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DEFLATION FEARS TRIGGER ECB's 'BAZOOKA'

March 10, 2016 euobserver.com reported: "The European Central Bank (ECB) once again on Thursday (10 March) used its "bazooka" of dramatic measures to try to revive the European economy threatened by slowing growth, global uncertainties and a new risk of deflation.

The objective was also psychological, as the ECB chief Mario Draghi tried to convince market watchers of the effectiveness of policies that have so far failed to produce decisive results.

The ECB decided to raise from €60 billion to €80 billion the amount of bonds it will buy each month in order to pump more money into the economy. The asset-buying programme known as quantitative easing will now include bonds issued by non-bank corporations.

In another move with symbolic implications, the ECB decided to reduce the rate on bank, states and institutions deposits to the ECB further into the negative, from -0.3 percent to -0.4 percent.

The interest rate on the main refinancing operations, by which the ECB lends money to banks for a week, is lowered to 0.00 percent, down from 0.05 percent. The rate for the marginal lending facility, the overnight credit to banks, is down from 0.30 percent to 0.25 percent.

"It's a fairly long list of measures," Draghi said at a press conference at the ECB headquarters in Frankfurt.

He assured that "each one of them was very significantly devised to have a maximum impact into boosting the economy and a return to price stability".



ISLAMIC STATE THREAT RISING IN MOROCCO, ANALYSTS SAY

March 10, 2016 voanews.com reported: "As Islamic State militants gain territory in Libya, Morocco is facing a growing threat from IS, government intelligence reports and analysts say.

Moroccan authorities said Monday that an IS cell was broken up as it planned to unleash explosives in public places. The news followed the arrest in February of suspected IS militants who were allegedly plotting biological attacks.

According to recent reports, jihadist Moroccans are joining IS in Libya and are increasing communication and coordination with sympathizers back home.

'In 2015, reports indicated that up to 300 Moroccans were training in Libya. So it stands to reason that these militants will one day seek to return home and plan attacks when they do,' said Sarah Feuer, a North Africa analyst at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Moroccan authorities have uncovered a growing number of cells claiming ties with IS, she said. Moroccan security forces recently arrested a group of militants who allegedly were trying to carry out attacks against government institutions and military leaders. The group of 10 men had pledged allegiance to IS leadership in Iraq and Syria and had received weapons from IS in Libya, Moroccan officials said."..."

IRAN FIRES 2 MISSILES MARKED WITH 'ISRAEL MUST BE WIPED OUT'

March 9, 2016 yahoo.com reported: "Iran test-launched two ballistic missiles Wednesday emblazoned with the phrase "Israel must be wiped out" in Hebrew, Iranian media reported, in a show of power by the Shiite nation as U.S. Vice President Joe Biden's visited Jerusalem.

The new missile firings were the latest in a series of tests in recent days, aimed at demonstrating that Iran will push ahead with its ballistic program after scaling backing its nuclear program under the deal reached last year with the U.S. and other world powers.

Israel, long an opponent of Iran, offered no comment on the test, though Biden issued a strong warning over any possible violation of the nuclear deal.

"A nuclear-armed Iran is an absolutely unacceptable threat to Israel, to the region and the United States. And I want to reiterate which I know people still doubt here. If in fact they break the deal, we will act," he said. Biden's comments came after meeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who strongly opposed the nuclear deal."..."

AG LYNCH TESTIFIES: JUSTICE DEPT. HAS 'DISCUSSED' CIVIL LEGAL ACTION AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE DENIERS

March 9, 2016 theblaze.com reported: "Attorney General Loretta Lynch testified Wednesday that the Justice Department has "discussed" taking civil legal action against the fossil fuel industry for "denying" the "threat of carbon emissions" when it comes to climate change.

During Lynch's testimony at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) said that he believes there are similarities between the tobacco industry denying scientific studies showing the dangers of using tobacco and companies within the fossil fuel industry denying studies allegedly showing the threat of carbon emissions.

He went on to point out that under President Bill Clinton, the Justice Department brought and won a civil case against the tobacco industry, while the Obama administration has "done nothing" so far with regard to the fossil fuel industry. Whitehouse concluded his comments by posing a question to the country's top law enforcement officer.

"My question to you is, other than civil forfeitures and matters attendant to a criminal case, are there other circumstances in which a civil matter under the authority of the Department of Justice has been referred to the FBI?" he asked.

"This matter has been discussed. We have received information about it and have referred it to the FBI to consider whether or not it meets the criteria for which we could take action on," Lynch answered. "I'm not aware of a civil referral at this time."

