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Turkish government fiercely rules out third-party involvement in peace process

Hurriyet Daily News, 17.11.2014



The Turkish government has categorically closed the door on the involvement of any third party in the peace process, which it labels as its brainchild. “This process is a local process,” Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan said about the process aimed at ending the three-decade-long conflict between the outlawed Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK) and Turkish security forces.

“It is a process which Turkey implemented with its own will. We don’t believe that inclusion of a different country, mechanism, system, organization or structure would be right” Akdogan said.

“Turkey is advancing this process with its own opportunities and capabilities,” he added. Akdogan responded to various questions in a meeting with the state-run Anadolu Agency’s “Editor Desk.” Akdogan’s strongly worded remarks were an apparent response to the PKK’s demand for an international mediator, possibly the United States, to help get peace talks with Turkey back on track and avert an escalation of their insurgency. “We have now reached the point where there has to be movement. That is why we are suggesting a third power observe this process. This could be the United States. It could also be an international delegation. We need a go-between, we need observers. We would also accept the Americans. From our view, it is moving in this direction,” Cemil Bayik, a founding member and leading figure of the PKK, told Austrian newspaper Der Standard in early November.

The U.S., like its NATO ally Turkey and the European Union, classifies the PKK as a terrorist organization. Furthermore, Akdogan also argued that the involvement of a third country would complicate the process. As an example of such a complication, he cited the dialogue held between state officials and the PKK abroad between 2009 and 2011 in a series of meetings publicly known as the “Oslo talks.” The talks collapsed after a PKK attack killed 13 soldiers near Diyarbakir in July 2011. Akdogan’s remarks on the peace process were followed by a make-or-break meeting with a delegation from the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) later in the same day, with both sides emerging to release carefully constructed announcements to help the dialogue channels remain open on the process. While describing the climate concerning the peace process as “moderate,” Akdogan underlined the need for patience, determination and sincerity in order to find a resolution to the chronic problem.

Akdogan made the remarks before holding the meeting with the HDP’s parliamentary delegation. Emphasizing that dialogue is the basis of the peace and resolution process, Akdogan said, “The meeting with the HDP is substantial.” Speaking to reporters after the meeting, HDP deputy parliamentary group chair İdris Baluken described the meeting as “positive.” Baluken said they discussed ways of keeping dialogue channels open, while noting that such meetings would be held



later this week in order to discuss practical steps to be taken in the upcoming phase of the process. "We have arrived at a consensus to keep dialogue channels open. Important assessments have also been made about moving on in a more constructive way, in regards to the language being used and policies that are being spoken of, for the acceleration of the negotiation process," Baluken said. As he noted, they also discussed some "practical steps," including the HDP parliamentary delegation's visit to the jailed leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan. Baluken sounded confident that the visit would take place shortly, although an exact date is yet to be set.

Ocalan, serving a life sentence on İmralı Island in the Sea of Marmara, has been in dialogue with state officials and the HDP and its predecessor, the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), since at least late 2012 and is playing a central role in the process. However, due to the recent tension, no parliamentary delegation has been able to visit Ocalan since Oct. 22. At the meeting with Akdoğan, Baluken was accompanied by the HDP's other deputy parliamentary chair, Pervin Buldan, and HDP Istanbul deputy Sirri Sureyya Onder. All three lawmakers are frequent visitors to Ocalan as part of the process. The government and the HDP also exchanged views on the inclusion of a monitoring team within the process, Baluken acknowledged. Noting that the government had no objection on that particular issue, Baluken highlighted that the team could be composed of prominent opinion leaders from Turkey.

On the same day, a presentation in Parliament by Interior Minister Efkan Ala on his ministry's budget as part of ongoing deliberations on the 2015 Central Governance Budget Law at Parliament's Planning and Budget Commission offered an opportunity for opposition lawmakers to attack the government's policy on the Kurdish issue. Mehmet Gunal of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) argued that a chapter in the presentation which was titled as "struggle with terrorism," should actually be changed to "negotiation with terrorism." Meanwhile, a heated exchange of words took place between Gunal and the HDP's Hasip Kaplan over use of the word "Kurdish." "In the 21st century, denying Kurd and Kurdish is burying your head in the sand," Kaplan said. When Gunal taunted deputies from the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) for letting Kaplan use the word "Kurdish," the tension escalated, prompting the president of the commission to give a break to the session.

Turkey, Iraq refresh vows to mend ties

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Turkey and Iraq have reinforced their pledge to mend ties during the Turkish prime minister's visit to the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, agreeing on closer cooperation against Islamist jihadists' threat and revive economic ties with a greater momentum than before.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's visit to the country, a vast part of which has been swept by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants since June, is the latest of a series of signs that mark determinations to open a new page in bilateral relations, which were strained during the former Iraqi government's reign.

The countries repeatedly clashed in a variety of issues including the independent oil exports of the Kurdish Region Government (KRG) and the Syrian war during the term of former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. However, in the face of a common threat from ISIL and with the relief of a recent Arbil-Baghdad agreement over oil exports, Davutoglu, and his Iraqi counterpart Haider al-Abadi were confident in recovering their relations to make them even stronger than before. "Iraq's stability and peace is Turkey's stability and peace," Davutoglu said during a joint news conference with al-Abadi on Nov. 20. "Only few countries in the world match up to this extent in terms of historical and social relations, as well as the threats and advantages they face," he stated. Al-Abadi, meanwhile, announced the neighbors have agreed to share intelligence and information against ISIL.

The Iraqi prime minister added talks on cooperation opportunities over security and military fields will be continued with joint works of the two countries' delegations. The prime ministers also announced al-Abadi will come to Turkey in December upon Davutoglu's invitation. "I invited Mr. al-Abadi and his ministers to a joint Cabinet meeting on one of these dates: Dec. 24, 25 or 26 and he accepted it," Davutoglu said. Al-Abadi also confirmed a visit to Turkey in December is on his agenda. Davutoglu also held a meeting with Iraqi President Fuad Masum and Parliamentary Speaker Salim al-Jabouri before departing for the KRG's capital Arbil, where he was set to meet with Kurdish officials. Davutoglu's visit followed a trip to Turkey by Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari earlier this month that was aimed at patching up the chilly ties between the two neighbors.

