

## Turkish Foreign Ministry criticizes US resolution over Washington brawl

Hurriyet Daily News, 26.05.2017



Turkey's Foreign Ministry has rejected a resolution by senior U.S. lawmakers condemning a street brawl between protesters and Turkish security personnel outside the Turkish ambassador's residence in Washington.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hüseyin Müftüo lu called the resolution "one-sided" and said it "distorts the facts." "We reject the resolution in question," he said. The spokesperson reiterated Turkey's argument that the incident during the visit of President Erdoğan, stemmed from U.S. authorities' refusal to take necessary security measures, despite repeated official warnings.

"There is no answer to the question why the U.S. authorities did not take tight security measures in front of the ambassador's residence as they did at other stages of the visit. Likewise, no explanation has so far been provided for the incident that took place afterwards in front of the Chancery, which was caused by the extreme and aggressive actions of the U.S. security authorities and was officially protested by our ministry," read the statement.

Continuing to push the resolution through the legislative process will not help settle the matter, said the spokesperson, adding that Turkey would like to retain hope that the developments regarding the matter, which Ankara will be following closely, will not overshadow the visit which was "considered productive."

On May 25, The House Committee on Foreign Affairs approved a non-binding resolution condemning the violence by Turkish security forces during Erdoğan's visit. The resolution was led by House Foreign Affairs Chairman Rep. Ed Royce and supported by ranking Democrat Eliot Engel of New York, as well as bi-partisan support from Republican majority leader Kevin McCarthy of California and Democratic whip Steny Hoyer of Maryland.

The brawl during Erdoğan's visit to meet U.S. President Donald Trump caused a diplomatic dispute between the two NATO allies. At least 11 people were injured in the encounter, two so seriously they had to go to the hospital.

Turkey blamed the violence on demonstrators linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) while Washington's police chief described the incident as a "brutal attack" on peaceful protesters. The U.S. State Department said in a statement that the conduct of Turkish security personnel during the incident was "deeply disturbing," while the Turkish government summoned the U.S. ambassador in Ankara to discuss the "violent incidents." The Turkish Foreign Ministry on May 22 also summoned U.S. Ambassador to Turkey John Bass over the brawl to deliver a verbal and written protest.

# President Erdoğan: EU cannot treat Turkey like a beggar

Hurriyet Daily News, 24.05.2017



President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will meet European Council President Donald Tusk and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker on the sidelines of a NATO meeting in Brussels, as they bid to calm recent bilateral strife and inject some positivity into the ties.

The EU cannot perceive Turkey as a beggar at its door but should instead decide on the union's future perspective with regards to its membership, Erdoğan said. "We don't aim to break away from the EU, but the EU shall take its responsibilities, too."

The EU cannot see Turkey [as] a beggar. It does not have such a right... that's what we'll tell them," Erdoğan told reporters before he departed for Brussels. Erdoğan said he would ask EU officials about their vision regarding Turkey's membership in the union, noting that the bloc appeared to favor Turkey's "withdrawal from the negotiation talks of its own accord."

"We say that if you have that [opinion], you make the decision. We won't make the job more difficult," he said. Ankara has been doing its best to meet the EU's *acquis communautaire* and expects a return from the union, Erdoğan said.

Relations between the bloc and Ankara took a hit after the failed July 2016 coup attempt and worsened further during the latter's campaign for last month's referendum on constitutional amendments. The meeting aims to bury tension and set a positive but realistic agenda between Ankara and Brussels so that ministers and officials can continue to work on practical issues, a Turkish official told the *Hürriyet Daily News*.

Erdoğan was disappointed about the EU's failure to open a new negotiation chapter for Turkey's accession process despite a previous commitment by Juncker, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. However, the current climate in the EU is not promising for the opening new chapters or policy areas with Turkey, amid the objection of several member states.

