as "frightening" tough US trade rhetoric planning to declare European car imports a national security threat.

"If these cars... suddenly spell a threat to US national security, than that is frightening to us," she said.

Merkel pointed out that the biggest car plant of German luxury brand BMW was not in Bavaria but in South Carolina, from where it exports vehicles to China.

"All I can say is it would be good if we could resume proper talks with one another," she said at the Munich Security Conference.

"Then we will find a solution." A US Commerce Department report has concluded that auto



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (L) greets US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi during the 55th Munich Security Conference in Munich, southern Germany

imports threaten national security, setting the stage for possible

tariffs by the White House, two

people familiar with the matter

said Thursday.

The investigation, ordered by

President Donald Trump in May, is "positive" with respect to the central question of whether the imports "impair" US national security, said a European auto industry source.

"It's going to say that auto imports are a threat to national security," said an official with another auto company.

The report, which is expected to be delivered to the White House by a Sunday deadline, has been seen as a major risk for foreign automakers.

Trump has threatened to slap 25 percent duties on European autos, especially targeting Germany, which he says has harmed the American car industry.

After receiving the report, the US president will have 90 days to decide whether to move ahead with tariffs.

Trump in July reached a trade

truce with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, with the two pledging no new tariffs while the negotiations continued.

Brussels has already drawn up a list of 20 billion euros (\$22.6 billion) in US exports for retaliatory tariffs should Washington press ahead, the commission's Director-General for Trade Jean-Luc Demarty told the European Parliament last month.

The White House has used the national security argument -- saying that undermining the American manufacturing base impairs military readiness, among other claims -- to impose steep tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, drawing instant retaliation from the EU, Canada, Mexico and China.

Trading partners have sometimes reacted with outrage at the suggestion their exports posed a threat to US national security.

Pence urges EU to recognise Guaido as Venezuela president

Munich, Germany

US Vice President Mike Pence on Saturday called on the European Union to recognise opposition leader Juan Guaido as the president of Venezuela.

"All of us must stand with the Venezuelan people until freedom and democracy is fully restored," Pence told the Munich Security Conference.

"So today we call on the European Union to step forward for freedom and recognise Juan Guaido as the only legitimate president of Venezuela."

Guaido, the head of Venezuela's National Assembly, de-



Venezuelan opposition leader and self-declared acting president Juan Guaido

clared himself president of the crisis-wracked country in Jan-

uary, piling pressure on President Nicolas Maduro.

Pence said that after the United States became the first nation to recognise the parliamentary leader as head of state, "52 nations including 30 of our European allies have followed America's lead".

"But it's time for the rest of the world to step forward," he said.

"Once more the Old World can take a stance in support of freedom in the New World. All of us must stand with the Venezuelan people until freedom and democracy is fully restored."

Samsung to launch US retail stores

San Francisco, United States

Samsung announced Friday it will open three US retail stores to promote its Galaxy line of smartphones as the South Korean giant sets to launch an updated flagship handset.

The move ramps up Samsung's efforts to compete on the home turf of Apple, which has hundreds of retail outlets in the US and around the world.

Samsung said in a statement it made the move after feedback from customers.

"They told us that they love having the ability to walk into a store and experience how the latest technology from Samsung works together to create a unique, immersive experience," the company said in a statement.

"Galaxy fans, in particular, mentioned that they were looking for a space to call

their own, a place where they can get a feel for Samsung products first-hand."

The new stores will be at the Americana at Brand mall in Los Angeles; Roosevelt Field in Garden City, New York; and The Galleria in Houston, Texas.

Samsung is holding a product launch Wednesday in San Francisco amid speculation it may launch a folding smartphone, which would make it the first of the major handset makers in the segment.

Samsung has previously opened pop-up stores in the US and has a center showcasing its technology in New York City.

"Our new Samsung Experience Stores are spaces to experience and see Samsung technology brought to life, to empower people to do what

they never thought was possible before," said YH Eom, president of Samsung Electronics America.

"We want to build a 'playground' for Samsung fans -- a place to learn about and try out all of the amazing new products we have to offer."

Samsung remained the number one global handset maker with a 20.8 percent share in 2018 despite an eight percent sales slump for the year, according to research firm IDC -- which said last year showed the worst overall decline in sales for the smartphone sector.

Representative picture



Erdogan won't go back on S-400 deal with Russia

Ankara, Turkey

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey would not "turn back" on a deal with Moscow to buy Russian S-400 missile defence systems in comments published yesterday.

Turkey's push to buy the systems has raised questions among NATO allies over their compatibility with alliance equipment as well as concerns over the burgeoning relationship between Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"We agreed a deal with Russia on the S-400, so for us to turn back from the deal is out of the question. This is a done deal," Erdogan said, quoted by CNN Turk broadcaster.

The United States in December approved the sale of \$3.5 billion in missiles to Turkey, which followed Washington anger over Turkey's intention to buy Russian systems.

Turkey was "open" to buying US Patriot missiles, Erdogan told Turkish journalists on board his plane from the southern Russian city of Sochi after a three-way summit on Syria with his Russian and Iranian counterparts.

"But this sale must serve the interests of our country. To this end, joint

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ERDOGAN