Turkey fears influx of 2-3 million more Syrian refugees

Reuters, 18.11.2014



Turkey could face an influx of 2-3 million more Syrian refugees if President Bashar al-Assad's forces or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) insurgents advance around Aleppo, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Nov. 18.

“Right now who is filling the void left by ISIL as a result of the coalition's air attacks? It is the regime,” Cavusoglu told a news conference in Ankara. “But there is not that much difference between the ISIL and the regime. Both kill cruelly, especially civilians. And neither hesitate to use whatever weapons are available to them.”

U.S. warplanes have been bombing ISIL forces in parts of Syria, but Assad's military has intensified its campaign against some rebel groups in the west and north that Washington sees as allies, including in and around Aleppo. Rebels and Syrian government forces hold parts of Aleppo, Syria's most populous city before the war. ISIL has seized territory from rival Islamist groups in a belt of territory north of Aleppo, threatening rebel supply routes. It also holds large sections of territory elsewhere in the wider Aleppo province. Turkey has been a staunch supporter of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), an umbrella term for dozens of armed groups fighting against both Assad and ISIL. It has also been pushing for the U.S.-led coalition to broaden its campaign to also tackle al-Assad.

“A weakening of the moderate opposition, the FSA backed by the coalition, will make the adverse situation in Syria worse and more unstable,” Cavusoglu said. “Fearful civilians are fleeing from areas where ISIL, terrorist groups and the regime are gaining ground. A possible advance in Aleppo would mean the influx of two to three million people to the Turkish border to seek asylum.” The Syrian civil war has killed close to 200,000 people and forced more than 3 million refugees to flee the country, according to the United Nations. Turkey already hosts more than 1.5 million refugees and has been pushing the United States and its allies to create a safe haven for displaced civilians on the Syrian side of its border.

Turkey, US ink wind power deal

Anadolu Agency, 21.11.2014



Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz and U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz signed a memorandum of understanding on improving clean wind energy between Turkey and the U.S. on Nov. 20. The two ministers also said more cooperation is on the road ahead between the two countries in clean energies, and perhaps even nuclear energy.

“The agreement is one step closer to a strong relationship between our countries in economic development, clean energy and addressing our mutual concerns on energy security,” said Moniz.

Yildiz said both countries wanted wind turbines with an installed power of 3,000 megawatts to be manufactured in Turkey, and targeted at least \$500 million worth of investments. “Turkey had an installed capacity of 19 megawatts twelve years ago. Now, this is up to over 3,500 megawatts. We aim to encourage the production of wind turbines in Turkey and more cooperation between American and Turkish companies,” he said. The two ministers also discussed the possibility of further collaboration on the construction of nuclear power plants in Turkey, said Moniz. “In the U.S., we remain committed to nuclear power. We are promoting small reactors between 50-200 megawatts for the future,” he added.

Yildiz said the U.S.’s policies on nuclear, coal and renewable energy were praiseworthy, while nuclear energy is integral for Turkey to diversify its energy sources. Yildiz also said Turkey and Japan had agreed to make a hosting country agreement for the second nuclear power plant in Turkey. “I believe the hosting country agreement will pass our Parliament by the end of this month, or the beginning of December,” Yildiz said at the Q&A session with reporters after the signing ceremony. The Russian natural gas volume from the West Line to Turkey has recently fallen by 40 percent, Yildiz also noted, although he did not want to comment on the reason for the decrease. “Russia’s daily natural gas delivery to Turkey has decreased by nearly 40 percent, which is not good news for Turkey,” he said, adding that the volume of gas from the West Line has fallen from 42 to 27-28 million cubic meters per day. “The amount should increase again to the contract level. Turkey pays its dues on time,” he added.

Turkey keeps interest rates on hold as inflation stays high

Reuters, 20.11.2014



The Turkish Central Bank kept interest rates on hold Nov. 20 and said it would keep monetary policy tight until the inflation outlook improves significantly. The Central Bank is battling to rein in inflation even as the economy slows and conflict rages in neighboring countries.

The Bank left its one-week repo rate at 8.25 percent, as forecast by 15 of 16 economists polled by Reuters. One economist had expected a cut in the main rate to 7.75 percent. After hiking rates sharply in January to halt a slide in the lira, the central bank cut rates from May to August before leaving them on hold in September and October.

The government slashed its growth estimates and raised its inflation forecast for 2014 and 2015 last month, citing unfavorable conditions in the global economy. Businesses and economists now expect a year-end consumer price inflation rate of 9.22 percent, a Central Bank survey showed last week, creeping up from its previous poll and well above its target rate of 5.3 percent. "With the country's inflation rate standing at just below 9 percent in October, the highest rate among the leading emerging markets, the gap between the current level of consumer prices and the central bank's target is embarrassingly wide," said Nicholas Spiro of Spiro Sovereign Strategy in London. "If the [Central Bank] continues to keep rates on hold until inflation starts to meaningfully decline ... it will win back credibility in the eyes of investors," he said. The Central Bank kept its overnight lending rate at 11.25 percent, its primary dealers' overnight borrowing rate at 10.75 percent and its overnight borrowing rate at 7.50 percent. Two economists had forecast a 75 basis-point cut in the overnight borrowing rate and two predicted cuts in the overnight lending rate.

Widening Turkey-EU gap worries bosses group

Hurriyet Daily News, 20.11.2014



Turkey's leading business group has noted its worry over the divergence in perception between Turkey and the European Union, adding that there was "no alternative" to joining the bloc to guarantee a secular and pluralist democracy.

"We are worried about the separation of perceptions between Turkey and the EU. Turkey's soft power and active foreign policy in its region and toward its neighbors in the early 2000s stemmed from its secular democratic system and its EU membership perspective. Turkey's rising power status that provided high economic growth came from its harmony with EU values.

