

## Turkcell, Vodafone among top five companies awarded for supporting Syrian refugees

Hurriyet Daily News, 28.02.2017



Turkcell, Turkey's biggest mobile operator, and Vodafone, one of top three mobile operators active in Turkey, were honored for their humanitarian work in supporting Syrian refugees at a major sector conference.

The award came at the GSM Association's (GSMA) Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. In addition to Turkcell and the Vodafone Foundation, Asiacell, Zain and Deutsche Telekom were awarded for their humanitarian efforts to help refugees in the same ceremony. Receiving the award in the name of the five operators from GSMA Chairman Sunil Mittal, Turkcell CEO Kaan Terzioğlu said:

"For me, it is a big honor to be here in the name of the five companies who work to make the world a better place. We should know that we are in a sector ... which can make a difference in the world's biggest tragedy. This humanitarian crisis is a very a big test for all of us."

"We have seen again that communication has a lifesaving role in crisis terms over the previous six years," he added, according to a follow-up press release. The head of Turkcell stated they established services so that people affected by the crisis could receive vital information and use communications in refugee camps.

"We formed emergency services and helplines for Syrians," Terzioğlu said, adding that they provided refugees with access to information and services with mobile applications such as Merhaba Umut (Hello Hope).

The head of Vodafone Turkey Foundation, Hasan Süel, said the foundation had undertaken a number of key mobile projects to support people fleeing from wars mainly in Syria. The foundation now offers coding training to Syrian children who live in Turkey, he said. "We hope to create a common language between Syrian and Turkish children as well as offering hope to them," Süel added in a press release.

# Official: Uzbekistan hopes to team up with Turkish businesspeople in petrochemicals

Hurriyet Daily News, 27.02.2017



Uzbekistan hopes to cooperate with Turkish businesspeople in the petrochemicals industry, said a top Uzbek official in a joint meeting in Istanbul.

“We hope to work with our Turkish partners in petrochemicals. We can also work together on the extraction and processing of mines such as gold, silver and uranium in Uzbekistan,” said Uzbekistan’s Deputy Prime Minister Rustam Azimov at the Turkish-Uzbek Business Forum, which was organized by the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK), as quoted by Anadolu Agency.

Azimov also noted that Turkey was the first country that recognized Uzbekistan’s independence after the fall of the Soviet Union. “Uzbek people will never forget that,” he added. Azimov said Uzbekistan had doubled the railway network in recent years, adding that they would welcome Turkish companies to invest in the country’s railway and highway projects.

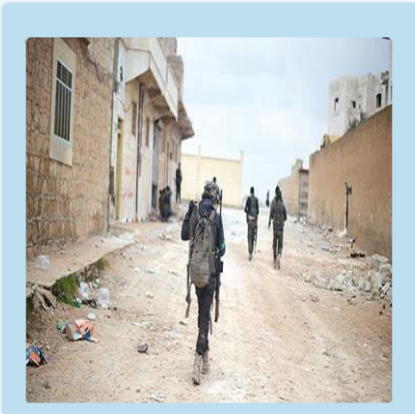
He said Uzbekistan is one of the most rapidly growing economies of the world with an around 8 percent of growth rate, adding that the country realized a number of key reforms to maintain its macroeconomic stability. Turkish Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci said the two countries have identified “nine or 10” sectors to boost cooperation, from textiles to tourism.

“We have decided to boost our economic and trade ties ... We will speed up our trade ties in several sectors to further increase our bilateral trade volume, which is currently at around \$1.2 billion,” Zeybekci noted, adding that the two countries aimed to launch joint economic meetings by the second half of 2017.

He also said Turkey and Uzbekistan needed to modernize and update an existing investment agreement, which was clinched in 1995. Mehmet Büyükekşi, the DEİK vice chair and Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM) head, said the visit by Azimov was of great importance on the road to further boosting bilateral ties. Büyükekşi also noted that the two countries had great potential for further business cooperation in many sectors, especially in health, textile, mining, tourism and leather goods.

# FM Çavuşoğlu: Turkey to strike YPG unless it leaves Manbij

Reuters, 02.03.2017



Turkey will strike the People's Protection Units (YPG), the military wing of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), if they do not withdraw from Manbij, a former bastion of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) that has been taken over by predominantly Kurdish forces, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu stated on March 2.