The Turkish president had earlier said Brussels had "no other option" than to open new chapters in Ankara's long-stalled accession talks, which began in 2005 but have progressed at a snail's pace due to concerns over its human rights record, blockage by Greek Cyprus, and reluctance among some European countries to admit a largely Muslim nation.

Erdoğan stated that Ankara would reconsider its position on joining the bloc if it was kept waiting much longer and if the current "hostile mentality" of some member states persists. Ankara and Brussels are expected to focus on upgrading the Customs Union and implementing the refugee deal if the meeting of the leaders produces a positive outcome.



A March 2016 deal to stop migration through illegal channels in the Aegean by cracking down on human traffickers and improving the conditions of nearly 3 million Syrian refugees in Turkey has also become a source of tension between the bloc and Ankara.

Under the agreement, Ankara agreed to take back all Syrians who crossed to the Greek islands illegally from Turkey, and the EU promised to take in the same number of Syrian refugees from Turkey. The agreement also called for a visa waiver for Turks visiting the EU.

While the plan successfully reduced refugee flows, the European Commission demanded that Ankara fulfill “five plus two” outstanding criteria out of a total of 72, including “revising legislation and practices on terrorism in line with European standards” in order to move on visa liberalization for Turkish citizens.

Visa-free access to the EU has been delayed due to a dispute over Turkey’s anti-terror laws. In the meantime, Ankara has repeatedly warned that it will walk away from the agreement to accept refugees heading to Europe unless the EU agrees to waive visa restrictions.

Ankara has studied the five remaining benchmarks, while saying that the other two criteria – biometric passports and readmission – are partially fulfilled. Turkey has prepared a road map proposal for the remaining five benchmarks, including the revision of its anti-terror laws, but it delayed submitting the proposal to Brussels in December 2016 after a terror attack in the Istanbul district of Beşiktaş in 2016.

Turkey and the EU have been working on upgrading a current Customs Union agreement on industrial goods by expanding it to agriculture products, services and public procurements. The European Commission notified the European Council that it was ready to negotiate with Turkey and duly called for a mandate in late 2016.

Ankara was hoping that the European Council would approve the mandate in the first half of 2017 so that it could begin negotiations with the European Commission by July 1, when the Estonian term presidency will begin. But recent tension has created a number of difficulties in advancing the process, along with Greek Cypriot warnings that it would not pave the way unless Ankara implements the Ankara protocol to open its ports to Greek Cypriot ships.

The Turkish government has long been asking to hold a summit with the bloc’s leaders, but it has been delayed due to national elections in France and Germany. The parties plan to hold such a meeting after Germany’s general election in September.

# Turkey condemns Manchester suicide attack

Hurriyet Daily News, 23.05.2017



Turkish officials have condemned the suicide attack at a concert in Manchester, which claimed at least 22 lives and wounded 59 others.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said he “strongly condemned” the attack during a speech at Istanbul University. “We share the grief of the British government and its people,” Erdoğan said. “Like every country, I would like to stress that we stand with Britain in the fight against terrorism,” he said. Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım also condemned the attack during a news conference with his Georgian counterpart Giorgi Kvirikashvili.

“We offer our condolences to our ally the United Kingdom, the victims’ families and we wish a speedy recovery to the injured. We condemn this attack in the strongest possible words,” Yıldırım said. “We know what terrorism can do, we paid a big price because of it. Terror is a global threat and should be dealt with globally,” he added.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu condemned the attack. “I condemn the terrorist attack in Manchester. Sincere condolences to the British government and the people,” Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said on Twitter.

The Foreign Ministry issued a statement condemning the attack in the British city. “We offer our deepest condolences to the United Kingdom and its people on behalf of our country and our people, who unfortunately know and feel the sorrows of such brutal assaults organized by inhuman powers,” the statement said.

Turkey will continue the determined and effective struggle carried out by its ally United Kingdom, the ministry said. “Thank so much for messages of condolence for #Manchester from Turkish friends. Deeply appreciated,” British Ambassador to Ankara Richard Moore said in his Twitter account.