Therefore, on the path of a secular and pluralist democracy, there is no tangible and serious alternative to its membership perspective," said Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen Association (TUSIAD) President Haluk Dincer at the "Turkey – EU Relations: Scenarios for the future" conference organized by TUSIAD and the Brookings Institute Nov. 20 in Istanbul. Dincer said that although many years have passed in Turkey-EU relations, no tangible calendar has ever been set, stressing that accession negotiations should be revived. He listed a number of factors that have affected accession negotiations, placing the decline of the EU's enlargement perspective after the euro crisis and the EU commission's failure to foresee any enlargement in the coming five years as the most important factor that could affect both parties. Dincer said the future of the Cyprus negotiations, which also involved international actors, was a determining factor, and emphasized that Turkey "should display a more constructive attitude."

Claiming that there had recently been a regression in terms of Turkey's democratic environment, political criteria, state of law, and freedom of speech, Dincer said Chapters 23 and 24 of the accession process - concerning the judiciary, fundamental rights, freedom and security - should be immediately opened. Agreements on readmission and visa facilitation had a positive effect on the public as part of EU-Turkey negotiations, Dincer said, adding that efforts to lift the "political blockades" of some EU countries could also contribute to negotiations. The TUSIAD head said Turkey should focus on fulfilling the preconditions of the chapters that do not have such political barriers ahead of them. Dincer also emphasized that TUSIAD "did not agree with the understanding that democracy, economic growth and prosperity is a zero-sum game." "It is a global fact that welfare and high amounts of consumption are not sustainable in the long-run without democracy," he said.

US direct investments in Turkey falling short

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Turkey attracted a mere \$160 million in foreign direct investments (FDI) from the U.S. in the first nine months of 2014, the president of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) has said, in a ceremony to mark the opening of the Istanbul office of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The figure amounts to only 3 percent of Turkey's overall FDI of \$5.6 billion, TOBB head Rifat Hisarciklioglu said on Nov. 18. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has opened its regional office in Istanbul to boost economic ties with Turkey and other countries in the region.

Hisarciklioglu said ongoing efforts to make Turkey the center for global corporations in the region would be strengthened thanks to the office. "The U.S. will not be 10,000 km away anymore, it will be at the heart of the city," he said. Turkish Development Minister Cevdet Yilmaz, who was also present at the ceremony, urged for a greater trade volume between the two countries. The U.S. is currently the seventh top recipient of Turkish exports and the fifth highest exporter of goods to Turkey. Yilmaz said U.S. direct investment in Turkey only amounted to \$9 billion of the total \$137 billion FDI in Turkey since 2002, adding that he expected the proportion to increase.

The new office is located in the Istanbul headquarters of the Turkish Chambers and Stock Markets Union, in the Levent district of the city. The vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Myron Brilliant, said the Istanbul regional office was only the chamber's second such office to be opened in the world. The other office, in Brussels, was opened several years ago. Brilliant added that Turkey was picked for its location as a hub between Europe, the Middle East and Africa, which provides many opportunities for businessmen. "Think about the places where we do business: China, India, Brazil, Russia. We have chosen Turkey for a significant reason," said Brilliant in his speech.

Iran says nuclear deal ‘possible’ in last-ditch round

Agence France-Presse, 18.11.2014



Iran’s foreign minister insisted on Tuesday 18 November that a nuclear deal remained possible as he arrived for a final round of talks with world powers, with differences still wide just six days before a deadline to strike an agreement between them.

But Mohammad Javad Zarif warned that an accord would only happen if the other side -- the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany -- refrained from making “excessive demands”. “A deal is still possible,” Zarif was quoted by Iranian media as saying after landing at Vienna airport.

“If, because of excessive demands by the other side, we don’t get a result, then the world will understand that the Islamic Republic sought a solution, a compromise and a constructive agreement and that it will not renounce its rights and the greatness of the nation.” “The mammoth accord being sought by Monday’s deadline, after months of negotiations, is aimed at easing fears that Tehran might develop nuclear weapons under the guise of civilian activities. It could consign to history a 12-year standoff over Iran’s atomic programme, silence talk of war and help normalise Iran’s relations with the West after 35 years of mistrust and antagonism. It could also boost Iran’s economy, improve the lives of ordinary Iranians and mark a rare foreign policy success for US President Barack Obama, five years after he offered Tehran an “outstretched hand”.

US and Iranian negotiations are under domestic pressure not to give too much away, however, while Israel assumed to be the Middle East’s sole nuclear-armed power and others in the volatile region are sceptical. In order to make it virtually impossible for Iran to assemble a nuclear weapon, the US, China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany (the P5+1) want Iran to scale down and put limits on its nuclear programme. Iran, which says its nuclear aims are exclusively peaceful, wants painful sanctions lifted and a recognition of its “right” to a peaceful nuclear programme. Some areas in what would be a highly complex agreement appear provisionally sewn up, like altering a reactor being built at Arak, a different use for the Fordo facility under a mountain to protect it from air attack and more inspections.

But the big problem remains enrichment, which renders uranium suitable for power generation and making nuclear medicines but also for a weapon. At present Iran could use its existing infrastructure to produce enough weapons-grade uranium for one bomb in a few months, although any such “breakout” attempt would be detected very quickly. And Iran wants to ramp up massively the number of enrichment centrifuges in order, it says, to make reactor fuel. The West wants them slashed, saying Iran has no such need at present, while seeking to extend the “breakout” period to at least a year. Other thorny issues are the duration of the accord and the pace at which sanctions are lifted, an area where Iranian expectations are “excessive”, one Western diplomat said.

“We still have gaps to close and do not yet know if we will be able to do so,” a senior US official warned late Monday. Given the differences many analysts expect more time to be put on the clock. “There is virtually no possibility that a complete deal will be concluded by November 24,” former top US diplomat Robert Einhorn, now an expert with the Brookings Institution, told AFP, predicting another extension of “several more months”. And the alternative walking away would be “catastrophic,” Arms Control Association analyst Kelsey Davenport said. “Given the political capital that both sides have invested ... it would be foolish to walk away from the talks and throw away this historic opportunity,” Davenport told AFP. For now though, with another extension presenting risks of its own fresh US sanctions, not least officials insist that they remain focused on the deadline. “An extension is not and has not been a subject of conversation at this point,” the senior US official said. Zarif was due to hold a working lunch in the Austrian capital Tuesday with the powers’ lead negotiator, former EU foreign policy Chief Catherine Ashton, before the talks begin in earnest later.

