

Davutoglu designated as AKP leader and new prime minister

Hurriyet Daily News, 21.08.2014



Turkey's ruling party has formally designated Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu to be the successor of Recep Tayyip Erdogan as both prime minister and chairman of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), marking the start of a new era in Turkish political life.

The AKP's Central Executive Board (MYK), which was convened under Erdogan's leadership, decided to propose Davutoglu's name for the chairmanship of the party, which will be elected during the AKP's extraordinary congress in Ankara on Aug. 27. The decision was announced by Erdogan after a three-hour meeting at the party headquarters.

"Our nominee is our foreign minister, our Konya deputy, our brother Ahmet Davutoglu," Erdogan told the crowd, which included government ministers and journalists, at the AKP headquarters in Ankara on Aug. 21. He said Davutoglu was chosen following "very delicate deliberations" and due to his "determination to fight the 'parallel state.'" The term "parallel state" is used by government supporters to refer to the followers of Islamic scholar and the AKP's ally-turned-nemesis Fethullah Gulen, who has been in voluntary exile in the United States for over a decade. "We had consultations with everybody from the people on the street to the highest bodies of our party," Erdogan added regarding the selection of Davutoglu.

"We have come to a certain point in peace and brotherhood; the unity of this movement comes above everything. Many people hope for cracks within our party, but we have survived such operations." Davutoglu took the stage after Erdogan, addressing him as "Mr. President." "The movement of the AK Party was not the product of a certain context. It is a movement rooted in a state tradition that walks to the future, and our president is our leader," Davutoglu said, describing the party as "a movement that closed the interregnum and restored our state." "The great restoration movement that has been realized over the past 12 years will continue without interruption. The country that was regarded as a sick man 12 years ago is now on its feet, has remembered its historic mission, and started a blessed march," he added, vowing that neither the "parallel state" nor any other force could stop this march.

Davutoglu is expected to be given the mandate to form the next government by Erdogan on Aug. 29, a day after the official presidential handover. He will become Turkey's 26th prime minister following a procedural confidence vote at Parliament in early September. In-house consultations conducted by Erdogan following his election as president on Aug. 10 indicated that Davutoglu's name was endorsed by the AKP's relevant bodies and a considerable number of lawmakers. Even outgoing President Abdullah Gül recently touched on Davutoglu's probably candidacy for both positions, adding that he was sure the current foreign minister would be successful in his new capacity.

The most prominent supporters of Davutoglu include a group of younger generation politicians led by Ankara deputy Yalcin Akdogan, one of Erdogan's closest advisors. Erdogan's decision to select Davutoglu as the new leader may therefore also be interpreted as a sign that the ongoing struggle between young and veteran members of the AKP is coming to an end. Davutoglu's controversial foreign policy is still being discussed inside and outside Turkey. A former professor of international relations, Davutoglu was appointed as foreign minister in 2009, despite not being a lawmaker at the time. He entered Parliament in 2011 as Konya deputy; but his role in shaping Turkish foreign policy dates back to 2002 under his capacity as chief advisor to PM Erdogan and then-Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul. His book, titled "Strategic Depth," contains important hints about the foreign policy understanding he has been propagating.

There are various factors in Erdogan's selection of Davutoglu as his successor. One of the most important reasons is the belief that Davutoglu, as elected prime minister, would be the best option to work in full harmony with Erdogan as elected president. For many, this harmony has been well tested over the years and Erdogan would surely capitalize on it during his presidential tenure, to be started on Aug. 28. In addition, Davutoglu's loyalty to Erdogan during difficult times, such as last summer's anti-government Gezi Park protests, Dec. 17 corruption operation, fight against the "parallel state," as well as his role in challenging Ekmeleddin İhsanoglu throughout the presidential election campaign, are seen as big pluses in the AKP.

As a respected figure in the party and a well-known figure among the AKP's grassroots, Davutoglu is also believed to have the capacity to run the party's new cadres and management without causing too much in-house tension. This is particularly the case as Erdogan wants a permanent AKP chairman and prime minister who will work with him at least until 2019. Another factor paving the way for Davutoglu is his academic background, which has contributed to the AKP's nationalist-conservative rhetoric and policies. Although long criticized by many for pursuing dangerous "neo-Ottoman policies," his passionate involvement in developments in Gaza, Egypt, Syria and elsewhere is seen as a positive among many AKP supporters.

Turkey to look into claims of German spying

Agence France-Presse, 17.08.2014



The Turkish authorities will thoroughly investigate a report that Germany has been spying on its NATO ally since 2009, a senior official said Sunday August 17, saying the claims need to be taken seriously. German weekly Der Spiegel reported that the German secret service the BND has been spying on Turkey since 2009, as well as accidentally intercepting at least one telephone conversation of US Secretary of State John Kerry.

“I am off the opinion that this needs to be taken seriously,” said Mehmet Ali Sahin, the deputy chairman of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

“Definitely, our government and foreign ministry will carry out the necessary research about the allegations in the magazine,” he added in televised comments. But Sahin also said Spiegel’s story needs to be approached “cautiously”, recalling the rocky relationship between the prominent news magazine and the AKP. During his victorious presidential election campaign, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who will become president on August 28, launched repeated attacks against Spiegel. The magazine hugely irritated the ruling party with a major cover story -- written both in German and Turkish -- ahead of the polls that was sharply critical of Erdogan’s strongman rule. “Der Spiegel is not a magazine that sees favourable dreams about Turkey,” said Sahin. “It makes very unfair news about the AKP and especially about Recep Tayyip Erdogan,” he added.

Turkey infuriated by tapping claims amid Berlin, Gulenist spying allegations

Hurriyet Daily News, 18.08.2014



The Turkish government has toughened its stance on Germany's alleged spying on Ankara, a NATO ally, and vowed to take legal action over claims that the so-called "parallel structure" wiretapped a key governmental agency. "The Foreign Ministry has been working on Germany's wiretapping," Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz said. "It is an unacceptable situation."

Earlier, a senior executive of Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) commented on a report by German weekly Der Spiegel which said the German secret service, the BND, has been spying on its NATO ally since 2009.

"I am of the opinion that this needs to be taken seriously," AKP Deputy Chair Mehmet Ali Sahin said Aug. 17. "Definitely, our government and Foreign Ministry will carry out the necessary research about the allegations in the magazine," he added. Nonetheless, he also said Spiegel's story needs to be approached "cautiously," recalling the rocky relationship between the prominent news magazine and the AKP. During his victorious presidential election campaign, President-elect Recep Tayyip Erdogan launched repeated attacks against Der Spiegel after the magazine hugely irritated the ruling party with a major cover story – written in both German and Turkish – that was sharply critical of Erdogan's strongman rule.

"Der Spiegel is not a magazine that sees favorable dreams about Turkey. It makes very unfair news about the AKP and especially about Recep Tayyip Erdogan," Sahin said. German officials' reported confirmation and justification of their spying on Turkey is likely to further infuriate Ankara. The Foreign Ministry was expected to release a statement on the controversy later Aug. 18. In addition to confirming that Germany's Federal Intelligence Service (BND) has been spying on Turkey for years, Der Spiegel and the Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung (FAS) newspaper cited German officials as saying Turkey belongs to the core target countries under observation by the German intelligence service.

