



EU FREE MOVEMENT PUT INTO QUESTION AT VIENNA SUMMIT

August 28, 2015 EU Observer.com reported: EU politicians are threatening to dismantle the bloc's free-movement rights amid calls to revamp asylum rules due to a surge in the number of people seeking refuge in Europe.

On Thursday (27 August), the bodies of up to 50 people, who had suffocated, were found in the back of a refrigerated food truck on the outskirts of Vienna. News of the tragedy came the same day EU and Western Balkan leaders and ministers met in the Austrian capital for a summit on migration issues.

"We cannot continue like this with a minute of silence every time we see people dying", the EU's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, said, referring to previous EU gestures of respect for migrant deaths. Earlier the same day, Sebastian Kurz, Austria's foreign minister, warned media the EU's asylum regime, the so-called Dublin regulation, which requires point-of-entry countries to process claims, risks collapse.

"I believe that we will need a quick solution for the entire system because otherwise countries will go at it alone and no longer adhere to the spirit of the European Union," he said. He added the EU should consider letting people apply for asylum from their home countries.

"We should think about the possibility of making an asylum request in the country of origin in order to ensure better redistribution to European Union countries".

Earlier on Wednesday, Kurz said that a European Union "without borders inside is in danger" if its external borders aren't secure. Italy's foreign minister Paolo Gentiloni made similar comments in Italian daily Corriere della Sera.

"The way things are going, there is a risk of Schengen [the EU's border-free zone] being called into question and having to go back to the old frontiers," he said. "..."



EGYPTIAN CHRISTIAN FACES TRIAL FOR HANDING OUT BIBLES

August 28, 2015 ChristianToday.com reported: "A Coptic Christian in Egypt arrested for handing out Bibles will today face a hearing before the prosecution after having his detention extended. According to the weekly Watani newspaper, Medhat Ishaq was arrested by police on October 6 for giving away Bibles to passers-by and 'attempting to persuade people to join the Christian religion.' He had nine Bibles in his possession at the time.

The paper reported that Ishaq was accused of 'exploiting religion in speech and printed material to promote sedition and harm national unity.' According to Daily News Egypt, a charge of 'insulting religion' was later added to his case.

Attempting to convert people is not illegal under Egyptian law, and Arabic Bibles are printed legally in the country. However, Christians do face a number of battles for religious freedom. Current legislation dictates that churches cannot be built near schools, villages, railways, residential areas, government offices and canals, among other stipulations, for example..."

PALESTINIAN AXE ATTACK ON ISRAELI SOLDIER IN JERUSALEM

August 27, 2015 Debka.com reported: "A Palestinian axe attack on an Israeli border guardsman in Jerusalem Thursday was followed by a firebomb that burned another border guard patrol jeep to a cinder. Two Israeli guards were injured. The attacks quickly escalated as Palestinians hurled rocks at the fire engines alerted to extinguish the fire.

Violent Palestinian riots then erupted in the A-Tur district. The axe was wielded earlier by a 56-year old Palestinian from Hebron, a jailed terrorist freed two years ago under a prisoner exchange deal. He aimed it at the neck of the guardsman at Damascus Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem, but missed and injured him slightly in the arm. The attacker was overpowered and arrested."

US, PHILIPPINES HOLD TALKS ON BOOSTING MILITARY CAPACITY: SPOKESMAN

August 26, 2015 SpaceDaily.com reported: "America's Pacific commander held talks with the Philippine military Wednesday on ways to strengthen US capacity in the region to deter conflict and maintain freedom of navigation, a Filipino spokesman said.

Admiral Harry Harris, head of the US Pacific Command, outlined a freshly drafted Pentagon report highlighting issues in the South China Sea, where China is in dispute with the Philippines and other neighbours over islands, reefs and waters, said military spokesman Colonel Restituto Padilla.

"It is part of our interest to keep that freedom of the seas going because a lot of trade goes on in these areas," Padilla said of Harris's meeting with Filipino military chief of staff General Hernando Iriberry. Harris did not speak to the press after meeting Iriberry and later Philippine President Benigno Aquino.

Japan and the Philippines -- both US military allies -- are engaged in tense maritime disputes with China over islands, reefs and waters in the East China Sea and South China Sea, respectively. Some of the South China Sea reefs and waters claimed by China are also disputed by Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam as well as the Philippines. Since last year China has been building new islands over reefs there that Manila alleges could become military bases, and which the US and Philippines say could eventually restrict free movement of shipping in international waters.

Padilla said the Pentagon report -- entitled "Asia Pacific Maritime Security Strategy" -- highlighted the importance of the region to the security of the US and its regional allies.