Jerusalem synagogue attack puts Israel close to brink

The Guardian, 19.11.2014



Five Israelis were killed in a frenzied assault by two Palestinians who targeted worshippers at a Jerusalem synagogue, the latest in a series of deadly attacks that many fear is pushing the city to the edge of a dangerous escalation in violence. Four of the people killed were rabbis, three of them holding joint US citizenship, one with dual British citizenship.

The fifth victim was an Israeli policeman, who succumbed to his injuries late on Tuesday night. The attack was greeted by international condemnation, and Israel’s Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, vowed to “respond harshly”.

He described the attack as a “cruel murder of Jews who came to pray and were killed by despicable murderers”. The two assailants, cousins Ghassan and Uday Abu Jamal, attacked the worshippers with meat cleavers and a gun during early-morning prayers before they were killed by police officers. The circumstances of the incident have added to the sense of crisis in Jerusalem. Witnesses described a chaotic and bloody scene inside the synagogue as police and the attackers engaged in a shootout at the building’s entrance. Photographs distributed by Israeli authorities showed a man in a prayer shawl lying dead, a bloodied butcher’s cleaver on the floor and prayer books covered in blood. Many in Israel have been alarmed by the religious dimension to the killings. Violence in Jerusalem, areas of Israel and the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, has surged in recent months, exacerbated by tensions over a key holy site revered by Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary and Jews as the Temple Mount.



Prominent among those who condemned the killings were the US president, Barack Obama and the British Prime Minister, David Cameron. Denouncing it as a “horrific attack” Obama told reporters at the White House: “Tragically, this is not the first loss of lives that we have seen in recent months. Too many Israelis have died, too many Palestinians have died.” Netanyahu called the attack a “cruel murder of Jews who came to pray and were killed by despicable murderers”. In an evening press conference he once again accused the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, of stirring tension in Jerusalem, and called on the international community to express its outrage. In the immediate aftermath of the attack Netanyahu ordered the demolition of the homes of the two attackers. Other measures reported to be under consideration by the public security minister, Yitzhak Aharonovitch, were the loosening of firearms regulations to allow security personnel to carry guns off duty and the reported establishment of security checks on those leaving Palestinian neighbourhoods of the city.

The US consulate in Jerusalem identified the dead Americans as Aryeh Kupinsky, Kalman Ze’ev Levine, and Moshe Twersky. Israeli authorities said the British man killed was Avraham Goldberg, 68, who had immigrated to Israel in the 1990s. The policeman who was killed was Zidan Saif. The four rabbis were buried on Tuesday afternoon in funerals attended by several thousand people and by senior political figures. Relatives in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Jabal Mukaber later said the attackers were the cousins Ghassan and Uday Abu Jamal, who burst into the Kehillat Bnei Torah synagogue in Har Nof. Israeli media reported that one of the two assailants had worked in a supermarket in the area. Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, quickly condemned the killings. “We condemn the killing of civilians from any side,” he said in a statement. “We condemn the killings of worshippers at the synagogue in Jerusalem and condemn acts of violence no matter their source.”

But Hamas, the militant Palestinian group that runs the Gaza Strip, praised the attack. In Gaza, dozens of people took to the streets to celebrate, with some offering trays full of sweets. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a small militant group, said the cousins were among their members, though it did not say whether it had instructed them to carry out the attack. Speaking to journalists at the scene, Jerusalem’s mayor, Nir Barkat, expressed shock at the brutality of the attack. “To slaughter innocent people while they pray ... it’s insane,” he said.

In a bleak assessment of the wave of violence, the Israeli justice minister, Tzipi Livni, told Army Radio that she had long feared that a religious war was developing. “And a religious war cannot be solved.” In Jabal Mukaber relatives of the two attackers offered theories about the motives for the attack, with some linking it to the death of a Palestinian bus driver found hanged behind his bus, described by Israeli authorities as a suicide but widely believed by many Palestinians to have been a lynching. Other family members, however, blamed recent friction at the Temple Mount which has been blamed for a rash of deadly violence and clashes. A cousin of the men, Sufian Abu Jamal, a construction worker aged 40, described the attack as a “heroic act and the normal reaction of what has been happening to Palestinians in Jerusalem and at the al-Aqsa mosque”. At the house of Uday, “Abu Salah”, an uncle of one of the men, said his relatives had been made angry by what they had seen on Facebook and television news reports. “It was a situation ripe for an explosion and that is what happened.”

The attack was the latest in a series of deadly assaults. Five Israelis and a foreign visitor have been deliberately run over and killed or stabbed to death by Palestinians. About a dozen Palestinians have also been killed, including those accused of carrying out those attacks. Residents trace the recent violence in Jerusalem to July when a Palestinian teenager was burned to death by Jewish assailants, an alleged revenge attack for the abduction and killing of three Jewish teens by Palestinian militants in the occupied West Bank. The US secretary of state, John Kerry, said the attack was “a pure result of incitement”. In an emotional statement in London, Kerry added: “Innocent people who had come to worship died in the sanctuary of a synagogue. They were hatched, hacked and murdered in that holy place in an act of pure terror and senseless brutality and murder.”

IMF says approves 1-bn-euro stand-by loan for Serbia

Agence France-Presse, 20.11.2014



The International Monetary Fund said on Thursday November 20 it had approved a new stand-by loan for Serbia worth around one billion euros (\$1.25 billion) to help it achieve economic reforms.

“The government’s economic programme will be supported by a 36-month precautionary stand-by arrangement. The overall size would be around one billion euros,” Zuzana Murgasova, head of an IMF mission that visited the Balkan country for the past two weeks, told reporters. However, the stand-by loan is yet to be approved by the IMF’s executive board, she added.

