



ONE IN 8 GERMANS WOULD JOIN ANTI-MUSLIM MARCHES: POLL

January 1, 2015 Reuters reported: "One German in eight would join an anti-Muslim march if a rapidly-growing protest movement organized one in their home towns, according to an opinion poll published on Thursday. The survey highlighted growing support in Germany, as in other European Union countries including Britain and Sweden, for parties and movements tapping into voter fears that mainstream politicians are too soft on immigration.

Some members of Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative bloc worry that they risk losing support to the euro-sceptic Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, which has shifted its focus to immigration and includes many who also back the PEGIDA protest movement -- Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West."..."

SWEDEN HIT BY THIRD MOSQUE ARSON ATTACK IN A WEEK

January 1, 2015 AFP reported: "Swedish police launched a manhunt Thursday after the third arson attack against a mosque in a week, amid growing tensions over the rise of a far right anti-immigration movement.

"People saw a man throwing something burning at the building," police in Uppsala said in a statement, adding that the mosque in eastern Sweden did not catch fire and that the suspect had left behind "a text on the door expressing contempt for religion."

A police spokesman told Swedish news agency TT that the burning object was a Molotov cocktail and that no one was in the building at the time. Sweden's Islamic Association posted a photograph online of the main door of the mosque, which was emblazoned with the slogan "Go home Muslim shit". The police were alerted by passers-by, who reportedly witnessed the attack at around 0430 GMT.



Sweden

"The crime has been classed as attempted arson, vandalism and incitement to hatred," the police said, appealing for witnesses to come forward.

Thursday's attack in Sweden's fourth-largest city came just three days after a late-night blaze at a mosque in Esloev in the south, which police suspect was also arson. On Christmas Day, five people were injured when a petrol bomb was thrown through the window of a mosque in Eskilstuna, east of the capital Stockholm."..."

LEADING PUBLISHING HOUSE WIPES ISRAEL OFF ITS MAP

December 31, 2014 Arutz Sheva reported: "One of the world's largest publishing houses is distributing school Atlases in Middle Eastern countries which totally erase any reference to the State of Israel, it has been revealed.

HarperCollins' subsidiary Collins Bartholomew, which specializes in maps, are selling 'Collins Middle East Atlases' to English-speaking schools in the Gulf states which depict Jordan and Syria extending all the way to the Mediterranean Sea.

Collins Bartholomew told The Tablet that the reason they wiped Israel off their maps was that including the Jewish state would be 'unacceptable' to their customers in the Gulf states. They added that the change to remove Israel was meant to incorporate 'local preferences' - apparently the local preference that Israel not exist.

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales condemned HarperCollins for the move, with Bishop Declan Lang of the Conference's Department of International Affairs telling the paper 'the publication of this atlas will confirm Israel's belief that there exists a hostility towards their country from parts of the Arab world.'..."

WILD CHEERS FOR PROPOSED INVASION OF ISRAEL

December 31, 2014 WND.com reported: "Turkish and Palestinian flags fluttered like angry birds in a crowd of thousands of people chanting 'Allahu Akbar!' and 'Down with Israel!'

The chants grew more exuberant as the hulking, bearded man on the speaker's platform assured them that 'God willing, we will liberate Jerusalem together.'

The speaker was Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal and his audience was Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party, gathered for its annual meeting Dec. 27 at a convention hall in Konya, the hometown of Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. The Turkish prime minister introduced the Hamas leader and then took a seat in the front row, cheering and clapping for the radical Islamist statements being made by Meshaal.

'As Turkey for centuries was the main defender of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque, likewise with you are the center of the Muslim Umma (Muslim nation) which will carry on the mission of liberating Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque,' Meshaal told the crowd in an address that received almost no major media coverage. 'Know this, that strong Turkey is the strength of Palestine and of Jerusalem. Turkey is the strength that represents all Muslims.'..."

SEVERE FLU CASES ON THE RISE IN U.S.

December 30, 2014 The Wall Street Journal reported: "This year's influenza season started earlier than expected and is sending more patients to the hospital, raising concerns this could be a more severe outbreak than in recent years."

Thirty-six states are now experiencing high levels of flu activity, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, as this year's flu vaccine may not fully protect against a strain known as influenza A H3N2 that is currently circulating and tends to be more severe. Fifteen children age 18 and under have died from the flu as of Dec. 20, compared with four such deaths around the same time last year, according to the CDC. A number of hospitals are outpacing previous years, with some restricting visitors to prevent the spread of the virus.