"They (Washington) wish to strengthen US military capacity to ensure it can successfully deter conflict and coercion and respond decisively when needed," Padilla said. There was a "very frank and honest exchange" by Harris and Iriberry over "the challenges that we need to face to ensure that no miscalculation occurs in our part of our seas and in the South China Sea", Padilla added.

The military spokesman said no specific details were discussed on how the US strategy will be put into practice, adding further meetings were expected. US and Filipino troops and navies have been conducting large-scale annual military exercises focusing mainly on maritime capability."

SENIOR COMMANDER: IRAN TO CONTINUE PRODUCTION, IMPORTS OF WEAPONS IRRESPECTIVE OF FOREIGN VIEWS

August 26, 2015 The Fars News Agency reported: "Iran will continue manufacturing and imports of different military equipment, missiles and weapons irrespective of the western states' pressures against this trend, a senior commander underlined.

'Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran has reached self-sufficiency in building different types of military equipment and enjoys the capability of producing certain weapons whose technology has not yet been developed or given to all countries, and therefore, they are owned by some limited world states,' Army Commander in Northeastern Iran Brigadier General Ali Jahanshahi told FNA on Wednesday.

To supply or produce its military needs and equip its army with different types of equipment and weapons, Iran doesn't need to take permission from any country and anyone, he said, and 'if any country or anyone wants to intrude in this regard, it will certainly face our crushing response.'

Jahanshahi also downplayed the military threats by certain regional countries, and said, 'The Islamic Republic of Iran's borders are secure for our friends and insecure for our enemies and we advise the enemy to consider its size and power when threatening the Islamic Republic of Iran and we stress that our response to the slightest military move will be the Islamic Republic of Iran's iron fist.'..."

STOCK UP ON CANNED FOOD FOR STOCK MARKET CRASH, WARNS FORMER GORDON BROWN ADVISER

August 25, 2015 Independent.co.uk reported: "A former adviser to Gordon Brown has urged people to stock up on canned goods and bottled water as stock markets around the world slide. Damian McBride appeared to suggest that the stock market dip could lead to civil disorder or other situations where it would be unreasonable for someone to leave the house.

"Advice on the looming crash, No.1: get hard cash in a safe place now; don't assume banks & cashpoints will be open, or bank cards will work," he tweeted.

"Crash advice No.2: do you have enough bottled water, tinned goods & other essentials at home to live a month indoors? If not, get shopping.

"Crash advice No.3: agree a rally point with your loved ones in case transport and communication gets cut off; somewhere you can all head to."

Mr McBride credited his former boss Gordon Brown with preventing a cataclysm by nationalising the banking system during the 2008 crash.

"We were close enough in 2008 (if the bank bailout hadn't worked)," he said. "and what's coming is on 20 times that scale".

Financial markets are unstable and periodically suffer crises which can have devastating consequences for the wider economy. The Shanghai Composite Index, China's most important stock market index, was down 8.45 per cent, erasing a year's gains in a day's trading.

The FTSE100 fell 4.5 per cent, hoping £60bn off the price of UK shares, and the Dow Jones in the US fell by over a thousand points in its first minute of trading. Some analysts have suggested that the stock market slide could be the start of a new global financial crisis.

Mr McBride's suggestions about stocking up on canned goods, setting rally points and stocking up on bottled water were ridiculed by some users on Twitter as over the top, however. Mr McBride was special adviser to Gordon Brown and head of communications at the Treasury for a period during the last Labour government...."



IRAN UNVEILS NEW SHORT RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE

August 22, 2015 spacedaily.com reported: "Iran's President Hassan Rouhani unveiled the country's latest domestically produced surface to surface missile on Saturday, saying such weapons are necessary for defence in the Middle East. The Fateh (Winner) 313 ballistic missile has a 500-kilometre (300 miles) range and features more advanced sensors and technology, according to Sepah News, the website of Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guards.

It was rolled out little more than a month after Iran and world powers concluded a deal that requires Iran to curb key parts of its nuclear programme in exchange for a lifting of economic sanctions. The missile was displayed as part of Defence Industry Day, an annual event that showcases Iran's hardware.

"A weak country incapable of confronting and defending against the military power of its neighbours and enemies cannot claim to seek peace," the president said in a televised speech, citing the need for diplomacy and military efforts to stand side by side.

"Iran's strategy is based on defence and deterrence. The first line is diplomats and the second line is generals. Diplomats should be backed by generals. If they fail, it is the generals' turn to come forward."

Several versions of the Fateh missile have been produced in the past few years. The 313 model has been successfully tested and is scheduled for mass production, the Sepah News report said. Iran's ballistic missile programme was a contentious issue in the talks that led to the nuclear deal in Vienna on July 14. To ensure a lifting of sanctions Iran must implement changes to its atomic activities and guarantee they are for energy and medical purposes. Iran has always denied seeking a nuclear bomb."..."