Serbia has agreed to carry out a comprehensive programme of economic recovery, composed of short-term fiscal consolidation measures and structural reforms, said Serbian Finance Minister Dusan Vujovic. The aim of the programme is to reduce the budget deficit to 4.25 percent and save some 1.3 billion euros by 2016, Vujovic added without giving further details. The deal is to take effect on January 1, he said. “This is an important day for Serbia,” Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said hailing the deal. The talks with the IMF came as the Serbian Central Bank (NBS) said on Wednesday that the country’s economy would contract by 2.0 percent this year. Earlier the government had forecast a 1.0 percent negative growth. The deal was reached after Serbia had taken various measures to reduce its high fiscal deficit, including a 10-percent cut of pensions and public sector monthly wages above 200 euros (\$250).

The adopted measures also included the privatisation of some 500 loss-making state-owned companies by the end of 2015 that cost up to 600 million euros per year in subsidies. In addition Serbia has also adopted a new labour law to cut some job protections and raise the retirement age for women to 65. Serbia, which began negotiations to join the European Union in January, is expected to report a record budget deficit of 8.0 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) this year.

In a country of 7.2 million people, more than 700,000 are employed in the public sector while 1.7 million are pensioners. The unemployment rate is around 17 percent and has been reduced by three percent in the last six months, Vujovic said. Most people with jobs struggle to live on an average monthly salary of 350 euros (\$444). The IMF had frozen a billion-euro loan (\$1.3 billion) in 2012 due to the Serbian government's inability to meet its terms.

NATO warns on Russian troops amid call to honour Ukraine peace plan

Agence France-Presse, 18.11.2014



NATO warned on Nov. 18 of a “very serious” build-up of Russian soldiers and weapons inside Ukraine and on its border as Germany’s foreign minister urged Kyiv and Moscow to respect a tattered peace plan. The West is keeping up pressure on Russia over Ukraine following a bad-tempered G20 summit in Australia at the weekend which Russian President Vladimir Putin left early.

In Brussels, NATO’s head Jens Stoltenberg issued a warning to Moscow over the seven-month conflict in Ukraine’s east which has killed over 4,100 people and plunged relations between the West and Russia to a post-Cold War low.

Stoltenberg said there was a “very serious build-up” of troops, artillery and air defence systems inside Ukraine and on the Russian side of the border as he arrived to meet European Union defence ministers in Brussels. “Russia has a choice. Russia can either be part of a peaceful negotiated solution or Russia can continue on a path of isolation,” Stoltenberg said. “The international community calls on Russia to be part of the solution.” At the same time, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier met Ukraine’s pro-Western leaders, before crunch talks later Tuesday in Moscow with Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. The meeting will be the first by a senior European minister since July. Germany is playing the lead role in mediating the crisis with Russia. Steinmeier said a peace plan agreed in Belarus in September, including a frequently violated ceasefire, “were not perfect but they do form a basis. We have to fulfil the agreements.”

Following a meeting with Berlin’s top diplomat, Ukraine’s Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk repeated calls for US-backed negotiations with Russia on a “neutral territory”. But Moscow quickly told Kyiv that it needs to deal directly with pro-Russian rebels in the region instead. “The authorities in Kyiv do not need to hold talks with Moscow but with representatives of southeast Ukraine,” deputy Russian foreign minister Grigory Karasin told Interfax. As the unrest in eastern Ukraine drags on into the ex-Soviet state’s harsh winter, Ukraine’s military said Tuesday that fresh clashes over the past 24 hours between government forces and rebels killed six of its soldiers. The latest deaths came despite the nominal truce that has halted fighting along much of the frontline but failed to stop bombardments at key flashpoints. Russia rejects claims that it provides military backing for the heavily armed separatist rebels in the east. It also denies that it supplied the anti-aircraft missile

which downed Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine in July, killing 298 people, an incident which sharpened the West's focus on the unrest. As the race to defuse the conflict steps up, the European Union on Monday agreed to blacklist more Kremlin-backed rebels in Ukraine. However, it stopped short of fresh sanctions against Moscow, saying there was hope of restarting dialogue. New European Union diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini said foreign ministers meeting in Brussels had raised the possibility of her visiting Moscow to "re-engage in a dialogue" in search of a solution. Ahead of Steinmeier's visit to Moscow later Tuesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said his government hoped "that the 'point of no return' has not yet been crossed" in Russia-Europe relations.

The comment came as Russia engaged with Germany and Poland in a tit-for-tat series of expulsions of diplomats which has further heightened tensions between the 28-nation EU and its vast eastern neighbour. In unusually strong remarks in Australia on Monday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel vowed the Kremlin "will not prevail". She called on Western leaders not to lose hope in what may be a long struggle with Russia over Ukraine. Ukraine has urged Brussels to go further to send a clear message to Moscow. During the meeting with Steinmeier, Yatsenyuk lashed out at Russia, insisting that the September peace agreement "is being observed by Ukraine and blatantly violated by the Russian side".

Ukraine protests one year on: 'Of course we haven't achieved our goals'

The Telegraph, 21.11.2014



It was on a freezing November Thursday when up to 1,000 people headed to Kiev's Independence Square. They brought with them Ukrainian and European flags, a small stage and sound system, and a furious sense of betrayal at President Viktor Yanukovych's refusal to sign up to a European integration deal.

Few realised it at the time, but the rainy night of November 21, 2013, marked the beginning of one of the most remarkable revolutionary movements in recent times. But many of the revolutionaries who flocked to the square in November and December last year are in a despondent mood.

"No, of course we haven't achieved our goals," said Sergei Leshchenko, a journalist turned activist who was one of dozens of former revolutionaries elected to parliament last month. "In fact we still have several steps to go to get there." In one sense, the EuroMaidan protests that began that night were a runaway success. Viktor Yanukovych is long gone, overthrown by an eruption of popular anger, and Ukraine is on a firmly pro-European course under a president and prime minister who are, at least on paper, committed to far reaching reforms. But that, said Mr Leshchenko, was only half the point. "The goal was not to get rid of Yanukovych," said "The main idea of Maidan was a country without corruption, a country without oligarchs, country without the old order of politicians."