"The German government has defended this line of practice vehemently, saying that Turkey cannot be compared to the U.S. or European countries like France and Great Britain. What happens in Turkey has a direct influence on domestic security in Germany, government sources told FAS. This includes the activities of the Kurdish Workers' Party [PKK], left- and right-wing Turkish groups in Germany, drug smugglers and people smugglers," Deutsche Welle's English service reported Aug. 18. Speaking to reporters on the same occasion on Aug. 18, Yildiz elaborated further on a Turkish newspaper report which said on Aug. 18 that the parallel structure, an alleged shadow state within the state composed of followers of U.S.-based Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen who aim at toppling the AKP government, has wiretapped senior civil servants involved in energy policy.

A police chief, known to be close to Gulenists and who was assigned to the Police Department's intelligence unit, initiated the wiretapping of civil servants at the Energy Market Regulation Board (EPDK) in 2009, when Turkey was taking bold steps to transform its energy policy, daily Sabah reported. "I consider the wiretapping of the EPDK as a very big loss for Turkey's democracy. We will do whatever is legally required," Yildiz said. "Those who are curious should ask us, we would openly answer. But we cannot forgive wiretappings. I guess you didn't give the personal wiretapping of me to your next door [neighbor]. You also gave it to more distant places, didn't you?" Yildiz said.

Turkish main opposition's senior executive resigns, set to run against party leader

Hurriyet Daily News, 18.08.2014



A senior executive of Turkey's main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) who has recently heavily criticized party policies that he claims caused defeat in the presidential election, resigned on Aug. 18. CHP Deputy Parliamentary Group Chair Muharrem İnce resigned from his party to run against the current party leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu in the upcoming party convention.

İnce's resignation, which he made public during a press conference at Parliament, was already publicly listed his objections to the current state of affairs regarding the party structure and its policies at a press conference on Aug. 14.

"In this country, the improvements of the principle of independence and the understanding of a secular Republic and state based on the rule of law have all taken place because of the CHP. The CHP leadership has no remedy for all of the country's problems," İnce said after listing various problems, which he claims requires a "restructuring of Turkey." "As of today, although there is no legal obligation, I have resigned from my post," İnce said, adding he sent his resignation petition to Kilicdaroglu earlier in the day.

His resignation came a day after CHP Spokesperson Haluk Koc announced on Aug. 17 that the CHP would hold an extraordinary convention on Sept. 5-6. "Never; it is being distorted. I am not anybody's man. I ask for everybody's support," İnce responded when asked whether he would later withdraw his bid for party leadership. İnce is known to be supported by former CHP chairman Deniz Baykal, who has been pursuing a silent, but determined opposition to Kilicdaroglu's leadership since being ousted as party leader in 2010.

Turkey sets up a new container city in Syria

Hurriyet Daily News, 18.08.2014



A container city for 10,000 Syrians is being built on the outskirts of Aleppo by Turkish aid organization Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), the organization announced on Monday. A thousand tents will also be set up as part of the camp in the village of Sicco in the district of Azez. The camp will include a refectory, mosque, health center and other social facilities.

IHH has continued humanitarian aid for Syrian civilians since the start of the civil war which entered its fourth year in March, IHH Kilis Coordinator Erhan Yemelek told Anadolu Agency.

“Last year, we established a camp of 700 containers in the Shemmarin region of Azaz town, Aleppo. Now we are establishing a new camp in Syria including a thousand of tent.” Syria has been gripped by civil war since March, 2011. Last month, the Syrian Network for Human Rights reported that more than 133,000 people had been killed in regime attacks. The fighting has also internally displaced more than 6.5 million people. An additional 2.5 million are registered as refugees in the neighboring countries of Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq. Meanwhile the Syrian Coalition welcomed on Friday the U.N. Security Council’s adoption of a resolution that targets militant groups in Iraq and Syria. The Syrian Coalition’s special representative to the U.N., Najib Ghabbian, called in a written statement Friday for “targeted airstrikes in Syria” to end violence by the Assad regime in the country.

Investors' concerns ease over future of Turkish economic team

Hurriyet Daily News, 21.08.2014



Investors' eyes have been closely searching for clues regarding the structure of the new Cabinet, expected to be announced today by President-elect Recep Tayyip Erdogan, but concerns over the possible removal of key stabilizing figures have been partially eased with recent statements from senior ruling party officials.

Expectations that current economic management members will stay in their posts have been strengthening, particularly after outgoing President Abdullah Gul's remarks suggesting that Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu was likely to be appointed as prime minister.

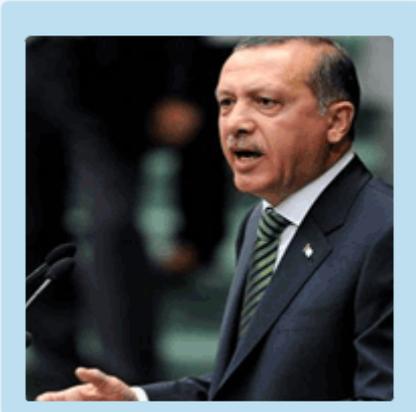
Local and foreign investors and analysts have been particularly concerned about the position of Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan and Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek, who are both seen as guarantors of Turkey's economic stability. According rumors circulating in Ankara, advisers and party members close to Davutoglu have already begun to lobby to keep Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan at the top of Turkey's economic policy decision-making. Even some party figures, who have been implicitly criticizing Babacan and implying that he is linked with Islamic scholar Fethullah Gulen, have adopted a more positive attitude about the deputy prime minister since seeing the impact of worries over his absence in the Cabinet, daily Hurriyet has learnt.

"Of course the decision will be up to Erdogan and Davutoglu, but in the new Cabinet, which is expected to be formed at the beginning of September, no changes are expected with Babacan and Simsek or other economic portfolios," one senior AKP official told Reuters. Despite abating concerns over the future of the Cabinet, Turkish stocks and the lira weakened yesterday, in line with emerging market peers, as investors awaited policy signals from the U.S. Federal Reserve. Istanbul's main share index was down 0.63 percent at 78,764 points in the morning trading after rising 2.5 percent on Aug. 19. It was underperforming the broader emerging markets index, which was down 0.1 percent.

The lira was also weaker, trading at 2.1713 to the dollar versus 2.1645 of the late hours of Aug. 19. "The prime minister is expected to be officially announced tomorrow but uncertainty over the next economic team in the Cabinet will remain until [the appointment] becomes official on Aug. 27," said Erkin Isik, a strategist at TEB-BNP Paribas. "However, recent news suggests that the economy team will remain intact, which could lead the lira to reverse some of its recent underperformance," he added.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan's current position fuelled claims that it is unconstitutional

Anadolu Agency, 12.08.2014



Turkey's two main opposition parties, the Republican People's Party known as the CHP and the Nationalist Movement Party known as the MHP, have called Recep Tayyip Erdogan's continuing role as prime minister unconstitutional. Erdogan was elected president on August 10 but will remain prime minister until August 27 – the day before his inauguration as president.

However, on Wednesday opposition politicians challenged this arrangement. MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli said: "Since Erdogan became Turkey's 12th president, his deputyship is automatically over according to the constitution."