Speaking to reporters outside parliament in Ankara, Çavuşoğlu said Turkey and the U.S. "must not face off against each other because of Turkey's fight against other terrorist groups [apart from ISIL]," the main focus of the Euphrates Shield Operation in northern Syria.

"We do not want any of our allies to stand with terrorist groups. We stated earlier that Turkey will hit the YPG unless they withdraw from Manbij," he said. Çavuşoğlu also said that with an operation on Manbij, the aim is to leave the area to "its true owners."

His remarks came one day after Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA) rebels on March 1 seized two villages near al-Bab, which they captured from ISIL last week, from U.S.-supported Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) rebels, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights stated.

Turkey regards the PYD and the YPG as terrorist organizations due to their links to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), but the U.S. sees them as reliable partners in the fight against ISIL in northern Syria. The U.S. supports the SDF, which is comprised mainly of YPG militia and some Arab forces, in the anti-ISIL coalition.

Syrian rebels "captured the villages of Tal Turin and Qara east of al-Bab after violent clashes with the separatist YPG militia," according to a statement issued by Hiwar Kallis, a rebel faction part of the FSA, AFP reported.

"The Euphrates Shield attacked our forces today, and the clashes are ongoing," said Sherfan Darwish, spokesman for the Manbij Military Council which is part of the SDF. Euphrates Shield is the name of Turkey's ongoing operation in northern Syria.

The Observatory also confirmed that Euphrates Shield fighters had captured the two villages near Al-Bab. "These battles mark the beginning of Euphrates Shield's operations to take Manbij," said the monitoring group's head Rami Abdel Rahman. The Manbij Military Council said on March 2 that they would cede several northern villages to government forces as part of a deal brokered by regime ally Russia to avoid conflict with Turkey. The Manbij Military Council said government troops would control a buffer zone between it and Turkey-backed rebels.



“We in the Manbij Military Council announce that we agreed with Russia to hand over villages on the front line with Euphrates Shield ... to the border guards of the Syrian state,” the group said. It said the territory to be handed over lay between Manbij and the town of al-Bab.

The Syrian border guards “will protect the line dividing the Manbij Military Council and the areas under the control of the Turkish army and Euphrates Shield,” the statement said. Meanwhile, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said Manbij is the “next target” after al-Bab, stressing that the SDF should leave Manbij. “They [SDF] should leave Manbij because it has no relationship to them. Manbij belongs to Arabs.

Likewise, Raqqa completely belongs to Arabs. We are receiving information that there are around 2,500 DEASH members there,” Erdoğan told journalists on his way back from Pakistan, using an Arabic acronym for the jihadist group.

Çavuşoğlu said Ankara and Washington are currently discussing how to implement a possible Raqqa operation and how Turkey would support the operation. “There are other coalition countries that are active in the field like France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. We are discussing issues such as how we will do air support,” he added.

Army Lieutenant General Stephen Townsend said March 1 that talks were underway with Turkey on the role it might play in liberating the militant group’s de facto capital of Raqqa. “We are engaged in discussions with the Turks on how they might participate in the liberation of Raqqa and I don’t know what the numbers of their participation might be Townsend said. Erdoğan said Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA) fighters could lead the Raqqa offensive. Townsend said Kurds would have some role in the operation to liberate Raqqa of ISIL, adding that the YPG wanted to have good relations with Turkey.

“There are going to be Kurds assaulting Raqqa for sure. The number, the size of them, and how many Kurdish units are participating in that, I can’t really say right now,” Townsend said. “I’ve talked to their leaders and we’ve watched them operate and they continually reassure us that they have no desire to attack Turkey, that they are not a threat to Turkey, in fact that they desire to have a good working relationship with Turkey.

And I have seen absolutely zero evidence that they have been a threat to, or have supported any attacks on, Turkey from Northern Syria over the last two years,” he added. The Turkish-led Euphrates Shield operation began last August to improve security, support coalition forces, and eliminate the terror threat along the Turkish border using FSA fighters backed by Turkish artillery and jets.