European integration was the means by which many Ukrainians hoped to achieve that goal - and until a few hours before the protesters began to gather on that Thursday evening, it had seemed inevitable. "Everything was geared towards signing that deal for months," said one senior Ukrainian diplomat who was working in the foreign ministry at the time. "Senior ministers were hiring people to teach them about the EU and how it works. And then one day the order came down 'OK, we're not doing that any more'." The official reason was to take more time to examine the impact of the agreement on trade relations with Russia. Moscow's opposition to the association agreement had been building since the summer, with the Kremlin openly warning that it may be compelled to tighten trade restrictions with Ukraine in a bid to protect its own domestic producers from a tide of cheap European goods. But those close to process believe it was only when Vladimir Putin spoke to Mr Yanukovich directly, just a few weeks before the deal was to be signed, that the Ukrainian president decided to shelve the project.

"There are two big questions: what did Mr Putin say that finally made Yanukovich change his mind about the association deal; and why did he suddenly flee in February?" said the diplomat. "To be honest, I'm not sure we will ever know the answers." In retrospect, that first U-turn needn't have been the end of Mr Yanukovich's career, said Mr Leschenko. "I still think if he had signed the association agreement in the early days, he would be president now," said Mr Leshchenko. "In fact, right up to early December, when protests were galvanised by police violently evicted students from the square, he could probably have fired the interior minister and survived." Why Mr Yanukovich declined to opt for any of these solutions remains a mystery. Instead, he made a series of erratic decisions, wavering between halfhearted police crackdowns that fuelled anger without clearing the square, and calls for conciliation without offering any concessions. For reasons still unclear, on February 22 he fled the capital immediately after signing an agreement that would have kept him in power until December.

At least 17 police officers and over 100 protesters were dead, and central Kiev was a blackened wreck, but the revolutionaries had prevailed. Today, Independence Square is once again the pristine, bustling heart of Kiev's shopping district. The cobblestones have been relaid, the pavements scrubbed clean of the ash of burnt tires, and the gutted remains of the Trade Union building, once the protesters' headquarters, is hidden behind an advertising hoarding celebrating Ukrainian unity. The transformation is disorientating. At a bakery near the Kozatsky hotel, customers munch pancakes at tables on which volunteer surgeons pulled shrapnel and bullets from protesters' legs. The pavement outside, where the bodies of the snipers' victims the surgeons could not save were laid in February, is bare. But while the barricades have vanished, unanswered questions remain. "No riot police have been jailed for the sniper killings in February. No corrupt politician has been imprisoned, Yanukovich and his entourage still avoid prosecution," said Mr Leshchenko.

"It is sad and depressing that we have not punished politicians responsible for corruption and bloodshed. We need that to set the precedent for change," he added. Throughout last winter, the established politicians were following, rather than leading the crowd. The first demonstrations on November 21 were organised independently via Facebook by people unwilling wait for the weekend protests called by mainstream opposition politicians, including Mr Yatsenyuk, suggested. And when the three "political" opposition leaders finally signed the February 21 agreement with Mr Yanukovich, the rank and file on the streets refused to accept it. But in the post-revolutionary government the conventional politicians have the initiative once again, and, some former activists suspect, represent the interests of the very establishment they set out to overturn.



Petro Poroshenko, the new president, was an early backer of the revolution and an avowed pro-European. But he is both an oligarch and a political insider who worked with previous presidents including Mr Yanukovich. Mr Yatsenyuk, the prime minister, was one of the triumvirate of established party leaders who assumed leadership of the protest movement last winter, but who were always viewed with deep scepticism by many in the crowd. With the election of a new parliament last month, of which he himself is a new member, Mr Leshchenko is hopeful deeper reforms can get underway. "After the elections there is no longer any excuse not to take the next steps," he said.

"As long as there is pressure in society for this change, I hope it will stop the politicians from getting lazy." But it will be tough going. With intense negotiations about the formation of a coalition government on going, some fear the 2014 revolution could succumb to the infighting that discredited the Orange revolution of 2004-5. And the last thing Ukraine can afford now is a government paralysed by infighting. The Hryvnia, Ukraine's currency, has lost half of its value against the dollar since February. The threat of default on foreign currency debt is growing. And while Russia recently restored gas supplies under a European-brokered agreement, Ukraine is reliant on outside assistance to pay its vast gas bills.

Meanwhile, in Kiev's military cemeteries, fresh graves are appearing alongside those of the dead of previous wars with each passing week. The bloody secessionist uprising in eastern Ukraine has killed more than 4,000 people since April, deprived Ukraine of some of its most productive industrial assets. Amid reports of a massive separatist troop buildup, Mr Yatsenyuk announced on Friday that the government's priority was equipping the army to repel possible offensives by the Russian-backed rebels who have seized control of a swathe of territory in the east of the country. No one knows yet whether the vast convoys of military supplies seen travelling through rebel territory are a show of force to discourage Kiev from trying to win land by force, or part of preparations for an upcoming Winter offensive. As we reach the anniversary of the first Maidan protests, Ukraine's future is still uncertain.

China surprises with interest rate cut to spur growth

Reuters, 21.11.2014



China cut interest rates unexpectedly on Friday, stepping up a campaign to prop up growth in the world's second-largest economy as it heads towards its slowest growth in nearly a quarter century.

The cut - the first such move in over two years - came as factory growth has stalled and the property market, long a pillar of growth, has remained weak, dragging on broader activity and curbing demand for everything from furniture to cement and steel. "It's a surprise, another Friday night special," said Mark Williams, Chief Asia Economist with Capital Economics in London.

"It may not have a major impact on GDP growth - that depends on if policy makers also allow the rate of credit growth to pick up." The People's Bank of China said it was cutting one-year benchmark lending rates by 40 basis points to 5.6 percent. It lowered one-year benchmark deposit rates by less - just 25 basis points. The changes take effect from Saturday. The central bank also took a step to free up deposit rates, allowing banks to pay depositors 1.2 times the benchmark level, up from 1.1 times previously. "They are cutting rates and liberalising rates at the same time so that the stimulus won't be so damaging," said Li Huiyong, an economist at Shenyin and Wanguo Securities. Recent data showed bank lending tumbled in October and money supply growth cooled, raising fears of a sharper economic slowdown and prompting calls for more stimulus measures, including cutting interest rates. But many analysts had expected the central bank to hold off on cutting interest rates for now, as it has opted instead for measures like fiscal spending, as it also tries to balance the need to reform the economy.