Bahçeli claimed Erdogan should have been removed as prime minister once the official election results were released on August 15, confirming him as president. Lawmaker and spokesman for the CHP, Haluk Koc said Erdogan's continued presence as prime minister violated the constitution. Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party will choose its new chairman, who will become the country's prime minister, during a congress to be chaired by Erdogan on August 27. CHP lawmaker Atilla Kart lodged an application with the Supreme Court of Appeal to bar Erdogan from chairing the congress. The application was denied on the grounds that Erdogan can perform the political role until he is sworn in as president on August 28. Kart will submit an individual appeal to the Constitutional Court, Turkey's highest court, on Thursday.

FDI into Turkey rises by 28 percent in second quarter

Anadolu Agency, 20.08.2014



Foreign direct investment (FDI) into Turkey has reached \$6.76 billion in the first half of 2014, marking a 28 percent rise from last year, the Turkish Economy Ministry has recently announced.

Turkey's economy minister, Nihat Zeybekci, said in a statement the \$6.7 billion received in FDI in the first half of the year shows Turkey continues to be an attractive country for foreign investors. "Turkey is on course to develop [economically] despite all of the [negative] speculation since the beginning of the year," Zeybekci commented in the statement.

The service sector benefited the most from foreign capital by receiving \$2.3 billion, while the manufacturing sector followed with \$1.9 billion, according to data released on Aug. 20. The ministry's data also shows how 68.1 percent of FDI, which amounts to \$3.6 billion, came from the European Union. Meanwhile, Turkey's electricity, gas and water received \$900 million-worth in FDI for the first six months of 2014, compared to 2013 where the country's energy sector had emerged as the largest recipient of international capital, receiving \$2.55 billion. Energy-hungry Turkey wants to increase its energy output for its ever-growing economy and needs substantial amounts of investment into its energy sector, on which the country is reliant on for its inflow of foreign capital.

Iraqi Turkmens ask for arms from West, demanding equal treatment

Hurriyet Daily News, 18.08.2014



Iraqi Turkmens, one of the largest minority communities affected by the violence in Iraq, are demanding arms to fight the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a prominent leader of the ethnic group has said as the West begins funneling arms to the Kurds.

Arshad al-Salihi, the head of the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITC), warned that the United States and European Union's increasing armed support for the Kurdish peshmerga forces could start to change the dynamics in the region. The U.S. and EU's provision of arms support for the Kurds is a good and positive step against the terrorist organization ISIL.

However, this help shouldn't only be lent to Kurds, Turkmens also should be given arms support," al-Salihi told daily Hurriyet. The Turkmen leader, who had previously said they would not ask for weapons support from Turkey or any other country, said that if the support was only limited to the Kurds, it would be an indication that there are "other plans and games" behind the decision. The West's stance on supporting the Kurds could be motivated by "plans to divide Iraq into three parts that consist of a Shiite region in the south, a strengthened Kurdish region in the north and a Sunni region in the central Iraq," he said.

Al-Salihi also said the creation of a special region for Christians and Yazidis on the Nineveh plain could be part of the plans. The Turkmens will no longer be able to live together and access land if these plans are realized, according to the Turkmen leader. "It is impossible for us to accept such an understanding," he said. He also called on international organizations not to overlook the problems of the Turkmens, claiming that "Turkmens have suffered the biggest life and property loss in Iraq." "It wouldn't be a right approach for the United Nations Security Council to view only Christians and Yazidis as the groups to be helped in Iraq," he said.

Kurdish forces take parts of Mosul dam from Isis fighters

The Guardian, 17.08.2014



An Iraqi security official said Kurdish forces have taken over parts of the country's largest dam, which was captured by the Islamic State (Isis) extremist group earlier this month. General Tawfik Desty told the Associated Press that peshmerga forces backed by Iraqi and US warplanes started the operation to retake Mosul Dam early on Sunday.

Desty, a commander with the Kurdish forces at the dam, which was seized on 7 August, said they now control the eastern part of the dam and that fighting is still underway. The US launched airstrikes against Isis fighters more than a week ago, in a bid to halt its advance across the north.

The extremists control vast swaths of Iraq and neighboring Syria. Kurdish forces supported by American warplanes have mounted an offensive to retake Iraq's largest dam, a formidable hydroelectric complex critical to both power supplies and irrigation in the region, from jihadi fighters, as reports emerged of another grisly episode of mass slaughter perpetrated by the extremists in a village in northern Iraq. US central command said on Saturday that fighter jets and drones had destroyed or damaged four armoured personnel carriers, seven armed vehicles, two Humvees and an armoured vehicle.

The US engagement is aimed at helping the Kurds turn the tide against the Isis extremists who have swarmed through parts of northern Iraq from bases in Syria, seizing towns and cities and slaughtering opponents indiscriminately. Villagers said Isis militants drove into a settlement on Friday, rounded up men and teenage boys, lined them up and shot them. The reports came from several men who survived the massacre in Kocho. Senior Kurdish official Hoshiyar Zebari said that jihadists "took their revenge on its inhabitants, who happened to be mostly Yazidis who did not flee their homes". Fear of an impending genocide against members of Iraq's Yazidi minority, whose faith is anathema to the Sunni Muslim extremists, was one reason Washington cited for air strikes it began on 8 August.

Human rights groups and residents say Isis fighters have demanded that members of religious minorities in Iraq's Nineveh province, where Kocho is located, either convert or leave, unleashing violent reprisals on any who refused. Mohsen Tawwal, a Yazidi fighter, said he saw a large number of bodies in Kocho on Friday. "We made it into a part of Kocho village, where residents were under siege, but we were too late," he told Agence France-Presse by telephone. "There were corpses everywhere. We only managed to get two people out alive. The rest had all been killed. The German foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, arrived in Iraq on Saturday to meet officials and assess what help is needed.

Isis fighters show strength as they repel Iraqi army's attempt to retake Tikrit

The Guardian, 19.08.2014



Islamic State fighters, also called Isis, have repelled an Iraqi army attempt to retake Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit in a battle that underlines the group's continuing strength despite losing control of the strategically important Mosul dam.

Boosted by Monday's recapture of the dam, Iraqi forces launched an assault on Tikrit, 80 miles (130km) north of Baghdad, with helicopter gunships and mortar and artillery fire. When troops entered the town from near its main hospital they faced heavy machine gun and mortar fire from the militants, forcing the military to pull back.

It was the third failed attempt to retake Tikrit since it fell to Isis fighters more than two months ago, when Isis made sweeping gains in five provinces. Since then Tikrit has been controlled by Sunni militants and former members of Saddam's Ba'ath party. A local official and a resident told Associated Press that the clashes began early on Tuesday on the south-western outskirts of the city. Isis landmines and snipers prevented Iraqi forces reaching the town from the west, officials told Reuters. By early afternoon residents in central Tikrit told the agency Isis fighters were firmly in control. An Iraqi army spokesman, Lt Gen Qassim al-Moussawi, said a "slow and gradual" push to retake areas around Tikrit was under way.

"There are still a lot of challenges and difficulties ahead of us," he said in a live briefing aired on state TV. "The war needs time, but we are determined to annihilate the Islamic State and to liberate all the areas they occupy even if we suffer heavy casualties, because we have no other choice." The failed attack came as the UN's refugee agency, the UNHCR, announced one of its biggest ever aid operations to help 500,000 Iraqis who have fled violence in Iraq in the last two months. It plans to launch a four-day airlift on Wednesday to provide tens of thousands of tents, plastic sheets, kitchen sets and jerry cans. The Swedish furniture company Ikea is helping to provide the supplies.