Presidential spokesperson Ibrahim Kalın also condemned the attack. “We strongly condemn the terror attack in #Manchester and express our deep condolences. Turkey and the United Kingdom will continue their joint and resolute fight against terrorism in all of its forms,” Kalın tweeted.

EU Minister Ömer Çelik also condemned the Manchester attack. “We condemn the terror attack in Manchester. It is an inhuman and brutal attack,” Çelik tweeted. Thousands of fans streamed out of a concert by U.S. singer Ariana Grande after the attacker detonated the explosives shortly after 10:33 pm (21:33 GMT) at Manchester Arena, which has the capacity to hold 21,000 people. Children were among the dead, U.K. police said.

# Turkish president calls on NATO to ‘do more against terror’

Reuters, 24.05.2017



ATO allies should show more solidarity in the fight against global terror, President Erdoğan has said, stressing that the alliance’s role in the anti-terror struggle will constitute one of most important items of the May 25 Summit in Brussels.

“Solidarity is the only antidote of terror. Sharing intelligence on a real time basis is a must and NATO should give more support to allied countries,” Erdoğan told reporters. NATO members are expected to discuss how the alliance can lend more support to the fight against terror and whether or not it should institutionally be part of an international coalition fighting the ISIL.

Erdoğan noted that the summit comes at a moment when the world is struggling with a number of global problems such as migration and cybercrime. “All these asymmetric threats are seriously threatening both national and international security. Among all these threats, terror comes first. There is a need for a determined, principled and consistent approach. In particular, all NATO allies are obliged to be in full solidarity and cooperation,” he said.

The recent terror attacks in St. Petersburg, Stockholm, Paris and Manchester show that terrorism is a global, not regional problem, Erdoğan added. “This reality needs to be acknowledged: Terror is not a single country’s problem, but a problem of the entire world. Global issues should be addressed with the cooperation of everyone,” he said, complaining that a number of countries “are still making distinctions” between terror groups.

On a question over Germany’s possible plans to remove its troops from the Incirlik base, after Turkey has been blocking the visit of German lawmakers, Erdoğan recalled statements from the German authorities that there would be no relocation of troops.

“But if they want to do something like that [removal of troops], it’s not going to be an important problem for us. If they leave then we’ll just say ‘goodbye,’” he said. On another question about Turkey’s veto on Austrian participation in NATO programs, Erdoğan replied with just one sentence: “Those who block will be blocked.” Ankara recently rejected neutral Austria’s participation in some NATO programs, citing Vienna’s “constant anti-Turkish position” at every European Union platform.

# Rebels leave last opposition district in Syria's Homs

Reuters, 21.05.2017



The last buses carrying rebel fighters and their families left Syria's Homs, completing a deal to bring the city back under government control for the first time since the start of the war.

Several hundred fighters left in the final phase of the evacuation of insurgents from al-Waer, an early center of the Syrian uprising. In what the government calls reconciliation deals, thousands of opposition fighters and their families have left a number of areas in western Syria in recent months, bringing President Bashar al-Assad's government back in control of the country's main urban centers.

The opposition and the United Nations have criticized the deals as forced displacement of Assad's enemies often after months or years of siege and bombardment. One of the rebels leaving al-Waer yesterday said many of the fighters had come to the district from other areas of Homs, including the Old City, after those areas were retaken by government forces earlier in the conflict.

"I don't want to stay here. I'll go to Idlib, and want to go onto Turkey and then Europe after that," he said, without giving his name. Evacuees have mostly headed for insurgent-held Idlib province, or for Jarablus, a town along Syria's northern border near Turkey.

Al-Waer has been under full siege for more than a year, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Government forces backed by Russian military police had begun to take control of key parts of the district, a Russian officer told Syrian state TV.

Homs Governor Talal Barazi told reporters that in the coming hours "al-Waer will be empty of all militants and weapons." He said more than 700 rebel fighters would have left by the end of the final phase, as well as at least 1,000 other people including their family members.

