

Turkey strongly condemns Nice attack, offers solidarity with France

Hurriyet Daily News, 15.07.2016



Turkey has strongly condemned the terrorist attack that killed at least 84 people in Nice during the French National Day celebrations, offering solidarity with France.

Turkish President Erdoğan strongly condemned the attack, which he described as “barbarous,” while also extending his condolences to the families of the victims and the French nation. “As a country which has been subjected to many terror attacks, we understand the feelings of France and the French nation very well. This barbarous attack has once again revealed the necessity of a determined and consistent fight against terrorism,” Erdoğan said.

The president also added that anyone who acted in an ambivalent manner against terror had to take the necessary lessons from the recent attack, saying that terror has no religion, race or nationality.

“I strongly condemn the cowardly terrorist attack that ensanguined Nice on the [French] National Day. Always on the side of the states of the world in the fight against international terrorism, Turkey shares the pain of the people of France,” said Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım in a Twitter message, which he tweeted in French. Terrorism is a crime against humanity and no one knows whom and when it will strike next, Yıldırım said, offering his condolences with those who lost their lives in the incident.

In a written message, the Foreign Ministry condemned and cursed the terror attack, saying, “Turkey is in a full solidarity with France in the fight against terrorism. We will all together continue our struggle against these villains. Terror, before anything else, is an offense against humanity and its universal values.”

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s chief foreign policy advisor and spokesperson İbrahim Kalın condemned the “barbaric attack” in a written statement, offering his condolences to the loved ones of the victims and wishing a speedy recovery to the wounded. “The modern barbarians who perpetrated the attack have nothing to do with religion and humanity. There is no room for them in this world - nor should there be. On this sad day, we stand in solidarity with France. Joint action against all forms of terrorism is a global responsibility and necessity,” he said.

Turkey slams US State Department comments on southeast

Anadolu Agency, 15.07.2016



U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby's comments regarding the Human Rights Watch (HRW) report on southeastern Turkey "do not reflect reality," Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Tanju Bilgiç said.

Bilgiç's remarks came two days after Kirby's press briefing, in which he said: "We're obviously aware of the report stating that the Turkish government has not responded to U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights – the letter requesting permission for a U.N. team to conduct an investigation in southeastern Turkey to examine potential violations by the security forces during military operations in urban areas."

Human Rights Watch accused Ankara of blocking access to independent probes into alleged abuses against civilians in southeastern Turkey. Bilgiç said in a written statement that international human rights organizations could "easily" visit Turkey's southeast. "As one of the 116 countries offering an open invitation to U.N. special procedures since 2001, Turkey cooperates closely with the related rapporteurs," he said.

Bilgiç added that the U.N. Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances in March, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muiznieks in April, and the Turkish co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in May, have all made visits to the southeastern region.

"Moreover, our invitation to Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, to visit our country, including the southeast, remains in place," he said. "Without knowing all of the truth, Kirby's comments that we are preventing investigations in the southeast are not compatible with reality," he added. Bilgiç also vowed that Turkey will continue its "uninterrupted constructive cooperation" with all U.N. mechanisms on human rights.

PM Yıldırım: Turkey needs to normalize relations with Syria

Anadolu Agency, 13.07.2016



Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım vowed that Turkey will eventually normalize relations with Syria, saying such a move was necessary amid ongoing efforts to restore diplomatic ties with Israel and Russia.

“We will expand the circle of friendship as far as possible. This is our aim. We will expand the circle of friendship inside and outside the country. We have already begun to do this. We have returned our relations with Israel and Russia to normal. I am sure that we will return to normal relations with Syria as well. We need that. Syria and Iraq need to reach stability for success in the fight against terror,” Yıldırım said.

He also stated there “malicious intent” in the heated recent debates over granting Syrian refugees Turkish citizenship. “Our heart is rich. We will increase our population and number of citizens, just as we have shared the food and bread of this homeland,” Yıldırım said.

“It has once again been revealed that some have malicious intent on the issue, despite necessary statements that were made. It has been seen that no one else cares about the future of Syrians. Citizenship is something that has existed for many years of human history. Countries naturalize and denaturalize.