Townsend also said Russian and Syrian aircraft bombed positions held by the U.S.-backed Syrian Arab Coalition near the Syrian town of al-Bab, inflicting casualties. “It became apparent that the strikes were falling on some of the Syrian coalition positions.

Some quick calls were made to our deconfliction channels and the Russians acknowledged and stopped bombing there,” Townsend said. The Russian Defense Ministry denied conducting air strikes but confirmed communication through the hotline.

“During these talks, the U.S. Air Force representative expressed concern that Syrian and Russian airplanes could inflict an unintentional strike on US-controlled armed groups while carrying out combat missions against (ISIL) south of Manbij,” the Russian ministry said in a statement. “This information was taken into account by the Russian command. Not one strike was carried out by Syrian or Russian aviation on the districts pointed out by the American side,” it added.

## Association: Over 52 bln liras in loan, credit card debt restructured in Turkey

Hurriyet Daily News, 01.03.2017



Some 52 billion Turkish Liras (\$14.3 billion) in loans and credit card debts were restructured in Turkey in September 2016, said the head of a top sector association, adding that this was a huge figure and that the sector achieved a great success by implementing the restructuring. Banks Association of Turkey (TBB) President Hüseyin Aydın also noted that banks use deposits to boost the economy.

“We restructured over 52 billion liras of loan and credit card debts last September. It was a good move, as the volume was quite big. Most of these debts were restructured when there was no problem in repayment,” he told.

Aydın noted that the sector had offered fresh loans, adding that the country’s banking sector was one of the largest loan providers in the world. “When we have a look at the non-performing loan (NPL) rates, we have seen that only a small part of them would likely become problematic,” he said, adding that Turkey’s NPL rates were 50-60 percent lower than the rates in the developed world.

Aydın, who is also Ziraat Bank CEO, also noted that Turkey’s banks had turned their deposits into loans, and if there were any lenders that were not transforming their deposits into loans, they should bring them into the economy.

“If there are any segments which have not turned their deposits into loans, they should not keep this money for nothing but use it to fuel the economy...In this vein, we have agreed with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan,” he added.

Aydın said the banking sector was trying to do its best both for the country and the economy. “Several negative developments have slowed down our growth rates a bit, and we have been growing under our potential. We believe we can do better. We have worked to offer bigger support to the economic growth, as the banking sector. One by one, we may have some faults, but as the banking sector, we have been trying to do our best for our country and economy,” he added. Turkey’s banking sector’s loans are expected to grow 15 percent without foreign exchange risks in 2017, while total assets are forecast to rise by 13 percent, deposits by 13 percent, and equity capital by 12 percent, according to sector representatives.

# UN probe: Syrian air force ‘targeted’ aid convoy in deadly bombing

Anadolu Agency, 01.03.2017



Syria’s air force carried out the September 2016 raid that killed at least 10 aid workers in Aleppo province by deliberately targeting a humanitarian convoy, a U.N.-backed probe said on March 1.

“Syrian air forces targeted a humanitarian aid convoy in Aleppo countryside,” the United Nations Commission of Inquiry (COI) said, adding that the raid “was meticulously planned and ruthlessly carried out,” to destroy the aid. A separate U.N. investigation said in December last year that it was unable to establish blame for the bombing that forced aid groups to temporarily stop deliveries of life-saving relief.

The COI also said that all Syrian sides that fought in the battle for Aleppo committed war crimes and the deal to evacuate civilians following the rebel defeat was a “crime of forced displacement.” The COI for Syria documented violations including chemical attacks and civilian executions perpetrated during the Damascus regime’s five-month siege of eastern Aleppo, which had been a key opposition stronghold.

From July 21, 2016 to Dec. 22, when government troops recaptured the city, the Syrian air force and its Russian ally “conducted daily air strikes” on Aleppo, the COI said. There is conclusive evidence that Syrian aircraft dropped “toxic industrial chemicals, including chlorine”, but there is no information indicating the Russians used chemical weapons, the report said.

Meanwhile, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov said that a U.N. Security Council resolution put forward by Western powers to punish Syria’s government over its alleged use of chemical weapons would harm peace talks in Geneva.

The resolution, vetoed by Russia and China, amid U.N.-led peace talks between the warring Syrian parties, had aimed to ban the supply of helicopters to the Syrian government and to blacklist Syrian military commanders.