That brought to more than 14,000 the total number of people to leave al-Waer in several phases since the agreement began to be implemented in March, Barazi said. Among them were some 3,700 rebels, allowed to leave with their light weapons.

State television showed rebels milling around, depositing bags and suitcases in front of buses, and holding Kalashnikov assault rifles as armed men from the government side watched the proceedings. Some 1,150 rebel fighters have decided to stay in the district and hand over their weapons under a government amnesty, Barazi said.

# Rare night of street parties in Iran after Rouhani win

AFP, 21.05.2017



It was a rare night of open-air partying in Iran as tens of thousands of supporters of President Hassan Rouhani took to the streets to celebrate his re-election.

For many, it was a chance to breathe easily again after a tense campaign. “I’m happy and a bit relieved after a month of stress,” said 27-year-old Afshin as he joined a large crowd. Across the country, young men and women danced and sang together in the streets until the early hours of the morning, with many taking advantage of the more relaxed atmosphere that attends presidential elections every four years.

As well as the purple of the Rouhani campaign, many wore the green of the reformist Green Movement, which was harshly suppressed after mass protests in 2009. “Ya Hossein, Mir Hossein,” shouted the crowd in Vali Asr, combining a popular religious slogan with the name of Mir Hossein Mousavi, a reformist leader who has been under house arrest since 2011.

Cars honked amid patriotic chants as more and more people filled the streets after dark, completely blocking traffic across wealthier north Tehran. One group screamed with joy as a young boy threw batches of Rouhani photos into the air.

Others held posters of former president Mohammad Khatami, who has been banned from appearing in the media for supporting the Green Movement. “I’m very happy because I’ve reached what I wanted, which was not Mr. Rouhani himself, but the path of reform, freedom and progress,” said Pegah, 25.

Many were determined to ensure Rouhani now kept his vows to improve civil liberties and reform the economy. “In the same way we campaigned for him, we will demand he keeps his promises,” said Afshin.

Videos on social media showed huge crowds in all four corners of the country. “We didn’t leave Mashhad, we took it back,” chanted young people in the holy city of Mashhad, Raisi’s hometown. It was a direct rebuke to Mashhad’s Friday prayer leader -- and Raisi’s father-in-law -- Ayatollah Ahmad Allamolhoda who last year banned concerts and told young music-lovers to “Go somewhere else.”

A video spreading widely on social media even seemed to show a large impromptu rave breaking out in the northeastern city, with huge numbers dancing to techno music. In the Azeri-speaking city of Tabriz in northwest Iran, crowds performed folk dances and local songs at a packed stadium as teenagers waved lighters in the air, while in the southwestern city of Ahvaz, it was the drum-heavy Bandari music that got thousands of revelers dancing.

The police were largely powerless to control the exuberance, and despite a few scuffles, no arrests were reported. In Tehran's Vali Asr Square, police tried in vain to disperse the crowds, saying they lacked a permit to gather, only to back down when the numbers became too great, and let the party continue.

## May presses Macron on Brexit trade talks

Financial Times 25.05.2017



Theresa May has urged Emmanuel Macron not to box Britain into a corner in Brexit talks by insisting that a trade deal cannot be discussed until a divorce settlement is in place.

On the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit in Sicily, the PM tried to keep alive her ambition of tying up a comprehensive EU-UK trade deal before Brexit takes effect in March 2019. In her first meeting with Mr Macron since his election as French president, Mrs May said it was essential that trade talks took place in parallel with knotty discussions on a British exit bill, citizens' rights and the Northern Ireland border.

"She made clear that Britain and the 27 EU member states should be discussing our future relationship with the EU at the same time as discussing the terms of our withdrawal," a British official said after the talks.

Mr Macron is expected to forge a strong partnership with Angela Merkel, German chancellor, during the Brexit talks. EU leaders have already agreed that good progress on a Brexit divorce deal must come before trade negotiations.

British officials say Mrs May restated her wish "for early clarity on the position of EU citizens in the UK and vice versa", although Brussels has warned Downing Street that the technical details are complicated.