Those have rules, standards and conditions. Anyone who fulfills those conditions is naturalized. It is out of question that people involved in particular crimes, terrorism crimes, or have been involved in other illegal affairs, can ever be granted citizenship,” he added.

“Merciless accusations against those who have been left stateless, homeless and searching for a safe port, an honorable people who have escaped death, do not exist in the genes of the Turkish nation or in its traditions. If we extend a hand for those who are in trouble, particularly Syrians, we are doing this as a necessity of our humanity and faith,” Yıldırım said. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ignited the citizenship debate when he said Syrians in Turkey could be granted citizenship if they filed an application and met particular criteria. Interior Minister Efkân Ala subsequently said only Syrians whose citizenship would be “beneficial” for Turkey’s interests would be offered identity cards.

The suggestion has been slammed by members of all three opposition parties as a political move aimed at garnering the votes of Syrians and tilting sensitive demographic balances in the country’s southeast.

Both the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) have said Turkey should hold a referendum on the issue. Meanwhile, Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahçeli has similarly slammed the idea of granting Turkish citizenship to Syrian refugees, also saying the issue is not within the authority of the presidency. "The social dilemmas caused by Syrians threaten the peace of society," Bahçeli said.

Ankara: Rapprochement with Russia will help resolve Syrian unrest

Hurriyet Daily News, 15.07.2016



A senior Turkish government official has said Turkey's mending of ties with Russia will have a positive impact on finding a settlement to the ongoing unrest in Syria, while however noting the two were on completely different pages over how the problem would be resolved.

"I am of the opinion that rapprochement between Turkey and Russia will facilitate the resolution of the Syrian question. I do not think that Turkey and Russia will leave their important differences of opinion behind by tomorrow and come to a common point but I think [rapprochement] will ease [the solution] of the Syria issue," deputy PM Kurtulmuş told .

Turkey and Russia broke the ice after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sent a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin in late June to express his deep sorrow over the downing of a Russian jet on Nov. 24, 2015, and his wishes to normalize bilateral relations.

Turkey's perspective with regard to the Syrian question was based on the will of the Syrian people instead of what some members of the international community preferred, Kurtulmuş said. "There can be a transitional period. A new Syria constitution, political parties' law and new parties could be founded after the closure of the Baath Party, because it's now a bloody-handed party," he said.

Different elements of the Syrian people would also be included into this new political framework, which would be controlled by the international community, he said. "The decision to be given by the Syrian people under this process would be absolute," he added. Syrian people will not accept Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who bore responsibility for the deaths of 450,000 people, the displacement of 8 million others and the collapse of Syria's history, as the leader of the future Syria, Kurtulmuş stated. No country has the power to resolve the Syrian crisis alone, the deputy prime minister stressed, adding, "Therefore there is a need of a joint perspective for peace."

Turkey says NATO must take a role in regional unrest

Anadolu Agency, 08.07.2016



Turkey has again urged NATO to change its security concept and provide support to Turkey in its endeavors against problems emanating from the Middle East, warning that European allies will face bigger problems in the future if the alliance did not take an action now.

“If NATO does not hold its responsibility today, it should comprehend that much bigger problems await Europe,” Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım said during his weekly parliamentary group meeting, echoing the warning issued by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during the NATO Warsaw Summit.

Yıldırım emphasized NATO’s obligations to be more sensitive in the face of rising terror and regional unrest, adding it was Turkey’s right to expect more support from allied countries in its fight against terrorism. “All countries and humanity must now see the magnitude of the tragedy,” Yıldırım said, as the number of refugees worldwide has increased to 60 million, a number higher than the populations of 160 countries.

“The security of Damascus is the security of Paris, of London and of Istanbul. The security of Aleppo is as important as Berlin and Washington. The security of Baghdad is equally important as the security of New York, Rome,” he stated.

In reference to the Chilcot Report, which revealed that Britain’s decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003 was a failure born of flawed intelligence, lack of foresight and “wholly inadequate” planning, Yıldırım accused the West of occupying Iraq and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair of confessing.