Chinese leaders have also repeatedly stressed they would tolerate somewhat slower growth as long as the jobs market remained resilient, even as they rolled out a series of more modest stimulus measures this year. The risks faced by China's economy are not that scary and the government is confident it can head off the dangers, President Xi Jinping told global business leaders earlier this month, seeking to dispel worries about the world's economy. In a speech to chief executives at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO Summit, Xi said even if China's economy were to grow 7 percent, that would still rank it at the forefront of the world's economies.

White House reviewing policy toward US hostages held by militants

Agence France-Presse, 18.11.2014



President Barack Obama has ordered a comprehensive review of U.S. policy governing efforts to free Americans being held by militant groups overseas, the White House said on Nov. 17.

In recent months, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants have beheaded three Americans, including Peter Kassig, an aid worker and former U.S. Army Ranger. “The administration’s goal has always been to use every appropriate resource within the bounds of the law to assist families to bring their loved ones home,” White House National Security Council spokesman Alistair Baskey said.

“In light of the increasing number of U.S. citizens taken hostage by terrorist groups overseas and the extraordinary nature of recent hostage cases,” added Baskey, “this summer President Obama directed relevant departments and agencies, including the Departments of Defense and State, the FBI, and the Intelligence Community, to conduct a comprehensive review of how the U.S. government addresses these matters.” The administration could not detail all the steps it was taking to free U.S. hostages, but Baskey said “we will continue to bring all appropriate military, intelligence, law enforcement, and diplomatic capabilities to bear to recover American hostages.

Those efforts continue every day.” ABC News reported that a Pentagon official wrote last week to U.S. Representative Duncan Hunter that the review would include an emphasis “on examining family engagement, intelligence collection, and diplomatic engagement policies.” It added that a Nov. 11 letter to Hunter from Christine Wormuth, undersecretary of defense for policy, did not explicitly address the issue of ransom payments, which it is U.S. policy not to pay. ABC News said Hunter wrote the White House in August after the beheading of U.S. journalist James Foley by ISIL, urging Obama “to guarantee we are maximizing our recovery efforts.” ISIL previously killed U.S. journalist, Steven Sotloff and British aid workers David Haines and Alan Henning.

Obama on immigration: 'We are and always will be a nation of immigrants'

The Guardian, 21.11.2014



Barack Obama used a heartfelt televised address to the nation on Thursday to explain his decision to enact sweeping immigration reforms that will shield from deportation almost five million people currently living in the country illegally.

The president unveiled controversial executive action that will make millions of undocumented migrants eligible to live and work in what he described as “a nation of immigrants”. He urged America to show compassion to newcomers who entered the country illegally but have worked hard. He also put down roots yet still “see little option but to remain in the shadows or risk their families being torn apart”.

“Are we a nation that tolerates the hypocrisy of a system where workers who pick our fruit and make our beds never have a chance to get right with the law?” he asked. “Are we a nation that accepts the cruelty of ripping children from their parents’ arms?” The address was a passionate and unapologetic attempt by the president to explain one of the boldest and most contentious decisions of his six-year presidency. Unless major immigration legislation is passed before 2016, Obama’s decision almost certainly means immigration will be a central issue for candidates in the next presidential election. It is an especially toxic issue for Republicans, who are united in opposition to Obama’s action but bitterly divided over how to deal with the millions of undocumented migrants in the country. Leaders have said that not acting risks the party’s long term future, but the conservative base has consistently opposed any reform that includes a path to citizenship for those who enter the country illegally.

Furious Republicans equate Obama’s decision to an “amnesty” for undocumented migrants, and are planning measures to counter it when they assume control of both houses of Congress in January. “If President Obama acts in defiance of the people and imposes his will on the country, Congress will act,” the incoming Republican Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, said on the eve of the president’s remarks. “We’re considering a variety of actions. But make no mistake, when the newly elected representatives of the people take their seats, they will act.” Obama’s action combines increased resources for border security and a direction to the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees border and immigration issues, to adopt a policy of removing “felons, not families”. But the most far-reaching aspect of the executive action is the creation of a new “deferred action” program that will benefit the estimated 3.7 million undocumented immigrants who are the parents of US citizens or permanent legal residents.

Those who have been in the country for more than five years, pass a criminal background check, pay taxes and submit biometric data will receive deportation relief and can apply to work. Obama is also expanding his 2012 deferred action against childhood arrivals (DACA) order, which benefited young people brought to the country illegally as children, who are known as DREAMers. Unlike the



previous order, which applied only to young people of a certain age brought by their parents before 2007, the new DACA program will be expanded to apply to all undocumented migrants, regardless of age, who were brought to the country as children illegally before 2010. The White House is bracing itself for a political storm over the wisdom, legality and fairness of the president's decision, which will inflame an already hostile relationship between Obama and congressional Republicans. The president's critics immediately said they would challenge the his actions, which they characterised as undemocratic and possibly unlawful.

Republicans have pointed out that these executive actions run counter to dozens of statements by Obama in recent years that appeared to indicate he did not believe he had the power to make such sweeping changes to the immigration system. The White House was careful to stress Obama was "acting within his legal authority" and made public a detailed legal opinion from the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, which advised the president on the legality of his decision. In his address, Obama also challenged Republicans who are unhappy with his moves to bring legislation to replace them, while also denying that his actions are equivalent to an amnesty. "Amnesty is the immigration system we have today – millions of people who live here without paying their taxes or playing by the rules, while politicians use the issue to scare people and whip up votes at election time," he said. Mass amnesty would be unfair. Mass deportation would be both impossible and contrary to our character.