It has already donated \$2.5m (£1.5m) and 150,000 mattresses and quilts for the UNHCR relief efforts in Iraq, making it the agency's largest private sector donor. The supplies, which have also been paid for from donations from Saudi Arabia, the US and Britain, will be flown to Irbil, the capital of the Kurdish autonomous region which that is sheltering an estimated 200,000 people seeking protection from Isis. The UNHCR's spokesman, Adrian Edwards, said: "This is a very, very significant aid push and certainly one of the largest I can recall in quite a while. This is a major humanitarian crisis and disaster." He added: "Barring last-minute delays, an air, road and sea operation will begin tomorrow [Wednesday], starting with a four-day airlift using Boeing 747s from Aqaba in Jordan to Irbil, followed by road convoys from Turkey and Jordan, and sea and land shipments from Dubai via Iran over the next 10 days." There are currently eight camps for displaced people in the Dohuk and Irbil governorates with another four to six planned.

The international threat posed by Isis was underlined in a new video warning in which the group pledged to “drown all of you in blood” if US air strikes continued. And in neighbouring Syria the group is said to have attracted a record number of new recruits. The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said more than 6,000 men joined Isis in July. Most were from Syria, but they include 1,200 foreign fighters, it said. Isis fighters are closing in on the last Syrian government-held army base in the north-eastern province of Raqqa, prompting Syrian air strikes in the area. Isis fighters are “worse than Saddam”, a Kurdish commander told AFP. Major General Abdulrahman Kawiri said: “They use terror and chaos to force the population to flee. Then they take over.”

Isis militants claim to have killed US journalist James Foley

The Guardian, 20.08.2014



Militants from Islamic State (Isis) claimed to have killed an American journalist long held captive in Syria in retaliation for ongoing US air strikes against its forces in Iraq. A propaganda video circulated on Tuesday showed a masked Isis fighter beheading a kneeling man dressed in an orange jumpsuit who is purported to be James Wright Foley, a photojournalist who went missing in Syria in 2012.

The masked executioner spoke in English, with what sounded like a British accent, and said the slaying came in response to the air strikes ordered by President Barack Obama against Isis 12 days ago.

Isis, whose chief spokesman came under US state department sanctions on Monday, warned of further revenge – including on another man purported to be a captured US journalist, Steven Sotloff – and in the video the victim was made to read a statement blaming the US for his own murder. Foley has been missing in Syria since November 2012, where he went to report on the bloody struggle to overthrow dictator Bashar al-Assad. He was initially thought to have been captured by forces loyal to the Assad regime. After the video came out a Facebook message from a support group, Free James Foley, urged patience “until we all have more information”, and asked that readers “keep the Foleys in your thoughts and prayers”.

Foley’s mother later released a statement saying her son gave his life to expose the suffering of the Syrian people. Diane Foley asked his kidnappers to release their other captives. “He was an extraordinary son, brother, journalist and person,” she said. “We implore the kidnappers to spare the lives of the remaining hostages. Like Jim, they are innocents. They have no control over American government policy in Iraq, Syria or anywhere in the world. “We have never been prouder of our son Jim. He gave his life trying to expose the world to the suffering of the Syrian people.” YouTube took down the gruesome video, but not before it sparked a debate on social media about the ethics of sharing it, adding a metatextual debate to a depiction of a man’s violent death.



Foley, 40, a former Stars and Stripes reporter, was captured in November 2012 near the Syrian town of Taftanaz. It was not his first detention while reporting: in 2011, he was taken while reporting on the uprising against Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Gaddafi's forces ultimately released him after six weeks in captivity. A friend of Foley's and his fellow captive in Libya, journalist Clare Morgana Gillis, wrote in a 2013 essay that captivity was "the state most violently opposite his nature." Gillis described Foley as gentle, friendly, courageous and impatient with "anything that slows his forward momentum." In a January 2013 interview with local television news near her Rochester, New Hampshire home, Foley's mother Diane said her son was "passionate about covering the story in Syria, passionate about the people there." Caitlin Hayden, the spokeswoman for the National Security Council, said US intelligence was working to determine the authenticity of the video.

"If genuine, we are appalled by the brutal murder of an innocent American journalist and we express our deepest condolences to his family and friends," Hayden said in a statement. A day after Obama declared that Iraqi and Kurdish forces backed by US warplanes had broken Isis' hold on the critical Mosul Dam, US Central Command announced two strikes near it on Monday, to "further expand control of the area." One strike was said to have destroyed an Isis checkpoint while the other was "not successful." Obama has offered no timeframe for the length of his campaign against Isis. The US military has bombed over 90 targets attributed to Isis, including vehicle convoys, mobile artillery and fixed positions, since 8 August. Most of the strikes have come in the past few days, near the dam. The other strikes have occurred either to blunt an Isis advance on the Kurdish regional capital of Irbil or to lift an Isis siege on Mount Sinjar, where it chased thousands of Iraqi Yazidis whom it threatened to kill unless they converted to Islam. The US considers the siege broken.

Gaza factions, Israel extend ceasefire by 24 hours

Anadolu Agency, 19.08.2014



Palestinian factions and Israel have agreed to an Egyptian proposal to extend a temporary ceasefire in the Gaza Strip by 24 hours. “The 24-hour extension aims at completing negotiations for a permanent ceasefire,” top Palestinian negotiator Azzam al-Ahmad told Anadolu Agency late Monday.

Israel also agreed to extend the ceasefire by 24 hours starting by Monday midnight, sources were quoted as saying by Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot. Egypt, which has been mediating indirect talks between the two sides, also officially announced the one-day extension.

Speaking to a press conference in Cairo following the announcement, al-Ahmad said that the talks had not made any progress, describing Tuesday as a “decisive day” for an agreement. “The talks should have been finalized by now, but the maneuvers of the Israeli delegation did not bring about any progress,” he told reporters. “All the reports about progress in the talks are baseless. There is no progress in any point [of the talks],” he added. “We hope to reach an agreement within the upcoming 24 hours, or the cycle of violence will continue to remain open.” An earlier five-day ceasefire between Palestinian faction and Israel expired by Monday midnight.

Palestinian factions and Israel have been holding indirect talks in Cairo aimed at reaching a permanent ceasefire to end one of Israel’s deadliest ever offensives against the Gaza Strip, which left at least 2016 people dead and more than 10,000 others injured. About 64 Israeli troops were also killed in Gaza combat, while three Israeli civilians were killed by rockets fired from the coastal enclave. The coastal strip, home to some 1.8 million Palestinians, has reeled under a crippling Israeli blockade since 2007, which has badly affected residents’ livelihoods

Death toll from Israel's Gaza onslaught up to 2,018

Anadolu Agency, 20.08.2014



The Palestinian death toll from a deadly Israeli onslaught on the Gaza Strip has risen to 2,018 since July 7, according to the Health Ministry. A Palestinian child was killed and 25 people were injured in Israeli attacks on the blockaded strip on Tuesday, ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qodra told Anadolu Agency.

A Palestinian man succumbed to wounds he sustained in an earlier Israeli strike in the southern city of Khan Younis, he said. The latest fatalities bring to 2,018 the number of Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks on the beleaguered seaside enclave since July 7, al-Qodra said.