The issue of a British exit bill will be even more contentious, with the EU looking at about €100bn gross. Mrs May has said Brussels must also settle outstanding liabilities to Britain. Asked at the G7 whether the EU had its own bill to settle, Donald Tusk, the European Council president, said: "No, we have to respect our obligations and I think it's not about money, it's about rules and also it's about a good basis for our future relations.

"This is why we will be very consistent in this problem, but please believe me it's not because of money but because of rules." Mr Tusk said he had been "pleasantly surprised" at Donald Trump's attitude towards Brexit after EU leaders met the US president in Brussels this week. "He said the EU would come out stronger after Brexit," said Mr Tusk. "Brexit was obviously traumatic but for the EU it was an incident. President Trump agreed."



# Germany is quietly building a European army under its command

Foreign Policy, 22.05.2017



Every few years, the idea of an EU army finds its way back into the news, causing a kerfuffle. The concept is both fantasy and bogeyman: For every federalist in Brussels who thinks a common defense force is what Europe needs to boost its standing in the world, there are those in London and elsewhere who recoil at the notion of a potential NATO rival.

But this year, far from the headlines, Germany and two of its European allies, the Czech Republic and Romania, quietly took a radical step down a path toward something that looks like an EU army while avoiding the messy politics associated with it: They announced the integration of their armed forces.

Romania's entire military won't join the Bundeswehr, nor will the Czech armed forces become a mere German subdivision. But in the next several months each country will integrate one brigade into the German armed forces:

Romania's 81st Mechanized Brigade will join the Bundeswehr's Rapid Response Forces Division, while the Czech 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade, which has served in Afghanistan and Kosovo and is considered the Czech Army's spearhead force, will become part of the Germans' 10th Armored Division.

In doing so, they'll follow in the footsteps of two Dutch brigades, one of which has already joined the Bundeswehr's Rapid Response Forces Division and another that has been integrated into the Bundeswehr's 1st Armored Division. According to Carlo Masala, a professor of international politics at the University of the Bundeswehr in Munich, "The German government is showing that it's willing to proceed with European military integration" — even if others on the continent aren't yet.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has repeatedly floated the idea of an EU army, only to be met with either ridicule or awkward silence. That remains the case even as the U.K., a perennial foe of the idea, is on its way out of the union. There's little agreement among remaining member states over what exactly such a force would look like and which capabilities national armed forces would give up as a result. And so progress has been slow going.

This March, the European Union created a joint military headquarters — but it's only in charge of training missions in Somalia, Mali, and the Central African Republic and has a meager staff of 30. Other multinational concepts have been designed, such as the Nordic Battle Group, a small 2,400-troop rapid reaction force formed by the Baltic states and several Nordic countries and the Netherlands, and Britain's Joint Expeditionary Force, a "mini-NATO" whose members include the Baltic states, Sweden, and Finland. But in the absence of suitable deployment opportunities, such operations-based teams may as well not exist.



But under the bland label of the Framework Nations Concept, Germany has been at work on something far more ambitious — the creation of what is essentially a Bundeswehr-led network of European miniarmies.

“The initiative came out of the weakness of the Bundeswehr,” said Justyna Gotkowska, a Northern Europe security analyst at Poland’s Centre for Eastern Studies think tank. “The Germans realized that the Bundeswehr needed to fill gaps in its land forces ... in order to gain political and military influence within NATO.”

An assist from junior partners may be Germany’s best shot at bulking out its military quickly — and German-led miniarmies may be Europe’s most realistic option if it’s to get serious about joint security. “It’s an attempt to prevent joint European security from completely failing,” Masala said.

“Gaps” in the Bundeswehr is an understatement. In 1989, the West German government spent 2.7 percent of GDP on defense, but by 2000 spending had dropped to 1.4 percent, where it remained for years. Indeed, between 2013 and 2016 defense spending was stuck at 1.2 percent — far from NATO’s 2 percent benchmark.