"Our medical director said that in his eight years at the hospital, he had never seen double digits" in the number of patients hospitalized, said Jill Chadwick, a spokeswoman at the University of Kansas Hospital in Kansas City, Kan. It had a record 25 flu cases admitted as of Monday and two deaths.

Dr. Anna-Kathryn Rye, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at Palmetto Health Children's Hospital in Columbia, S.C., said the hospital is seeing two to three times the number of flu patients as in a normal season. "We are hoping this week will be the peak," she said."...

For patients of all ages, the hospitalization rate of flu patients so far is 9.7 people per 100,000 people in the general population, compared with 4.3 people per 100,000 last year and 5.5 people per 100,000 in the 2012-13 flu season."..."

U.S. TO STATION 150 ARMORED VEHICLES IN EUROPE

December 30, 2014 Reuters reported: "The United States plans by the end of next year to station around 150 tanks and armored vehicles in Europe for use by U.S. forces training there, according to a U.S. military commander. Some of the tanks and vehicles - enough to equip an armored brigade - could be placed in Poland, Romania or the Baltic states, Lieutenant-General Ben Hodges, commander of the U.S. Army in Europe, said in a telephone interview with Reuters from Wiesbaden, Germany."

Hodges said a proposal to have a U.S. brigade rotate to Europe was first made two years ago, before the crisis over Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region. That meant a U.S. armored unit was already in the pipeline to come to Europe earlier this year, when it was needed as part of U.S. measures to reassure eastern European allies in response to the Ukraine crisis, he said.

Hodges said he saw a risk that pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine might launch a new offensive in the spring. Russia denies any aggressive activity. Hodges said he expected the U.S. measures, which include an expanded exercise program, to go on throughout 2015 and into 2016.



Keeping enough equipment in Europe for a U.S. armored brigade avoids the need for troops coming from the United States for exercises to bring their own kit. It also means the equipment is there if the United States needed to reinforce eastern Europe quickly in an emergency.

"By the end of ... 2015, we will have gotten all the equipment for a heavy brigade, that means three battalions plus a reconnaissance squadron, the artillery headquarters, engineers, and it will stay in Europe," Hodges said.

"You are talking about 150-ish, maybe 160 M1 tanks, M2 Bradley fighting vehicles, 24 self-propelled howitzers."

No decision has yet been taken on where the armored vehicles will be kept. Hodges said he expected at least a third of it to remain at U.S. training centers in Germany. The United States may consider distributing some of the equipment to a Baltic country, Poland or Romania if it made strategic sense and if that country wanted it kept there.

The United States has sharply cut its forces in Europe since the Cold War. It now has about 30,000 troops there plus a similar number of Air Force, Navy and Marine personnel, Hodges said. Despite budgetary pressures in the United States, Hodges said he hoped U.S. soldiers and bases in Europe would remain at their current levels for now."

'ISIS EXECUTED NEARLY 2,000 IN SIX MONTHS'

December 28, 2014 Haaretz reported: "The Islamic State militant group has killed 1,878 people in Syria during the past six months, the majority of them civilians, a British-based Syrian monitoring organisation said on Sunday. Islamic State also killed 120 of its own members, most of them foreign fighters trying to return home, in the last two months, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights."

The militant group has taken vast parts of Iraq and Syria and declared a caliphate in territory under its control in June. Since then it has fought the Syrian and Iraqi governments, other insurgents and Kurdish forces. Rami Abdulrahman, the head of the Syrian monitoring group, told Reuters that Islamic State killed 1,175 civilians, including eight women and four children. He said 930 of the civilians were members of the Sheitaat, a Sunni Muslim tribe from eastern Syria which fought Islamic State for control of two oilfields in August..."

EGYPT CATCHES ISLAMIC STATE INFILTRATING SINAI

December 28, 2014 WND.com reports: "Egypt in recent weeks arrested dozens of foreign jihadists in the Sinai Peninsula, stoking fears Islamic State militants are seeking to open a new front in the land of Moses, an Egyptian security official told WND. The official said the Egyptian military brass were alarmed by the number of foreign jihadists who had infiltrated the Sinai, with those jihadists arrested in recent raids originating from such countries as Pakistan, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond."..."

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