At least 10,218 Palestinians have also been injured. Violence flared up in the Palestinian territories on Tuesday following a temporary lull brokered by Egypt as part of efforts to strike a permanent ceasefire deal between Palestinian factions and Israel. According to Israeli figures, at least 64 Israeli soldiers have been killed in recent ground battles with Palestinian fighters in the Gaza Strip – the highest military death toll for Israel of any of its three onslaughts on the territory. Three Israeli civilians, meanwhile, have been killed by rocket fire from Gaza. Since 2007, the Gaza Strip – home to some 1.8 million Palestinians – has reeled under a crippling Israeli blockade that has badly affected the local economy and played havoc with residents' livelihoods.

Israel strikes 25 Gaza targets

Anadolu Agency, 19.08.2014



Israeli army said Tuesday that its forces had attacked 25 targets in the Gaza Strip following rocket fire from the Palestinian territory. The army said in a statement that the targeted sites were of a “military nature”.

Israel launched several airstrikes across the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, claiming the move was a response to rockets allegedly fired from the Palestinian territory despite a temporary ceasefire. Palestinian resistance faction Hamas, for its part, described the Israeli attacks as a fresh attempt to undermine Egypt-hosted negotiations aimed at reaching a permanent ceasefire.

For the last nine days, Palestinian factions and Israel have been holding indirect negotiations in Cairo aimed at reaching a permanent truce. A five-day ceasefire expired on Monday. But the two sides agreed to extend it by 24 hours as part of Egyptian efforts aimed at reaching a permanent deal. The ceasefire came following more than a month of devastating Israeli attacks on the besieged Gaza Strip, which have left more than 2000 Palestinians dead – the vast majority of them civilians – and more than 10,000 injured.

According to Israeli figures, at least 64 Israeli soldiers have been killed in recent ground battles with Palestinian fighters in the Gaza Strip – the highest military death toll for Israel of any of its three onslaughts on the territory. Three Israeli civilians, meanwhile, have been killed by rocket fire from Gaza. Since 2007, the Gaza Strip – home to some 1.8 million Palestinians – has reeled under a crippling Israeli blockade that has badly affected the local economy and played havoc with residents’ livelihoods.

UK economic growth passes pre-crisis peak

The Guardian, 15.08.2014



Britain's economy powered on in the second quarter, recording its strongest growth since before the financial crisis, but economists warned the pressure was on UK consumers and businesses to sustain the recovery amid the threat of a triple-dip recession in the eurozone.

Growth between April and June was confirmed at 0.8% by the Office for National Statistics in its second estimate, in line with expectations. The last time the economy grew by more than 0.8% was the third quarter of 2007, before the global financial crisis took hold. GDP is now 0.2% above its pre-recession peak in the first quarter of 2008.

UN announces emergency aid for 500,000 northern Iraqis

Agence France-Presse, 19.08.2014



The UN refugee agency said Tuesday it was poised to mount a massive aid operation for 500,000 Iraqis driven from their homes by jihadist rebels. "In response to the deteriorating situation in northern Iraq, UNHCR is this week launching one of its largest aid pushes aimed at helping close to half a million people who have been forced to leave their homes," spokesman Adrian Edwards told reporters.

The jihadists, who have declared a "caliphate" in a region straddling the Iraq-Syria border, have after a period of two months of violence brought the country of Iraq to the brink of breakup.

To date, the United Nations estimates that 1.2 million Iraqis have been displaced by fighting this year, Edwards said ahead of the extraordinary aid push set to begin Wednesday. "Barring last-minute delays, an air, road and sea operation will begin tomorrow, starting with a four-day airlift using Boeing 747s from Aqaba in Jordan to Arbil, followed by road convoys from Turkey and Jordan, and sea and land shipments from Dubai via Iran over the next 10 days," he said. Among the initial supplies are 3,000 tents, 200,000 plastic sheets, 18,500 kitchen sets and 16,500 jerry cans. Edwards said that a key goal was to help those who lack shelter or housing.

“Conditions remain desperate for those without access to suitable shelter, people struggling to find food and water to feed their families, and those without access to primary medical care. Many are still coming to grips with the tragedy they’ve been through in recent weeks -- fleeing homes with nothing, and many trying to cope with the loss of loved ones,” he said. “The aid that’s coming from outside is aimed at meeting the needs of the most vulnerable people -- primarily at this moment it’s people without accommodation who really need the most urgent help. We have to start with the most vulnerable and then expand from there,” Edwards said. “This is a major humanitarian crisis and disaster and it continues to affect very large numbers of people. Very much more aid is going to be needed over the next weeks,” he added.

Ukraine plans to enter EU, NATO — Turchynov

ITAR-TASS, 18.08.2014



Ukraine can deliver all reforms required for its joining the European Union within five years, parliamentary speaker Olexander Turchynov said in an interview with Baltic News Service, Ukrainian parliament’s press service reported.

“We are setting the aim to join the European Union within five years,” he said. “Ukraine should become a member of the European Union and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.” Ukraine’s parliament, Verkhovna Rada, will ratify the EU association agreement soon, he said. “The Ukrainian people have made their choice - European and North Atlantic integration.”

“Most Ukrainians realise the country should join NATO as it is a means to protect Ukraine from Russia’s aggressive policies.” Ukraine’s Foreign Minister, Pavlo Klimkin, said in an interview with Deutschlandfunk (DLF) radio station on Sunday: “Ukraine as yet is not going to join NATO. As yet, there is no accord on the issue between politicians and society. Thus, this is not a task for now.

Russia and Ukraine ministers to meet in Berlin for ceasefire talks

The Guardian, 17.08.2014



Russian and Ukrainian foreign ministers are meeting in Berlin aiming at ending the conflict in eastern Ukraine, where there was heavy fighting for control of the city of Luhansk. The meeting between Pavlo Klimkin of Ukraine and Russia's Sergei Lavrov is being attended by their German counterpart Frank-Walter-Steinmeier and France's Laurent Fabius.

“It is all about finding a roadmap towards a sustainable ceasefire and a framework for effective border controls,” Steinmeier said. “Only in this way can eastern Ukraine calm down and Kiev continue a national dialogue that appropriately involves the people in the east.”

Steinmeier warned that “a simple recipe does not exist”. He added: “That is why it is so important in my view that we all sit down at a table at this time.” On his way to the negotiations, Klimkin tweeted: “Flying to Berlin. The talks will not be easy. It is important to stop the flow of weapons and mercenaries from Russia.” Russia has denied any role in supporting separatists in eastern Ukraine, who have been fighting in recent days to maintain control of one of their most important strongholds, Luhansk. The government in Kiev said on Sunday the separatists had shot down a Ukrainian warplane, but it was not clear what had happened to the pilot. Kiev said the downing of its plane happened as its forces were fighting their way into Luhansk, capturing a rebel-held police station in the Velika Vergunka district.

The Luhansk authorities said the government siege of the city had left it on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe, cutting off basic provisions, electric power and water. A Russian aid convoy that was supposed to be bringing relief assistance to Luhansk and other separatist enclaves advanced closer to the Ukrainian border amid continuing controversy over its supervision. Ukraine said it would only allow the trucks across the border under the oversight of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC said there were still no sufficient guarantees of safety for the relief convoy from the warring parties. Kiev has warned that the Russian convoy was part of a ploy to smuggle Russian arms to the rebels.