“Today, there would be no Daesh problem if humanity did not live the pain of the occupation of Iraq. Composed of looters, Daesh is a structure that was born out of an authority vacuum and has no religion or faith. It’s the very devil. Alright, let’s fight against Daesh, good. But from where did they obtain these very modern weapons? Did Daesh plant a weapons industry in the Iraqi deserts?” Yıldırım asked. Daesh is an Arabic acronym frequently used to refer to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Yıldırım also pointed at the posture the West has been taking against ISIL with the PKK and its offshoot, the PYD in Syria, by saying “[The West claims] the PYD is not a terror organization. Why? Because it has been fighting against Daesh? Since when has a terror organization been providing assistance for the eradication of another terror organization?” The prime minister’s remarks drew a link to a lingering disagreement between Turkey and the United States over the role of the PYD in the anti-ISIL fight in Syria.

The U.S. and many other Western countries regard the PYD as a political party, despite Turkey's insistence that it constitutes a terrorist organization affiliated with the PKK. The PKK is on the lists of terrorist organizations of the U.S. and the European Union.

In a separate statement, Yildirim said there were "not many reasons" to fight with any countries in Turkey's region, including Syria and Egypt, vowing that Ankara would continue to try to improve relations with its neighbors.

"There are not many reasons for us to fight with Iraq, Syria, Egypt and countries in all regions. But there are many reasons to carry relations forward," Yildirim said at a meeting of his Justice and Development Party's (AKP) "Politics Academy" in the capital Ankara. Turkey recently moved to normalize strained ties with Russia and Israel, and Yildirim stressed that Turkey "regards all countries as friends."

"We will increase our friendships and decrease enmities. We will also increase our friendships within the country. We will refrain from meaningless and empty discourse. From now on, we will improve our friendships with all countries surrounding the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. We will keep our disagreements at a minimum," he vowed.

Syria's Assad says Moscow 'never' spoke of departure

AFP, 14.07.2016



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said he has never faced pressure from Russia to step aside, as US Secretary of State John Kerry headed to Moscow seeking to revive stalled peace efforts.

Speaking to NBC News in Damascus, Assad insisted his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had never raised the issue of his departure or a political transition. "Only the Syrian people define who's going to be the president, when to come, and when to go. They never said a single word regarding this," Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said.

Assad's fate is a key question in efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement to Syria's five-year civil war. Hopes for the existing peace process rest on the UN-backed blueprint sketched out by the 22-nation, US and Russian-led International Syria Support Group.

Under this road map, signed by both Syria's ally Iran and Assad's pro-rebel foe Saudi Arabia, a nationwide ceasefire will precede Geneva-based talks on "political transition." But there has been little progress towards a resumption of political talks that was scheduled for August 1.



Kerry was due to arrive in Moscow, a close ally of Assad's government that launched air strikes in support of regime forces last October. Kerry said before leaving Washington that he would meet Putin "to see if we can somehow advance this (the peace process) in the important ways that people want us to." Moscow and Washington brokered a landmark partial ceasefire in Syria in February but it has since all but collapsed amid continued heavy fighting.

Kerry's spokesman John Kirby told reporters his boss was "extremely frustrated" with the failure of peace efforts and "his patience was growing thin". In Washington, many observers have criticised Kerry's outreach to Russia on Syria, arguing he has been strung along by Putin as he seeks to protect his client Assad. But Kirby insisted the administration is not being naive, and that the visit to Moscow, Kerry's third this year, would "probe the sincerity" of Putin's promises.

Syria's conflict began in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government demonstrations and has evolved into a complex multi-front war that has left more than 280,000 dead and forced millions from their homes. Efforts to bring an end to the war have taken on greater urgency since the emergence of the ISIL group, which seized control of large parts of Syria and neighbouring Iraq in mid-2014.

The jihadist group has committed widespread atrocities in areas under its control and organised or inspired a wave of attacks across the Middle East and in Western cities. A US-led coalition is carrying out air strikes against the jihadists in Syria and Iraq and recent months have seen ISIL lose significant territory.