“It is counter-constructive,” Gatilov told reporters. “The climate will be negative, not because we veto it, but because this resolution was put forward.” Salem al-Muslet, a spokesman for the High Negotiations Committee, said that the opposition regretted Russia’s seventh veto on Syria, but planned to meet Gatilov and hoped that Russia would pressure its ally, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

“We hope that they come here having something in mind to push the political process here in Geneva, because with this regime, we will reach nowhere unless there is a pressure and the only country that can deliver pressure on the regime is Russia,” Muslet told Reuters Television.

The Geneva peace process has barely reached first gear, with five days of discussion solely on how to arrange the talks. On March 1, the Syrian opposition said that they had been told by U.N. mediator Staffan de Mistura that government negotiators were prepared to discuss a political transition at peace talks in Geneva.

“We heard from de Mistura that due to Russia pressure there is acceptance to tackle the issues enshrined in [Security Council resolution] 2254 and most importantly political transition,” Nasr al-Hariri told reporters after meeting de Mistura, Reuters reported. He added the government delegation was trying to prioritize other points to avoid tackling the political issues directly and was using violence on the ground to foil the talks.

## 26,000 civilians escape Mosul amid fierce clashes

Hurriyet Daily News, 01.03.2017



Some 26,000 people have fled in the 10 days since Iraqi forces launched a push to retake west Mosul, amid fierce clashes between Iraqi forces and the ISIL militants.

West Mosul is ISIL’s last urban bastion in Iraq, and its recapture would mark the effective end of the cross-border “caliphate” its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced from a mosque in the city more than two years ago. Iraqi forces have yet to advance deep into the west, but the fighting combined with privation and harsh ISIL rule has already pushed a growing number of civilians to flee.

Field teams received “26,000 displaced people from [west] Mosul during the past 10 days,” Jassem Mohammed al-Jaff, the Iraqi minister of displacement and migration, said in a statement, according to AFP.

The number of people who have fled is only a small fraction of the 750,000 people who are believed to have stayed on in west Mosul under ISIL rule but is expected to rise sharply in the coming days and weeks.

Sniper fire is a significant danger in the area, said Kathy Bequary, the executive director of NYC Medics, a group providing emergency care from a mobile clinic. “We’re seeing a lot of serious gunshot wounds from snipers,” Bequary told AFP.

“Most of our patients are combatants, but civilians are affected too. Two days ago, we treated a family – a mother, father, son and daughter – who were trying to escape Mosul and were targeted by snipers,” she said. “The 5-year-old daughter was shot in the pelvis, a through and through wound. The girl was very, very critical,” Bequary said.

The drive to retake the west of Mosul – the smaller but more densely populated side of a city split by the Tigris River, after Iraqi troops retook its east side the previous month. ISIL is putting up tough resistance in the southwest of the city, a commander in the elite Counter-Terrorism Service told AFP on March 1. The CTS is fighting “for the [Maamun] Flats area, which is considered very important for control of the Baghdad road and the surrounding neighborhoods,” Staff Lt.-Gen. Abdulghani al-Assadi said.

“The resistance is violent and fierce because they’re defending this line and this line, in our opinion, is the main line for them,” al-Assadi said. Meanwhile, U.S.-backed Iraqi army units on March 1 took control of the last major road out of western Mosul that had been in ISIL’s hands, trapping the militants in a shrinking area within the city, a general and residents said.

The army’s 9th Armored Division was within a kilometer of Mosul’s Syria Gate, the city’s northwestern entrance, a general from the unit told Reuters by telephone. “We effectively control the road, it is in our sight,” he said.

Mosul residents said they had not been able to travel on the highway that starts at the Syria Gate since Feb. 28. The road links Mosul to Tal Afar, another ISIL stronghold 60 km to the west, and then to Syria.

## Liberal Democrats’ anti-Brexit stance brings £1m donation from one of UK’s richest men

Independent, *02.03.2017*



The Liberal Democrats have reaped the rewards for the party’s staunch opposition to Brexit with a £1m gift from one of Britain’s richest men.