The Guardian reported on Thursday evening that Russian armoured vehicles crossed the border through a gap in a fence but it was unclear where they were heading. The Kiev government said its artillery had destroyed a Russian armoured column on Friday, but that could not be independently confirmed. In Donetsk, another rebel-held town under sustained government attack, the local separatist leader, Alexander Zakharchenko, posted a video on Saturday in which he claimed that 1,200 fighters and new military equipment were on their way from Russia. He suggested the reinforcements, which he said included tanks, had already crossed the border. The Berlin meeting was arranged in talks on Friday in Sochi between the heads of the presidential administrations of both Russia and Ukraine.

Adoption of Russia's proposal on Ukrainian ceasefire delayed

ITAR-TASS, 22.08.2014



The adoption by the UN Security Council of the Russian-sponsored draft statement on ceasefire in the east of Ukraine for the time of humanitarian aid delivery there has been delayed. Various amendments to the text were proposed, now the Russian side's response to them is expected, said Iona Thomas, the head of press for the UK Mission, whose ambassador Mark Lyall Grant is president of the Security Council this month.

The draft statement urges all the parties to fulfil agreements to ensure security of humanitarian convoys along the entire route and declare a ceasefire to this end.

The document also calls for starting the distribution of humanitarian supplies without delay with the participation of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Russia's Ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin told ITAR-TASS earlier that the document was placed under the so-called "silence procedure" before 4pm, New York time. If no delegation voiced its remarks to the proposed text, it would have been adopted automatically. The Russian initiative at once was faced with the US resistance. Deputy spokesperson for the US Department of State Marie Harf said the US considered the UN Security Council involvement for securing the ceasefire regime in the east of Ukraine unnecessary. Harf said Kiev had already signalled its readiness for the humanitarian ceasefire regime, however, the problem was that the separatist militias in the south-east of Ukraine did not stop hostilities, she added.

Red Cross official heading for Moscow to discuss situation around Ukraine

ITAR-TASS, 19.08.2014



Head of the International Red Cross in Europe and Central Asia, Loran Korba, is expected to go to Moscow Tuesday for discussing the situation around a convoy of trucks carrying humanitarian aid for the population of war-torn Eastern Ukraine, Anastasia Isyuk, the press secretary of the Red Cross told Itar-Tass.

The convoy of around 270 trucks is currently stuck on the Russian-Ukrainian border. Korba will hold talks with high-rank Russian officials regarding the Red Cross's humanitarian activities in Ukraine and in particular on the convoy, Isyuk said.

Monday night, the itinerary of the trip was still in the phase of formation, she said adding that she could not name the officials Korba was going to meet with. He left Geneva last Thursday and went to Kiev, where from he was supposed to travel to Moscow. However, he returned to Geneva after the talks with Ukrainian officials. August 12, a column of about 270 trucks with almost 2,000 tons of foodstuffs, water, baby foods, and medical supplies left the Moscow region. It reached the Russian-Ukrainian border in the southern Rostov region August 14 and is there ever since. Ukrainian and Russian officials coordinated the procedures of cargo inspection at the customs offices and agreed on a joint inspection of each truck by the two countries' customs officers, after which the trucks would be sealed.

They also gave consent to placing Red Cross workers on each truck. The International Committee of the Red Cross says the main stumbling block now is the absence of guarantees for security of its personnel. The convoy will not get on the move until they the ICRC receives them. Getting these guarantees is a matter of primary concern for Red Cross as it must be confident that its crews will be allowed to work safely, especially considering the fact it did not give consent to armed escorting of the convoy, Isyuk said. Korba's visit to Moscow falls on the World Humanitarian Day. Red Cross officials admit fast delivery of aid would be in the interests of the population of Eastern Ukraine. Korba admitted last week that people in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions had been extremely hard-hit by the crisis, as freshwater and electricity supplies in those parts of Ukraine had been heavily limited.

Ukraine military: 17 dead, 6 injured after refugee convoy attack

CNN, 19.08.2014



At least 17 people were killed and six injured in an attack on a refugee convoy in the eastern Luhansk region, Ukrainian authorities said on Tuesday August 19. Fighting continues around the town of Lutuhyne, near where the convoy was attacked, the website of Ukraine's counterterrorism operation said.

The injured are hospitalized there, but the perimeter of the area is under fire, so no investigators or journalists can reach the scene. A spokesman for Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council earlier said that the bodies of 15 civilians had been recovered as of Monday night.

"Col. Andriy Lysenko told a press briefing in Kiev that Ukrainian forces were being prevented from recovering other casualties by "fighting in the area which is still controlled by the separatists." The Ukrainian military said Monday that women and children were among those killed in the attack on the caravan of refugees. The civilians were trying to escape fighting between pro-Russian rebels and the Ukrainian military but were not in an established humanitarian safety corridor when they came under fire, a military representative said. Lysenko said Tuesday that the convoy was traveling from Luhansk to Lutuhyne when it was attacked.

Militants are now blocking access to the area around the destroyed convoy and are shooting at all vehicles in the area, he said. Meanwhile, fierce fighting continues for control of the city of Luhansk, a stronghold for pro-Russian rebels. The Ukrainian military has retaken one district, Lysenko said, and there is street fighting in the city center. Humanitarian agencies say thousands of people in the Luhansk and neighboring Donetsk regions don't have access to water, electricity and proper medical aid. Ukrainian officials acknowledged Sunday that a convoy of more than 260 Russian vehicles on the border is, in fact, carrying humanitarian aid.

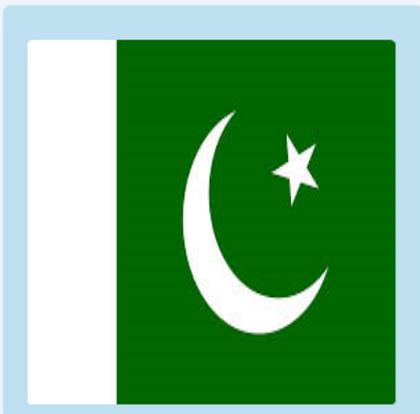
But Lysenko said the aid had not started to move as of Tuesday morning, since the rebel Donetsk People's Republic has not given the necessary safety guarantees to the International Committee of the Red Cross. A small group from the ICRC has been sent to Luhansk to evaluate the situation there and assess how to proceed with the cargo delivery, he said. As of Tuesday, 77 cities and villages in Donetsk region are without electricity. The convoy initially sparked fears that Russia was trying to use a humanitarian convoy as a cover for sending in more aid and weapons for pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine, which Russia and the rebels denied. The ongoing fighting -- sparked by a political crisis over whether Ukraine would seek closer ties with Europe or Russia -- has left more than 2,000 people dead and just under 5,000 wounded in eastern Ukraine since mid-April, according to estimates from U.N. officials. Efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine continue.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko spoke by phone Monday with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, his office said. That conversation followed a meeting in Berlin on Sunday of the foreign ministers of Germany, Ukraine, France and Russia. “We discussed the question of how we can find ways to reach an urgently needed ceasefire in eastern Ukraine,” German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said. “We discussed the question of how we can improve and optimize controls at the Russian-Ukrainian border.”