In a 2014 report to the Bundestag, the German parliament, the Bundeswehr’s inspectors-general presented a woeful picture: Most of the Navy’s helicopters were not working, and of the Army’s 64 helicopters, only 18 were usable. And while the Cold War Bundeswehr had consisted of 370,000 troops, by last summer it was only 176,015 men and women strong.

Since then the Bundeswehr has grown to more than 178,000 active-duty troops; last year the government increased funding by 4.2 percent, and this year defense spending will grow by 8 percent. But Germany still lags far behind France and the U.K. as a military power. And boosting defense spending is not uncontroversial in Germany, which is wary of its history as a military power.

Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel recently said it was “completely unrealistic” to think that Germany would reach NATO’s defense spending benchmark of 2 percent of GDP — even though nearly all of Germany’s allies, from smaller European countries to the United States, are urging it to play a larger military role in the world.

Germany may not yet have the political will to expand its military forces on the scale that many are hoping for — but what it has had since 2013 is the Framework Nations Concept. For Germany, the idea is to share its resources with smaller countries in exchange for the use of their troops.

For these smaller countries, the initiative is a way of getting Germany more involved in European security while sidestepping the tricky politics of Germany military expansion. For these smaller countries, the initiative is a way of getting Germany more involved in European security while sidestepping the tricky politics of Germany military expansion. “It’s a move towards more European military independence,” Masala said.

“The U.K. and France are not available to take a lead in European security” — the U.K. is on a collision course with its EU allies, while France, a military heavyweight, has often been a reluctant participant in multinational efforts within NATO. “That leaves Germany,” he said.



Operationally, the resulting binational units are more deployable because they're permanent (most multinational units have so far been ad hoc). Crucially for the junior partners, it also amplifies their military muscle. And should Germany decide to deploy an integrated unit, it could only do so with the junior partner's consent.

Of course, since 1945 Germany has been extraordinarily reluctant to deploy its military abroad, until 1990 even barring the Bundeswehr from foreign deployments. Indeed, junior partners — and potential junior partners — hope that the Framework Nations arrangement will make Germany take on more responsibility for European security. So far, Germany and its multinational miniarmies remain only that: small-scale initiatives, far removed from a full-fledged European army.

But the initiative is likely to grow. Germany's partners have been touting the practical benefits of integration: For Romania and the Czech Republic, it means bringing their troops to the same level of training as the German military; for the Netherlands, it has meant regaining tank capabilities. (The Dutch had sold the last of their tanks in 2011, but the 43rd Mechanized Brigade's troops, who are partially based with the 1st Armored Division in the western German city of Oldenburg, now drive the Germans' tanks and could use them if deployed with the rest of the Dutch army.) Col. Anthony Leuvering, the 43rd Mechanized's Oldenburg-based commander, told me that the integration has had remarkably few hiccups.

"The Bundeswehr has some 180,000 personnel, but they don't treat us like an underdog," he said. He expects more countries to jump on the bandwagon: "Many, many countries want to cooperate with the Bundeswehr."

The Bundeswehr, in turn, has a list of junior partners in mind, said Robin Allers, a German associate professor at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies who has seen the German military's list. According to Masala, the Scandinavian countries — which already use a large amount of German-made equipment — would be the best candidates for the Bundeswehr's next round of integration.

So far, the low-profile and ad hoc approach of the Framework Nations Concept has worked to its advantage; few people in Europe have objected to the integration of Dutch or Romanian units into German divisions, partly because they may not have noticed. Whether there will be political repercussions should more nations sign up to the initiative is less clear.

Outside of politics, the real test of the Framework Nations' value will be the integrated units' success in combat. But the trickiest part of integration, on the battlefield and off, may turn out to be finding a lingua franca. Should troops learn each other's languages? Or should the junior partner speak German? The German-speaking Dutch Col. Leuvering reports that the binational Oldenburg division is moving toward using English.