Obama added: "Mass amnesty would be unfair. Mass deportation would be both impossible and contrary to our character. What I'm describing is accountability – a common-sense, middle-ground approach: if you meet the criteria, you can come out of the shadows and get right with the law." Although several presidents, including Republicans Ronald Reagan and George HW Bush, have enacted executive changes to the immigration system, none have acted unilaterally to shield so many people from deportation. Almost half of the estimated 11 million undocumented migrants living in the US illegally could benefit from the changes should they apply. The schemes protecting undocumented migrants from deportation will not apply to recent or future illegal immigrants. Those who do qualify will not receive a path to citizenship, be permitted to leave and re-enter the country or obtain subsidies under the Affordable Care Act.

And the protections will only last for three years and could be reversed by Obama's successor in the White House. If the order is rescinded by the next president or simply allowed to expire, millions who have signed up, declaring their presence in the country, could theoretically become vulnerable to deportation again. Hillary Clinton, the most prominent Democratic candidate for the White House in 2016, issued a statement in support of Obama's action. She said it was an "abdication of responsibility" by Republicans to reform the immigration system that had forced the president to bring the stop-gap measure but added "only Congress can finish the job by passing permanent bipartisan reform".

Polls indicate voters are divided over how to treat the millions – many of them Latino – living in the country illegally, and Obama used his address to attempt to persuade the country of the benefits of allowing them to stay. The president said "tracking down, rounding up and deporting millions" was unrealistic, pointing out that illegal border crossings are at a historic low and made the economic case for allowing undocumented migrants the chance to work and pay taxes. In the most emotional segment of his address, Obama's voice strained as he argued that Americans "are and always will



be a nation of immigrants". "We were strangers once, too," he said. "And whether our forebears were strangers who crossed the Atlantic, or the Pacific, or the Rio Grande, we are here only because this country welcomed them in, and taught them that to be an American is about something more than what we look like, or what our last names are, or how we worship." Obama's package of measures also includes an increase in resources to the southern border with Mexico, where there was a brief surge of unaccompanied Central American children over the summer. Additionally, the Obama administration said it would streamline the immigration court process and, in a move that will please Silicon Valley, make it easier for highly-skilled workers, graduates and entrepreneurs to obtain work visas. On Friday, the president will fly to Las Vegas to sign the measures at Del Sol high school, where he kickstarted the push for comprehensive immigration reform almost two years ago.

Five months after Obama made that speech, the Senate passed a bipartisan bill that, had it become law, would have bolstered border security and provided a path to citizenship for many of the 11 million people living in the country illegally. While supported by senior Republicans who are desperate to mend the party's reputation among Hispanic voters, the legislative efforts stalled in the more conservative House of Representatives. "Had the House of Representatives allowed that kind of a bill a simple yes-or-no vote, it would have passed with support from both parties, and today it would be the law," Obama said, adding that he would continue to press for a holistic legislative solution. "But until that happens, there are actions I have the legal authority to take as President – the same kinds of actions taken by Democratic and Republican presidents before me – that will help make our immigration system more fair and more just."

Announcements & Reports

► *How Europe can lead public-sector transformation*

Source : Accenture

Weblink : <http://www.accenture.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/Accenture-How-Europe-Can-Lead-Public-Sector-Transformation.pdf>

► *How to do business Turkey?*

Source : Deloitte

Weblink : <http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/tr/Documents/tax/tr-how-to-do-business-in-turkey-2014.pdf>

► *A new vision for growth: key trends in human capital 2014*

Source : PwC

Weblink : http://www.pwc.com/en_GX/gx/hr-management-services/pdf/pwc-key-trends-in-human-capital-2014.pdf

► *Emerging trends in real estate: the global outlook for 2014*

Source : PwC

Weblink : <http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/asset-management/emerging-trends-in-real-estate-global-2014/assets/pwc-emerging-trends-in-real-estate-the-global-outlook-for-2014.pdf>



► *Strengthening regional and national capacity for disaster risk management: the case of ASEAN*

Source : Brookings Institute

Weblink : <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2014/11/05%20south%20east%20asia%20drm%20petz/strengthening%20regional%20and%20national%20capacity%20for%20drm%20case%20of%20asean%20november%205%202014.pdf>

► *Accelerating exports in the Middle Market*

Source : Brookings Institute

Weblink : <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2014/10/middle%20market/acceleratingexportsinthemiddlemarket.pdf>

► *Russian 'deniable' intervention in Ukraine: how and why Russia broke the rules*

Source : Chatham House

Weblink : http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_publication_docs/INTA90_6_01Allison_1.pdf

Upcoming Events

► *A Transatlantic Pakistan Policy*

Date : 24 November 2014

Place : Washington – USA

Website : <http://www.gmfus.org/archives/a-transatlantic-pakistan-policy/>

► *Europe's Capital Markets Union*

Date : 24 November 2014

Place : Brussels – Belgium

Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/view/475-europes-capital-markets-union-1/>

► *Mapping Competitiveness with European Data*

Date : 28 November 2014

Place : Brussels – Belgium

Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/470-mapping-competitiveness-with-european-data/>

► *From De-industrialization to the future of industries*

Date : 28 November 2014

Place : Brussels – Belgium

Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/474-from-de-industrialization-to-the-future-of-industries/>



► *11th Asia Europe Economic Forum*

Date : 05 December 2014
Place : Tokyo – Japan
Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/view/460/>

► *18th Middle East Iron and Steel Conference*

Date : 08 December 2014
Place : Dubai – United Arab Emirates
Website : <http://www.woodmac.com/public/events>

► *PONI 2014 Winter Conference*

Date : 09 - 10 December 2014
Place : Washington – USA
Website : <http://csis.org/event/poni-2014-winter-conference>

► *Ageing and Health: Policy-making in an Era of Longevity*

Date : 09 February 2015
Place : London – United Kingdom
Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/conferences/ageing>

► *Security and Defense*

Date : 23 February 2015
Place : London – United Kingdom
Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/Defence2015>

► *Diversifying MENA Economies*

Date : 02 - 03 March 2015
Place : London – United Kingdom
Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/conferences/MENA-Economies>

► *Creating an Effective Financial System*

Date : 09 March 2015
Place : London – United Kingdom
Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/conferences/financialsystem>

► *Innovation Forum 2015*

Date : 26 March 2015
Place : Chicago – USA
Website : <http://www.economist.com/events-conferences/americas/innovation-2015>