Russia’s Foreign Ministry said “some progress” had been made on issues including ending the hostilities, border control, the delivery of humanitarian aid and creating the conditions for a political settlement. Poroshenko also spoke Monday and Tuesday with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, when the Ukrainian leader slammed the attack on the refugee convoy and pointed to “continuing provocations of the Russian Federation aimed at escalation of the security situation in the region.” Poroshenko and Russian President Vladimir Putin are due to meet in Belarus next week at a summit also involving EU officials and the leaders of Belarus and Kazakhstan, the Kremlin said. Those two nations are members, with Russia, of the Eurasian Customs Union, a trade bloc. Ukraine signed a trade agreement with Europe this year in defiance of Moscow’s wishes.

Thousands join Khan, Qadri anti-government march on Pakistan’s capital

CNN, 15.08.2014



Thousands of anti-government supporters led by two of Pakistan’s most influential figures have joined a march to Islamabad to demand the resignation of the country’s prime minister, prompting a major security operation.

By early Friday, an estimated 15,000-20,000 people had joined cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan on the outskirts of Lahore in Pakistan’s northwestern Punjab region. The procession took to the roads in cars, trucks and buses to make the 230-mile (370-kilometer) journey to the capital. The march started on Thursday as Pakistan celebrated Independence Day.

Khan, the former Pakistan cricket captain and leader of the Tehreek-e-insaaf (PTI) political party, has called on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to stand down amid claims of vote rigging during last year’s election, a claim Sharif has rejected.

‘Recapture’ of Mosul Dam from Isis a major step forward, says Obama

The Guardian, 19.08.2014



US President Barack Obama declared a “major step forward” in Iraq on Monday after American fighter jets, bombers and drones assisted Kurdish and Iraqi forces in driving the Islamic State (Isis) back from Iraq’s most important dam.

Obama hailed the cooperation of the Iraqi and Kurdish forces on the ground at the Mosul Dam, calling effective local ground forces a bulwark against an expanding, unclear US mission. “If we have effective partners on the ground, mission creep is less likely,” Obama said in a brief press conference Monday afternoon.

He praised the Iraqis and Kurds for “recapturing” the dam, something the US military had yet to definitively announce. “We continue to see important progress over different parts of our strategy,” Obama said, providing his second declaration of something like victory since Thursday, when he declared Isis’ siege of Sinjar mountain to be “broken.” US Central Command, operationally in charge of the Iraq strikes, said on Monday that it launched 15 airstrikes against Isis near the Mosul Dam that day alone, bringing the total there to 35 since Saturday. In the first eight days of the newest US campaign in Iraq, 33 airstrikes had been launched in pursuit of what Obama identified as the original purpose of US forces’ return to Iraq: preventing a genocide of Yazidis at Mount Sinjar and protecting US personnel in Irbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdish.

While the goal of taking Mosul Dam from Isis is significantly different from Obama’s two previously stated aims, the president wrapped it in the same language of “force protection” that he used for the Irbil mission. “If that dam was breached, it could have proven catastrophic,” he said, with flooding reaching down to Baghdad, where hundreds of US diplomats and special-operations “advisers” are stationed. Defending himself from charges of mission creep, Obama said “we are not reintroducing thousands of troops to engage in combat ... We’re not the Iraqi military, we’re not even the Iraqi air force.” Functionally, that is exactly what the US military has been over the past eleven days, as a mixture of US warplanes have harassed Isis positions and destroyed Isis vehicles and artillery, providing air cover for Kurdish and now Iraqi military units below.

US airpower vastly outclasses any air support the Iraqis can offer. Iraqi units have outfitted small, slow Cessna and Beechcraft planes with Hellfire missiles. Obama hailed the US military for having “stopped the [Isis] advance on the city of Irbil and pushed back the terrorists.” Yet he declined to say when the US mission will end, or where it will next target Isis. On Monday, the State Department designated a senior Isis member for sanctions on its foreign terrorist organizations list, seemingly an indication of a new focus on Isis leadership. Obama implored the incoming Iraqi government, helmed by US-backed prime minister designate Haider al-Abadi, to rapidly coalesce around inclusivity as a “long-term” strategy against Isis.

He held out the “prospect of Sunni tribes” rejecting Isis as a potential positive consequence of an Iraqi decision to substantially include Sunnis in the nation’s governance, and hinted that further military aid would follow any such decision. Obama’s decision to use deepening American military involvement in Iraq’s crisis as an incentive for the Iraqi government to heal sectarian divides is the inverse of George W Bush’s 2007 surge strategy, which contended that a stable Iraq was a precondition to inclusivity. The US backed prime minister Nouri al-Maliki opted to instead privilege his Shia co-religionists and later, particularly after US forces withdrew in 2011, himself. Lukman Faily, the Iraqi ambassador to Washington who has for months pressed the administration to expand airstrikes against Isis, praised Obama after his remarks. “We commend the President’s willingness to stand with the Iraqi people and government against this brutal aggression from inter terrorism,” Faily tweeted.

US military tried to free American hostages in Syria

ITAR-TASS, 21.08.2014



The US “attempted a rescue operation recently to free a number of American hostages held in Syria”, the Pentagon reported. It said the operation “involved air and ground components and was focused on a particular captor network within ISIL (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – former name of the Islamic State group)”.

“Unfortunately, the mission was not successful because the hostages were not present at the targeted location,” the Pentagon said. Lisa Monaco, assistant to the president for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, said the rescue attempt of Americans held hostage occurred earlier.

President Obama “authorized action at this time because it was the national security team’s assessment that these hostages were in danger with each passing day in (Islamic State) custody,” Monaco said. It was not clear whether the operation had intended to rescue journalist James Foley among others. The Washington Post quoted Obama administration officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity as saying that Foley was among those intended for rescue. The Islamic State group released a video on Tuesday, showing a purported beheading of journalist James Foley, who went missing in Syria in November 2012.

After Iraq, US police forces more militarized than ever

Anadolu Agency, 18.08.2014



The fatal shooting last week of an 18-year-old black man named Michael Brown by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, fueled protests among the residents of city, which is predominantly populated by African-Americans. But the protesters in Ferguson were faced with a heavily militarized police force, dressed in camouflage, firing tear gas from tanks and targeting protesters with rubber bullets.

The police crackdown on protesters in Ferguson, a suburb of St. Louis, raises concerns over the militarization of American police forces, which are now equipped with gear that was once used by the U.S. Army in Afghanistan and Iraq.

On June 23, the American Civil Union Liberties published a report entitled, "War Comes Home: The Excessive Militarization of American Policing." The report says S.W.A.T. teams frequently raid people's homes across the country in the middle of the night, often to search for drugs. Although people have been killed during the raids and pets have been shot dead, "billions of dollars worth of military equipment flows from the federal government to state and local police departments," the report says. The equipping of police departments with military gear formerly used in war zones dates to 1990 when the 110th Congress enacted the National Defense Authorization Act, which paved the way for the Department of Defense Excess Property Program, also called the 1033 Program.