Greg Nasmyth is understood to have made his fortune from last year’s £950m sale of his family’s energy information business, called Argus Media. His donation – reported today by the Electoral Commission – allowed the Lib Dems to raise more money than Labour in the last three months of last year, the figures show. It is the first time the party has topped Labour’s donations tally for any quarter since records began in 2001, the commission said.

Baroness Brinton, the Liberal Democrat president, said: “Millions of people want a clear voice saying Britain must stay in the heart of Europe. That voice is the Liberal Democrats. Labour do not offer that any more, they are Theresa May’s cheerleaders for a hard Brexit.”





The president pointed to a “famous by-election victory in Richmond Park” in December, rising membership and more than 30 recent local council gains. “It is clear the Liberal Democrat fightback is on, providing the real opposition to the Conservative Brexit government,” she added.

Tim Farron, the Lib Dem leader, ordered his MPs and peers to vote against Brexit after Theresa May refused to agree to a further referendum on her exit terms. In stark contrast, Jeremy Corbyn split Labour after imposing a three-line whip on his MPs to back the Article 50 Bill, to begin the withdrawal process.

Mr Nasmyth, an environmentalist, was driven to give the £1m because of the Lib Dem stance on EU membership and also on green issues, the Financial Times said. It reported that he made the donation in October in the run-up to the Richmond Park by-election, where the Lib Dem candidate ousted the Brexit-backing millionaire Zac Goldsmith.

Last year, the Lib Dems received £2m from supermarket titan David Sainsbury, as part of his backing for the Remain campaign in the Brexit referendum. Figures for the fourth quarter of 2016 – the first full quarter of Theresa May’s premiership – showed the Conservatives taking the lion’s share of donations, with a total of £3,610,983.

That compared with £1,972,904 given to the Liberal Democrats – more than half coming from Mr Nasmyth – and £1,970,055 received by the Labour Party. The Greens took in £46,228, the Co-operative Party £39,750, Ukip £33,228, and the Women’s Equality Party, £30,000.

Labour’s largest donors were the unions Unite (£440,622), Usdaw (£368,693) and the GMB (£332,808), while the Conservatives’ biggest gifts came from mining millionaire Michael Davis (£266,000) and property developer David Rowland (£233,000).

A Labour spokesman said: “Labour is a mass membership party, proud to be funded by members and working people. It is this broad funding base that makes us the party of ordinary working people, while our main rivals increasingly rely on a small pool of donors.” In all, £7.7m was donated to 11 political parties, a rise of £1.2m over the third quarter of 2016 – but £1.5m down on the same period in the previous year.

# Commission outlines 5 scenarios for future of EU in white paper

Politico, 02.03.2017



The European Commission has outlined five scenarios for the future of the European Union in a white paper obtained by POLITICO ahead of its publication on Wednesday.

The scenarios are entitled “carrying on,” “nothing but the single market,” “those who want more do more,” “doing less more efficiently,” and “doing much more together.” The paper is an attempt by the Commission, led by President Jean-Claude Juncker, to shape a major debate about the EU’s future following Britain’s shock decision to leave. The document is also intended to influence a declaration by the 27 countries remaining in the EU.

The paper starts with a somber tone, acknowledging the existential struggle the EU is facing due to crises over Brexit, migration and the eurozone. “Europe’s challenges show no sign of abating,” the paper says. It also notes the difficult balancing act facing the EU, as “many Europeans consider the Union as either too distant or too interfering.”

While generally neutral in its language, the Commission at times makes its preferred option clear. For example, on eurozone governance, the Commission aligns itself with the most federal option by saying it will issue a paper based on the 2015 Five Presidents’ Report, which called for a eurozone finance minister and stricter controls over the budgets of the 19 countries that use the single currency.

Here are more details of the five scenarios:

## Scenario 1: Carrying on

This scenario assumes that staying the course will involve small, smooth changes to the functioning of the EU. The Commission says “carrying on” will deliver “incremental progress.” This option is based on national governments agreeing to deepen the EU’s single market, pool some military capabilities and “speaking with one voice on foreign affairs,” while leaving key responsibilities like border control mostly in the hands of national governments.