The Washington Post reported that Washington was to offer to cooperate with Russia in joint military action against ISIL and the Syrian branch of Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra Front. In Paris before heading to Moscow, Kerry did not deny the report, but refused to discuss the proposal in detail until he had been to the Kremlin.

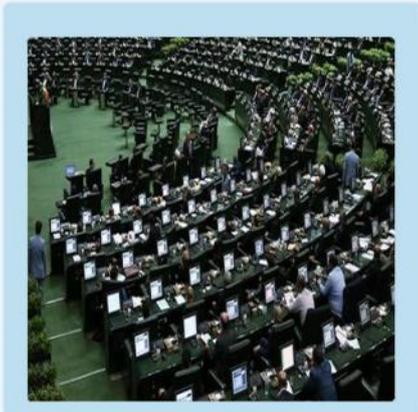
According to the Post, which cited sections of what it said was a draft agreement, US and Russian commanders would set up a joint command and control centre to direct intensified air strikes against the groups. Such a deal is likely to face criticism that it amounts to a tacit acceptance of Putin's efforts to shore up Assad's regime.

In his interview with NBC, Assad also said a US reporter killed in alleged Syrian government bombardment in 2012 was responsible for her own death. Marie Colvin, a 56-year-old war correspondent working for British newspaper The Sunday Times, died in the rebel-held Baba Amr district of Syria's third city Homs.

"It's a war and she came illegally to Syria. She worked with the terrorists, and because she came illegally, she's been responsible of everything that befall on her," Assad said, speaking in English. Asked if she was responsible for her own death, Assad replied "of course," though he denied that his forces had targeted her. His comments came days after relatives of Colvin filed a lawsuit in a US court alleging Assad's regime targeted her to stop her covering government atrocities. The suit, based on information from captured government documents as well as defectors, claims the Syrian military intercepted Colvin's communications and unleashed a barrage of rocket fire on her location, killing her and French photographer Remi Ochlik.

Kerry to offer Russia military coordination on Syria

Reuters, 14.07.2016



The United States will propose increasing military cooperation and sharing intelligence with Russia to identify and target Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al Qaeda headquarters, training camps and supply routes in Syria, the Washington Post reported.

The extent of coordination set out in the document would represent a major shift after years of rivalry between Washington and Moscow, who support opposing sides in Syria's five-year-old civil war. The proposal, set out in a document published by the newspaper, will be presented by Secretary of State John Kerry during a visit, it said.

Kerry declined to comment when asked about the report. "I'll have comments, going to Moscow, meeting with President Putin tonight; we'll have plenty of time to talk about it and I'll give you all a sense of where we are," he told reporters in Paris. A senior State Department official told Reuters that Kerry would discuss how to deal with ISIL and al Qaeda in Syria, as well as efforts to reduce the violence, allow humanitarian access and move towards political transition.

"At present we are not conducting or coordinating military operations with Russia, nor is it clear we will reach an agreement to do so," the official said. The document published by The Washington Post called for intelligence sharing to identify leadership targets, training camps, supply lines and headquarters of the Nusra Front, al Qaeda's affiliate in Syria. Strikes against those targets could be carried out by U.S. or Russian jets. It said that expanded coordination between the United States and Russia would be channeled through a Joint Implementation Group, based in the vicinity of the Jordanian capital Amman.

EU commissioner sends warm message to Turkey on visa deal

Hurriyet Daily News, 11.07.2016



A European Union commissioner has expressed “understanding” for Turkey amid ongoing demands by Brussels for Turkey to change its anti-terror law as part of the visa-free travel deal for Turkish citizens inside the EU.

Dimitris Avramopoulos, the EU commissioner for migration, home affairs and citizenship, told Germany’s Tagesspiel newspaper that there is “pressure on Turkey” in its fight against terrorism. “We should not underestimate the fact that there is enormous pressure on the shoulders of the Turkish government in its fight against terrorism,” Avramopoulos said.

The EU has put a change in Turkey’s anti-terror law as a prerequisite for the realization of visa liberalization for Turkish citizens to enter the visa-free Schengen area. Turkey and the EU have been discussing visa liberalization since 2013 and agreed in March to go ahead with it as part of the deal to halt illegal immigration from Turkey to the EU.