# Trump advisor Stephen Miller blocked G-7 migration proposal

Foreign Policy, 25.05.2017



President Donald Trump's controversial senior advisor and speechwriter, Stephen Miller, has led White House efforts to undercut an initiative by Italy to place the migration crisis at the center of this week's Group of Seven major summit meeting starting Friday in Sicily.

For Italy, the summit in Taormina, Sicily, was to provide a poignant opportunity to raise awareness of the plight of hundred of thousands of refugees who cross the Mediterranean Sea to Italy's shores each year, and to reach agreement at the summit on a plan to find them permanent homes.

But the Donald Trump White House has largely blocked its Italian host from putting forward an initiative addressing the need to resettle millions of refugees and migrants who have poured into Europe on rickety boats or crossed borders on foot over the past decade. Instead, the United States has pressed the leaders to cap the session with a stern declaration on the need to fight terrorism, a cause that gained added urgency following a grisly suicide bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester.

The rearguard action was led by the 31-year-old Miller, who has exercised outside influence over the summit's response to the worst refugee crisis since World War II. In line with President Trump's pledge to build a wall to keep Mexicans out of the United States, the White House has been pressing the G-7 leaders to focus more attention on the need to prevent illegal immigrants from crossing borders than on finding migrants who make the journey a permanent home.

The U.S. stance reflects the influence of Trump confidantes like Miller in an area that has traditionally been managed by national security experts in the White House and the State Department. But the State Department remains short-staffed, creating a policy vacuum that has been filled by the White House.

The migration issue has largely been channeled through the White House's domestic policy council, which defers to Miller, the administration's strongest advocate for tough migration policies. Miller has filled a policy void left by a weak multilateral affairs division in the White House, and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who has shown little interest in refugees, according to a U.S. official

In advance of the summit, Italy's Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni met Wednesday with President Trump in Rome and made a last-ditch effort to persuade the American president to soften his opposition to resettling more refugees in the United States and urged the United States to provide financial assistance for migrant rescue operations in the Mediterranean, according to USA Today. It remains unclear how Trump responded.



The move on migration is part of a broader effort by the White House to push back on continental European priorities on a range of issues at the G-7 summit, including climate change, trade, and migration that until recently aligned closely with President Obama's foreign-policy vision.

Trump administration officials contend that G-7 bureaucrats have developed a vexing habit over the years of adopting lengthy communiques with voluminous annexes that don't conform with the president's vision. They also concede that they either haven't had time to adequately review a range of issues before the G-7 or consider them unacceptable.

"It's spun out of control," said a second U.S. official, who noted that the White House favors a simpler event with more hobnobbing among world leaders and fewer policy declarations. "The president of the United States has campaigned on certain principles and he will not abandon those just because another country wishes we would have a different policy" said the second U.S. official. "We are not forcing our policy on others, but they shouldn't try to force theirs on us."

The Trump administration has voiced opposition to numerous proposals put forward by its counterparts, including a call for a sweeping endorsement of the World Trade Organization. Trump characterized the trade group, which was established at the direction of the United States, as a "disaster" during the presidential campaign.

The administration has sought to explore ways to bypass the trade group's resolution disputes mechanism so it can unilaterally slap trade sanctions on countries it suspects are engaging in unfair trade tactics.

The Trump administration also pushed back on a call to endorse the Paris climate accord, with the second U.S. official noting that Trump has yet to decide whether to leave the agreement or not. An "unrealistic" provision in an early draft of the final communique called for sharp cuts in carbon emissions and lessening dependence on fossil fuel, the official said. "That is not what the position of the United States."

The G-7 meeting is an opportunity for the world's leading industrialized democracies — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. But expectations have been set low for the summit, with new governments coming to power in the United States, Britain, and France, rising hostility to trade, and immigration.

The seaside meeting comes at a moment of international political upheaval, with the United States rethinking its support for key international agreements. European diplomats have complained privately that planning for the event has been "hampered" by the State Department's slow transition, according to Reuters.