There are some dark clouds hanging over this option in phrases such as “Europeans are mostly able to travel across borders without stopping for checks,” indicating trouble ahead for the visa-free Schengen Zone if changes are not agreed to its management. The Commission warns: “Continuous improvement to border management is needed to keep up with new challenges. If this is not done, some countries may wish to maintain targeted internal controls.”

## Scenario 2: Nothing but the single market



Here the Commission focuses on the achievement with the broadest base of support: its single market. The Commission is not enthusiastic about this option, noting that “decision-making may be simpler to understand but the capacity to act collectively is limited” and “this may widen the gap between expectations and delivery at all levels.”

With the single market as its main mission, the Commission believes, the EU would face a heightened risk to the euro, because it would have failed to finish establishing the eurozone’s economic governance, leaving it vulnerable to new financial crises.

Companies would likely face more border checks, and EU members would revert to pursuing bilateral foreign policy. Trade deals and defense cooperation would also be more difficult. On a day-to-day level, the Commission believes connected cars would not take off in Europe under this scenario “due to the absence of EU-wide rules and technical standards.”

#### Scenario 3: Those who want more do more

This is effectively a multi-speed EU based on “coalitions of the willing” in specific policy areas such as defense, internal security, taxation or social matters. Under this scenario the Commission assumes that all 27 members would still make general progress on a deeper single market.

The Commission believes this model would lead to differences in citizens’ rights and is not optimistic that eurozone governance could be completed. However, it envisages that it would allow national militaries that have close relations with one another to move quickly into new fields like drone surveillance, or for aligned economies to create a unified business law code.

#### Scenario 4: Doing less more efficiently

By “doing less,” the Commission apparently means is “better tackle certain priorities together.” In other words, not “less” but doing more in “a reduced number of areas.” The major headline achievements would be a fully resourced European Border and Coast Guard, a single voice on foreign policy and the establishment of a European Defense Union.

The Commission sees other priority areas for deeper cooperation as innovation, trade and security. Research could be focused on digitization and decarbonization of the economy. The Commission points out one problem with this scenario — it relies on EU countries agreeing among themselves on the areas on which they want to cooperate more efficiently.

#### Scenario 5: Doing much more together

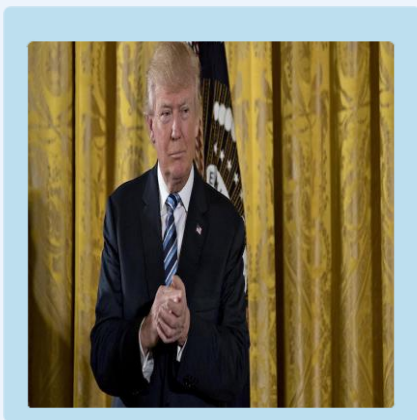
Here the EU27 go “further than ever before in all domains” — code for a federal EU. The EU would get more of its “own resources” (the ability to raise revenue through tax), the eurozone would be completed along the lines of the Five Presidents’ Report issued in 2015.

The Commission prefers this option for eurozone governance and said it will issue a reflection paper to that effect in the coming months. Under this scenario the EU would also assume powers to speak for all of Europe on trade and foreign policy, and would assume global leadership for fighting climate change and on humanitarian issues.

There would be “far greater and quicker decision-making” in Brussels, but the Commission acknowledges “there is the risk of alienating parts of society which feel that the EU lacks legitimacy.”

## Trump vows to fight ISIL with ‘allies from Muslim world’

Hurriyet Daily News, 01.03.2017



U.S. President Donald Trump in his first address to the Congress since taking office on Jan. 20 has vowed to fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) together with U.S.’ allies from the Muslim world.

“We will work with our allies, including our friends and allies in the Muslim world, to extinguish this vile enemy from our planet,” U.S. President Donald Trump said on Feb. 28. Trump referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as “a network of lawless savages that have slaughtered Muslims and Christians, and men, women, and children of all faiths and beliefs.”

Trump also reaffirmed support for its longstanding security alliances around the world but insisted that friends and partners from Europe to the Middle East to the Pacific must “pay their fair share of the cost.”

He sought to reassure allies still uneasy over doubts he raised during the 2016 presidential campaign about his commitment to their defense and to maintaining a U.S. global leadership role. But he also made clear that he expects those countries to shoulder more of the burden of their own security needs, echoing a campaign message that some allies had taken advantage of Washington’s generosity in providing them a security umbrella.