But progress stalled when Brussels insisted that Ankara must also reform its tough anti-terrorism laws. The EU says Turkey must narrow its definition of terrorist crimes, but Turkey says its laws are crucial to its fight with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Officials on both sides have said agreement on visa-free travel for Turkish citizens, unpopular in many EU states, is now unlikely until the autumn at the earliest.

Theresa May to become Britain's next PM on July 13

AFP, 12.07.2016



Theresa May will become the prime minister who leads Britain into talks to quit the European Union, after her last rival in the bid to succeed David Cameron pulled out.

May became the only contender after Andrea Leadsom - who had stirred a storm for suggesting she was more qualified to be premier because she had children - abruptly quit the race. Cameron later announced May would take over from him, when he will go to Queen Elizabeth II and tender his resignation after one final Prime Minister's Questions session in parliament. "We'll have a new prime minister in that building behind me," he said.

Accompanied by her banker husband Philip and surrounded by supportive MPs, a smiling May later stressed the need "to negotiate the best deal for Britain in leaving the EU" in brief comments outside parliament. Cameron chaired a farewell Cabinet meeting before handing over power to May.

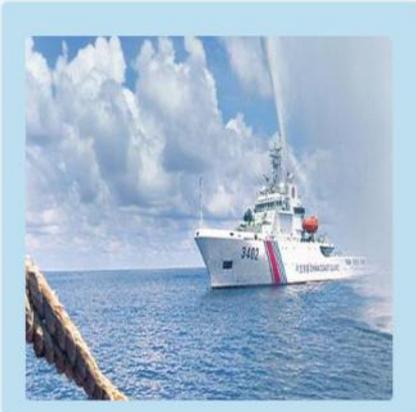
Britain has faced the worst political turmoil in generations following June 23's shock referendum vote to leave the European Union. The outcome prompted Cameron to step down, plunging his ruling Conservative party into a bitter leadership race. At the same time, the head of the main opposition Labour party, Jeremy Corbyn, is also facing a challenge to his job.

Senior MP Angela Eagle formally launched her bid, and Labour's election coordinator, Jon Trickett, said the opposition party should brace for a general election soon after May takes office. "I am now putting the whole of the party on a general election footing," Trickett added. Meanwhile, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she expected the new British government to "quickly" define its relationship with the EU after May becomes the new premier.

"The United Kingdom will need to quickly clarify how it wants its ties with the European Union to be in future," Merkel said at a reception for diplomats north of Berlin. Merkel reiterated that it was now up to London to formally trigger Article 50 to leave the EU following last month's shock referendum backing a "Brexit" or British exit from the Union. Only then could negotiations on any future relationship between Britain and the EU begin, she added.

Migrant flows to EU ease after Turkey deal, 'front line' moves to Italy

Reuters, 13.07.2016



The flow of refugees and migrants to Europe has slowed since April when the European Union sealed a deal with Turkey to halt illegal traffic across the Aegean Sea, the region's border agency chief said.

Since then, Italy has replaced Greece as the migration "front line," with hundreds crossing the Mediterranean from Libya every day, Fabrice Leggeri, head of Frontex, the agency in charge of protecting the EU's external borders, said. "For the first six months of 2016, there were 360,000 illegal entries in the EU, which is higher than what we saw last year, but the influx has been diminishing since April," Leggeri told.

In 2015, Frontex recorded more than 1.5 million irregular crossings into Europe, mostly by people entering Greece before heading north to Germany and Sweden, fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East, North Africa and elsewhere. Leggeri said the "new front line" was now Italy, where about 750 people, mostly from sub-Saharan and Western Africa, arrived each day compared with about 50 in Greece.

A Frontex spokesman said the EU-Turkey deal, under which Ankara agreed to halt illegal migration in return for financial and political rewards, and the closure of the Greece-Macedonia border earlier this year were the two main reasons behind the declining figures. Malta-based charity Migrant Offshore Aid Station said one of its rescue ships had recovered the bodies of four migrants and rescued around 400 people on July 12 from an overcrowded wooden boat en route to Italy from Libya.