Trump's G-7 chief negotiator, Kenneth Juster, meanwhile has been pushed out of his job, according to Politico. It remains unclear whether Juster, who is reportedly under consideration to become Trump's envoy to India, has fallen out of favor at the White House. But he will not attend the summit. One Trump insider said that Juster is still being considered for a senior position in the administration. But another Trump insider said "he was pushed out. I also know that India is not a done deal. But he wants it." Some diplomats said that it was not the United States alone that was impeding progress on a range of fronts in negotiations on a summit communique.



Britain and France have gone through national elections that have proven distracting for negotiators trying to forge a common vision. And few nations are particularly keen on agreeing to new financial commitments, or abiding by previous pledges. For instance, the G-7 powers traditionally release a document outlining progress on previous commitments they have made on education. The point of issuing the report is to hold countries accountable for past promises. This year, no such document is expected before the event.

Marie Rumsby, the senior advisor for food security at Global Citizen, an advocacy group, said that a general stinginess has undercut efforts to promote anti-poverty initiatives. In 2015, she noted, the Group of Seven made a commitment to lift 500 million people out of poverty by 2030.

In the early preparations for the summit, the Italian host planned to launch a flagship initiative on food security to help meet that goal. But key members were not able to agree on specific financial commitments, and so they dropped the initiative. "We understand that other governments were not forthcoming with financial contributions," Rumsby said. But Luca De Fraia, of the nongovernmental organization ActionAid Italia, said the biggest setback has been the U.S. effort to undercut Italy's effort to make migration the centerpiece of the summit.

Italy, which hosts one of Europe's largest migrant communities, had proposed having G-7 leaders endorse a standalone statement on migration that underscored the international communities obligations to resettle refugees. But the United States objected, offering up their own version, which proved unacceptable to the Italians.

Deadlocked, they decided to drop the idea of having a separate migration statement. Instead, the final G-7 communique will include a couple of paragraphs on the issue that both sides can live with it. "We know the negotiations and discussions have been tough and we are not expecting much on that front, unfortunately," said De Fraia.



# Announcements & Reports

## *Central Asia at 25*

**Source** : Bruegel  
**Weblink** : <http://bruegel.org/2017/05/central-asia-at-25/>

## *What Factors Cause Individuals to Reject Violent Extremism in Yemen?*

**Source** : Rand  
**Weblink** : [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1727.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1727.html)

## *Actualising East: India in a Multipolar Asia*

**Source** : Brookings  
**Weblink** : <https://www.brookings.edu/research/actualising-east-india-in-a-multipolar-asia/>

# Upcoming Events

## *13th Asia Europe Economic Forum (AEEF)*

**Date** : 26 May 2017  
**Place** : Beijing - China  
**Website** : <http://bruegel.org/events/13th-asia-europe-economic-forum/>

## *Emerging Markets and Europe: Time for Different Relationships?*

**Date** : 27 May 2017  
**Place** : Brussels - Belgium  
**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/524-emerging-markets-and-europe-time-for-different-relationships/>

## *What future for Europe's Social Models?*

**Date** : 27 May 2017  
**Place** : Brussels - Belgium  
**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/526-what-future-for-europes-social-models/>

## *Challenges for Growth in Europe*

**Date** : 27 May 2017  
**Place** : Brussels - Belgium  
**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/521-challenges-for-growth-in-europe/>



## *Global Governance of Public Goods: Asian and European Perspectives*

**Date** : 28 May 2017  
**Place** : Paris - France  
**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/529-global-governance-of-public-goods-asian-and-european-perspectives/>

## *The Future of the Welfare State*

**Date** : 28 May 2017  
**Place** : Berlin - Germany  
**Website** : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/541-the-future-of-the-welfare-state/>

## *Vision Europe Summit 2016*

**Date** : 28 May 2017  
**Place** : Lisbon - Portugal  
**Website** : <http://bruegel.org/events/vision-europe-summit-2016/>