“Our foreign policy calls for a direct, robust and meaningful engagement with the world,” Trump told a joint session of Congress. “It is American leadership based on vital security interests that we share with our allies across the globe,” he said, also warning that it is not his job to “represent the world.”

“My job is not to represent the world. My job is to represent the United States of America.” He specifically assured NATO allies of his new administration’s continued commitment to the decades-old alliance.

However, he made no mention of one of the main sources of European concern: his friendly overtures during the campaign toward Russian President Vladimir Putin. “We strongly support NATO, an alliance forged through the bonds of two World Wars that dethroned fascism and a Cold War that defeated communism,” Trump said.



“But our partners must meet their financial obligations,” he said. “And now, based on our very strong and frank discussions, they are beginning to do just that.” Then, deviating from his prepared remarks, Trump added: “In fact, I can tell you the money is pouring in. Very nice.” But he offered no specifics.

Trump’s 60-minute speech touched on his plans to overhaul the nation’s health-care system and tax code, but it was short on specifics and heavy on lofty prose. Struggling to steer a bitterly divided nation with his job-approval ratings at historic lows, Trump effectively pleaded with the American people to give him a chance and to imagine what could be achieved during his presidency.

“We are one people, with one destiny,” Trump said quietly near the end. “The time for small thinking is over. The time for trivial fights is behind us. We just need the courage to share the dreams that fill our hearts.”

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Feb. 28 that he was open to a broad overhaul of the U.S. immigration system, a shift from his hardline campaign rhetoric, as he made his first speech to Congress following a turbulent first month in office.

After an initial month in office dominated by a fight over his temporary travel ban on seven Muslim-majority nations, Trump looked for a reset to move past a chaotic period that sowed doubts about his ability to govern effectively.

Trump said a broad immigration reform plan was possible if both Republicans and Democrats in Congress were willing to compromise. He said U.S. immigration should be based on a merit-based system, rather than relying on lower-skilled immigrants.

“I believe that real and positive immigration reform is possible, as long as we focus on the following goals: to improve jobs and wages for Americans, to strengthen our nation’s security, and to restore respect for our laws,” said the Republican president, who took a hard line against illegal immigrants in his 2016 campaign.

Trump has used his early weeks in office to repeat vows to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and intensify deportations of illegal immigrants who have committed crimes. At the same time, he has expressed sympathy for children who entered the country when their parents crossed the border without proper authority, the “dreamers” who so far are protected by an order signed by Obama.



# Announcements & Reports

## ► *Europe in a new world order*

**Source** : Bruegel

**Weblink** : <http://bruegel.org/2017/02/europe-in-a-new-world-order/>

## ► *Maintaining Arctic Cooperation with Russia*

**Source** : Rand

**Weblink** : [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1731.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1731.html)

## ► *The unprecedented expansion of the global middle class*

**Source** : Brookings

**Weblink** : <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-unprecedented-expansion-of-the-global-middle-class-2/>

# Upcoming Events

## ► *Views from a former president: Taiwan's past, present and future*

**Date** : 7 March 2017

**Place** : Washington DC – United States

**Website** : <https://www.brookings.edu/events/views-from-a-former-president-taiwans-past-present-and-future/>

## ► *The geopolitical impact of China's economic diplomacy*

**Date** : 8 March 2017

**Place** : Washington DC – United States

**Website** : <https://www.brookings.edu/events/the-geopolitical-impact-of-chinas-economic-diplomacy/>

## ► *India – Middle East Relations in the Asian Century*

**Date** : 12 March 2017

**Place** : Doha - Qatar

**Website** : <https://www.brookings.edu/events/india-middle-east-relations-in-the-asian-century/>

## ► *Repeal, Replace, Repair, or Improve? The Future of the ACA*

**Date** : 17 March 2017

**Place** : Washington DC – United States

**Website** : <http://www.rand.org/congress/activities/2017/03/17.html>



► *Conversations On The Future Of Europe*

**Date** : 22 March 2017  
**Place** : Brussels - Belgium  
**Website** : <http://bruegel.org/events/conversations-on-europe/>