Frontex, which will soon be renamed the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, is increasing staff numbers and funding to boost controls at EU frontiers. Border protection will remain a national responsibility and the agency will continue to rely on EU capitals for contributions to a proposed pool of 1,500 border guards ready for quick deployment to crisis spots.

Inspired by the "stress tests" carried out annually by the European Banking Authority to assess the stability of the EU's financial system, Leggeri said his organization wanted to conduct checks to ensure states implemented efficient border policies. "We are currently looking for volunteering countries to establish a methodology," he told reporters.

Responding to concerns that some migrants have suffered human rights abuses, Leggeri said the new-look agency would provide a way - probably an online form - to report wrongdoings, and would carry out investigations where possible.

Abe claims win in Japan parliamentary poll

AFP, 11.07.2016



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition won a landslide victory in an election for parliament's upper house, despite concerns about his economic policies and plans to revise the nation's post-war pacifist constitution for the first time.

Voters backed the hawkish premier, despite a lackluster economic performance, handing his Liberal Democratic Party and its allies control of more than half of the upper house of parliament. An emboldened Abe called for debate on Japan's pacifist constitution, which he said it was his "duty" to revise after scoring a strong win in weekend elections.

"We have always set a goal of revising the constitution...that is my duty as president," Abe said. "But the party does not have more than two-thirds of seats in both chambers by itself, so I don't expect the draft would pass as is," he said, referring to the parliament's lower house as well, and suggesting compromise was needed. "So I hope debate will steadily deepen."

Japan's constitution, imposed by occupying United States forces after World War II, prohibits the use of aggression to solve international conflicts. The provisions are popular in the public at large, but reviled by right-wingers like Abe, who see them as outdated and punitive. Unofficial results from the vote compiled by media show the LDP and its Buddhist-backed allies, Komeito, now occupy more than half - at least 147 - of the seats in the upper chamber of parliament.

Full official results are expected. With backing from fringe parties that also favor constitutional change, Abe could now have the two-thirds majority that he needs in both houses to push through an amendment to the country's basic law. However, observers point out that corralling support for a revision from coalition partners who have traditionally shied away from nationalist posturing could be difficult.

And the proposal would still face a referendum, with pollsters saying the vast majority of the public are wary of any softening of the country's pacifist stance. Meanwhile, China's official agency quickly warned that the victory posed a danger to regional stability. Commentaries by the Xinhua news agency are not formal government statements but often reflect official thinking in China, where memories of Japan's past militarism still spark outrage.

"With Japan's pacifist constitution at serious stake and Abe's power expanding, it is alarming both for Japan's Asian neighbors, as well as for Japan itself, as Japan's militarization will serve to benefit neither side," the Xinhua commentary said.

NATO says no ‘meeting of minds’ with Russia

AFP, 14.07.2016



NATO and Russia failed to overcome deep differences over Ukraine in their first talks since the alliance approved a troop boost in Eastern Europe, alliance chief Jens Stoltenberg said.

Russia proposed steps to improve air safety over the Baltics after a series of military near misses but Stoltenberg admitted there was “not a meeting of minds” on the Ukraine conflict. Moscow’s ambassador to NATO said the planned deployment in its Soviet-era backyard was “excessive” and accused the US-led alliance of fomenting a Cold War atmosphere. The meeting between ambassadors is the first since April, when the Ukraine conflict plunged relations into a deep freeze.

“We had an open and frank atmosphere in the meeting but we didn’t agree,” Stoltenberg said after the talks involving the Russian ambassador and his counterparts from the 28 NATO countries. “Allies and Russia have profound and persistent disagreements on Ukraine. There was not a meeting of minds today,” Stoltenberg said.

The NATO chief added that “in the spirit of transparency, NATO briefed Russia on the important decisions that we took in Warsaw last week to increase our security.” NATO leaders decided at the summit in the Polish capital to send four battalions totalling around 4,000 soldiers to Poland and the Baltic states, which have been nervous ever since Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea.