KIM JONG UN SAYS N. KOREA HAS MINIATURISED NUCLEAR WARHEADS

March 8, 2016 SpaceDaily.com reported: "North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un says his scientists have successfully miniaturised thermo-nuclear warheads to place on a ballistic missile and create a "true" deterrent, state media said Wednesday.

While Pyongyang has talked of success in mastering miniaturisation before, this is the first time Kim has so explicitly claimed a breakthrough that experts see as a game-changing step for the North's nuclear capabilities. Kim also stressed that the warheads were "thermo-nuclear" devices, echoing the North's claim that the fourth nuclear test it conducted in January was of a more powerful hydrogen bomb.

"The nuclear warheads have been standardised to be fit for ballistic missiles by miniaturising them," Kim noted during a meeting with nuclear technicians, the North's official KCNA news agency said.

"This can be called a true nuclear deterrent," Kim was quoted as saying.

His comments came a day after the North's powerful National Defence Commission threatened pre-emptive nuclear attacks on South Korea and the US mainland, as Seoul and Washington kicked off large-scale joint military exercises.

Kim echoed the threat, warning that North Korea would "never hesitate to make a pre-emptive nuclear strike" in the event of any effort by the US and its allies to undermine its national sovereignty as a nuclear state. Military tensions have surged on the divided Korean peninsula since the North's nuclear test in January and a long-range rocket launch last month.

The UN Security Council responded by imposing tough new sanctions last week, which Pyongyang has condemned and labelled as part of a US-led conspiracy to bring down Kim's regime by force. The stronger our nuclear strike capability gets, the more powerful our deterrent to aggression and nuclear war grows," Kim said.

Experts have been divided on just how far North Korea may have gone in its ability to miniaturise nuclear warheads, although several top US and South Korean military officials have briefed on its likely success. The issue is key as, while North Korea is known to have a small stockpile of nuclear weapons, its ability to deliver them accurately to a chosen target has been in doubt."..."

ISIS IS PLANNING 'SPECTACULAR' ATTACK IN UK

March 8, 2016 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "The UK's national head of counter-terrorism, Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, warned on Monday that evidence shows Islamic State (ISIS) is 'trying to build bigger attacks' worldwide, and in Britain in particular. Speaking at a London briefing, Rowley said a large-scale 'spectacular' attack is the 'natural next step' for the jihadist group, reports BBC.

ISIS has already pulled off massive attacks, such as the attack on Paris last November in which 130 people were murdered at six coordinated fronts, but now it appears eager to launch more assaults of a similar scale. Rowley revealed terror-related arrests hit a new record last year, reaching 339 in England, Wales and Scotland. Scotland Yard said the last three years saw a 57% rise in terror-related arrests as compared to the previous three years, and in response the UK terror threat level is currently at 'severe.'

He said that recently there has been a shift in ISIS from planning smaller attacks to aspirations for large-scale affairs.

'In recent months we've seen a broadening of that. Much more plans to attack Western lifestyle, and obviously the Paris attacks in November. Going from that narrow focus on police and military as symbols of the state to something much broader,' Rowley said.

'And you see a terrorist group which has big ambitions for enormous and spectacular attacks – not just the types that we've seen foiled to date.'

He said ISIS is looking to infiltrate its terrorists who had military training in Syria over to northern Europe to launch attacks.

The UK counter-terror head added that psychologists are working with counter-terror units over increasing concerns people with mental health problems are being radicalized. Just last Thursday a German doctor was arrested for brain-washing a mentally ill man and sending him to Iraq where he conducted a suicide bombing for ISIS..."

NORTH KOREA THREATENS NUCLEAR STRIKES AGAINST SOUTH AND U.S.

March 7, 2016 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: North Korea on Sunday threatened 'indiscriminate' nuclear strikes against South Korea and the United States if the two allies push ahead with joint military drills scheduled to begin Monday, AFP reports.

The threat to carry out what it described as a 'pre-emptive nuclear strike of justice' was made in a statement by North Korea's powerful National Defense Commission, citing the Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army (KPA).

It comes just days after leader Kim Jong-Un ordered the country's nuclear arsenal to be placed on standby for use 'at any moment,' in response to tough new UN sanctions imposed over the North's fourth nuclear test in January and last month's long-range rocket launch.

The United States downplayed Kim's order and said it had 'not seen North Korea test or demonstrate the ability to miniaturize a nuclear weapon and put it on an ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile).'

Pyongyang has issued dire warnings of nuclear attack in the past, usually during periods of elevated military tensions of the Korean peninsula, noted AFP. While the North is known to have a small stockpile of nuclear warheads, experts are divided about its ability to mount them on a working missile delivery system."..."