Instead of paying to destroy military equipment used abroad in war-zones, the 1033 Program allows the Department of Defense to transfer its excess or surplus military equipment to local and civilian law enforcement -- like the Ferguson Police Department -- for free. According to the Defense Logistics Agency, which provides logistic support and military services, the equipment provided to civilian law enforcement agencies in 2013 alone was worth half a billion dollars. This equipment includes: aircraft, watercraft, armored vehicles, highly-mobile multi-wheeled vehicles (HMMWV), and armored personnel carriers designed for battlefields.

But as local police departments increased their weaponry with surplus military equipment, the population living in poverty in Ferguson doubled between 2000 and 2010-2012, according to the Brookings Institute. By the end of this period, roughly one in four residents lived below the poverty line. Sean Arseo, a political scientist and classroom assistant at the Charter School of San Diego, told The Anadolu Agency that poor areas in the U.S. are also highly policed areas. "Citizens of those communities face an overwhelming fear that any confrontation can erupt into their wanton slaying or brutal beating by an officer for any minor perceived offense," Arseo said. "Those who come out in opposition to these unnecessary tragedies are met with an equally, if not more, brutal response."



With 67.4 percent of the population in Ferguson being black, according to the US Census Bureau's 2010 statistics, and with 87.5 percent of the police force in Ferguson being white, according to a 2007 survey by the Department of Justice, racial tensions can be ignited easily what is in effect a segregated society. The Missouri Attorney General's Office has released statistics that show that racial profiling was prevalent in Ferguson before the recent tension. According to the report, police stopped 4,500 African-Americans in 2013 compared to 686 white citizens the same year. "For generations now it seems clear that blacks are on average and as a class treated significantly more harshly than whites by law enforcement," Angelo Corlett, author and professor in Philosophy of Law at San Diego State University told The Anadolu Agency. "To the extent that this is true, it must be stopped as soon as possible and permanently."

Ferguson Police Department's response to the protesters also raises concerns of constitutional rights being put at risk, according to analysts. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution prohibits the enactment of any law "abridging the freedom of speech" and the right of people to peacefully assemble. "Police officers must be careful not to violate the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution upholding nonviolent freedom of expression -- even passionate and offensive expression," Corlett said. He said that if protesters become violent, police should respond with graduated force, as needed. But if protesters are non-violent, he said, there is no excuse for police respond with violence. "It is very important for a group to be heard in peace and with respect," Corlett said. "Sometimes meeting frustrated protesters with great presence is not the right thing to do and can make matters worse."

Announcements & Reports

► *The last chance for a united Cyprus: Negotiations for a federal solution*

Source : SETA

Weblink : http://file.setav.org/Files/Pdf/20140627183801_the-last-chance-for-a-united-cyprus-pdf.pdf

► *Mexico's emerging infrastructure opportunity*

Source : Ernst and Young

Weblink : [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-mexicos-emerging-infrastructure-opportunity/\\$FILE/EY-mexicos-emerging-infrastructure-opportunity.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-mexicos-emerging-infrastructure-opportunity/$FILE/EY-mexicos-emerging-infrastructure-opportunity.pdf)

► *Dynamics: bridging the gap*

Source : Ernst and Young

Weblink : [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-dynamics-bridging-the-gap-june-2014/\\$FILE/EY-dynamics-bridging-the-gap-june-2014.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-dynamics-bridging-the-gap-june-2014/$FILE/EY-dynamics-bridging-the-gap-june-2014.pdf)

► *Building a better retirement world*

Source : Ernst and Young

Weblink : [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-Building-a-better-retirement-world/\\$FILE/EY-Building-a-better-retirement-world.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-Building-a-better-retirement-world/$FILE/EY-Building-a-better-retirement-world.pdf)



► *China's express sector development report 2014*

Source : Deloitte

Weblink : <http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/Consumer-Business/gx-cb-china-express-sector.pdf>

► *Productivity in the public sector: what makes a good job?*

Source : PwC

Weblink : http://www.pwc.com/en_GX/gx/psrc/united-kingdom/assets/pwc-productivity-in-the-public-sector.pdf

► *Libya and Mali operations*

Source : GMF

Weblink : http://www.gmfus.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files_mf/1405709549Gros_LibyaMali_Jun14_web.pdf

Upcoming Events

► *Macroeconomic Effects of China's RMB Internationalization and Capital Account Liberalization*

Date : 28 August 2014

Place : Beijing - China

Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/event/macroeconomic-effects-china%E2%80%99s-rmb-internationalization-and-capital-account-liberalization>

► *Japan's New Role in a Changing Asia*

Date : 31 August 2014

Place : Nagoya - Japan

Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/event/japan%C2%80%C2%99s-new-role-changing-asia>

► *Launch of the Memos to the new EU leadership*

Date : 04 September 2014

Place : Brussels - Belgium

Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/view/450/>

► *President Erdogan: Turkey's election and the future*

Date : 04 September 2014

Place : Washington - USA

Website : <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2014/09/04-turkey-election-erdogan>



► *Lingering questions on President Reagan's role in the Iran-contra scandal*

Date : 05 September 2014
Place : Washington - USA
Website : <http://www.brookings.edu/events/2014/09/05-lingering-questions-president-reagans-role-iran-contra-scandal>

► *Annual Meeting - Europe: the way ahead | Read more at Bruegel*

Date : 05 September 2014
Place : Brussels - Belgium
Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/451-annual-meeting-europe-the-way-ahead/>

► *Business Opportunity and Political Risk in the Gulf and Middle East*

Date : 07 - 08 September 2014
Place : Manama - Bahrain
Website : <https://www.iiss.org/en/events/geo-economics%20seminars/geo-economics%20seminars/archive/2014-fea4/business-opportunity-8b49>

► *Effects of income tax changes on economic growth*

Date : 09 September 2014
Place : Washington - USA
Website : <http://taxpolicycenter.org/events/effects-of-income-tax-changes.cfm>

► *Turkey's presidential elections 2014: What do they mean for Turkey's democratization process, the Kurdish question and Turkey's foreign policy?*

Date : 11 September 2014
Place : Washington - USA
Website : <http://www.tesev.org.tr/turkey-s-presidential-elections-2014--what-do-they-mean-for-turkey-s-democratization-process,-the-kurdish-question-and-turkey-s-foreign-policy-/Content/1681.html>

► *Istanbul Finance Summit*

Date : 15 - 16 September 2014
Place : İstanbul - Turkey
Website : <http://www.istanbulsummit.com/anasayfa/?lang=trk>

► *Fifth Annual Conference in Political Economy, "The Crisis: Scholarship, Policies, Conflicts and Alternatives"*

Date : 16 - 18 September 2014
Place : Naples – Italy
Website : http://iippe.org/wp/?page_id=1943



► *International Conference on Economics, Energy, Environment and Agricultural Sciences*

Date : 21 September 2014
Place : Kuala Lumpur - Malaysia
Website : <http://www.pakrdw.com/>

► *Europe's strategic choices: building prosperity and security*

Date : 17 – 19 October 2014
Place : Berlin - Germany
Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/Berlin2014>

► *The New Shape of Banking: Regulation, Reform and Resilience*

Date : 20 October 2014
Place : Berlin - Germany
Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/Banking>

► *7th International Energy Congress Expo*

Date : 24 - 25 November 2014
Place : Ankara - Turkey
Website : <http://www.energy-congress.com>

► *Food security: mapping risks, building resilience*

Date : 01 – 02 December 2014
Place : London – United Kingdom
Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/foodsecurity2014>