They also said they had agreed on a twin-track policy of “deterrence and dialogue” with Russia, insisting they would not back down until Moscow abided by the Minsk peace deal for Ukraine. But Russia has been strongly critical of the NATO troop decision, accusing the alliance of aggression and warning that it will react to the deployment of forces in its former Soviet backyard.

“The measures on the eastern flank are not justified. They are excessive and counter-productive,” Alexander Grushko, Russia’s ambassador to NATO, said after the meeting. He said NATO was “taking us back to a Cold War atmosphere” and said the “model of confrontation that (NATO) is imposing on us does not interest us.” Western countries accuse Russia of backing separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine and the United States and European Union have imposed punishing economic sanctions on Moscow.

US sanctions North Korean leader for first time over human rights

Reuters, 11.07.2016



The US sanctioned North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for the first time, citing “notorious abuses of human rights,” in a move diplomats say will infuriate the nuclear-armed country.

The sanctions, the first to target any North Koreans for rights abuses, affect property and other assets within the U.S. jurisdiction. They include 10 other individuals besides Kim and five government ministries and departments, the U.S. Treasury Department said. “Under Kim Jong Un, North Korea continues to inflict intolerable cruelty on its own people, including forced labor, and torture,” Acting Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Adam J. Szubin said.

But inside North Korea, adulation for Kim, 32, is mandatory and he is considered infallible. A 2014 report by the United Nations, which referred to Kim by name in connection to human rights, triggered a strong reaction from Pyongyang, including a string of military provocations.

Earlier this year, Congress passed a new law requiring U.S. President Barack Obama to deliver a report within 120 days to Congress on human rights in North Korea. It had designated for sanctions anyone found responsible for human rights violations. Kim Jong Un, the third generation of his family to rule the Stalinist state, topped the list. The U.S. Treasury Department identified Kim’s date of birth as Jan. 8, 1984, a rare official confirmation of the young leader’s birthday.

Many of the abuses are in North Korea’s prison camps, which hold between 80,000 and 120,000 people including children, the report said. The five agencies designated were two ministries that run North Korea’s secret police and their correctional services, which operate the prison camps. Also named were the ruling Workers’ Party’s Organization and Guidance Department (OGD), a key bureau used by Kim to wield control of the party and the government. The sanctions also named lower-level officials, such as Minister of People’s Security Choe Pu Il, as directly responsible for abuses.

Announcements & Reports

► *The China-Russia Trade Relationship and Its Impact on Europe*

Source : Bruegel

Weblink : <http://bruegel.org/2016/07/the-china-russia-trade-relationship-and-its-impact-on-europe/>

► *An Italian Job: The Need For Collective Wage Bargaining Reform*

Source : Bruegel

Weblink : <http://bruegel.org/2016/07/an-italian-job-the-need-for-collective-wage-bargaining-reform/>

► *The Obama Strategy in Afghanistan: Finding a Way to Win*

Source : CSIS

Weblink : <http://bruegel.org/2016/06/the-effectiveness-of-the-european-central-banks-asset-purchase-programme/>

Upcoming Events

► *The Search for Europe*

Date : 15 July 2016

Place : Brussels - Belgium

Website : <http://bruegel.org/events/the-search-for-europe/>

► *The UK and the EU: Managing the Euro and the Single Market*

Date : 15 July 2016

Place : London - UK

Website : <https://www.chathamhouse.org/event/uk-and-eu-managing-euro-and-single-market>

► *Competitive Gains in the Economic and Monetary Union*

Date : 16 July 2016

Place : Brussels - Belgium

Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/534-competitive-gains-in-the-economic-and-monetary-union/>

► *The Future of Capitalist Democracy: UK-Japan Perspectives*

Date : 16 July 2016

Place : London - UK

Website : <http://www.chathamhouse.org/event/future-capitalist-democracy-uk-japan-perspectives>



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

Date : 17 July 2016
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 : 18 July 2016
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 : 18 July 2016
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 : 20 July 2016
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 : 20 July 2016
Place : Berlin - Germany
Website : <http://www.bruegel.org/nc/events/event-detail/event/541-the-future-of-the-welfare-state/>