

A WORLD IN MOTION



ISSUE 199 | 19 JULY 2018

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Mr Trump's whirlwind tour of Europe included tackling NATO member's defence spending, UK's PM May, and relationship building with Mr Putin.

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THE NUMBERS

TRUMP'S EUROPEAN TRIP



10-17 JULY 2018

The dates of Mr Trump's trip to Europe



61%

The percent of the total surveyed population in 12 NATO countries who view the organisation favourably



£8-10 million

The estimated cost of security operations in the UK during Mr Trump's visit



2 hours

The length of private discussions between Mr Trump and Mr Putin at the Helsinki summit

TRUMP'S CONTROVERSIAL EUROPEAN TRIP



By Donnelly McClelland

Presidents Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin held a private meeting for a little over two hours. Trump said he had "no reason to believe" that Russia had interfered with the 2016 presidential election. Both leaders lauded the meeting in Helsinki as an opportunity for improving bilateral relations, arguing that improved dialogue was necessary for both countries. "Diplomacy and engagement are better than hostility," Mr Trump said. The positive feeling was echoed by Mr Putin, who said that the meeting marked the first steps to restore "an acceptable level of trust" between both nations. The two leaders agreed to cooperate more closely to fight terrorism, cybersecurity and nuclear non-proliferation. (DW)

NATO summit

The summit between Presidents Trump and Putin in Helsinki was the culmination of a week-long European visit by the US president, which began with the NATO summit in Brussels. Mr Trump declared the summit a success despite spending much of the gathering berating US allies for not spending enough on defence. Mr Trump has long complained that other member states have refused to commit 2% of their GDP to military spending and that the US is therefore subsidising their defence. During the meetings he made reference to raising spending to 4%, but no other member made reference to (or committed to) an alteration in the agreed goal (as per the Wales Summit of 2014) of 2%, which only five countries (including the US) are currently meeting.

Mr Trump led the discussion on defence spending, accusing members (Germany in particular) of not

contributing enough to their collective defence. Germany currently spends 1.2% of their GDP on defence, with the US at 3.5%. The agreement made in 2014 gave member nations until 2024 to meet the 2% goal. All NATO allies have increased defence spending since the Wales summit, and two-thirds of members are projected to meet the 2% goal by 2024. A senior NATO diplomatic source, who was in the meetings at the NATO summit, said the mood was grim in the wake of Mr Trump's visit, but there was also relief that he did not force a change in policy.

UK visit and European relations

Mr Trump's first official visit to the UK (just after the NATO summit) was not free of controversy either – his unguarded comments on the British Prime Minister's handling of Brexit in an interview with the British tabloid, *The Sun*, were published the night before his formal press conference with Ms May, where he then ranked the relationship between the two nations as the "highest level of special" and called Ms May a great leader who should do as she sees fit. Ms May revealed later, in a television appearance, that Mr Trump had advised her to "sue the EU" instead of negotiating the terms of Brexit.

On the eve of his meeting with Mr Putin, Mr Trump (in an interview on CBS) characterised the European Union (EU) as "a foe" because of "what they do to us on trade". Numerous European politicians were quick to respond that the EU and the US remain "best friends", but some cautioned that member states need to close ranks and "take their fate in their own hands". The EU and the US share the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship in the world and also enjoy the most integrated economic relationship. But it is feared that Mr Trump's recent actions regarding the imposition of trade tariffs could jeopardise this relationship.

Helsinki summit

Very few among the US media at the press conference after the Helsinki meeting seemed interested in asking questions on whether the summit addressed nuclear disarmament, peace in the Korean Peninsula, resolving the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, or ratcheting down tensions in

NEWS HEADLINES



Syrians in towns across Deraa province celebrated their liberation on 12 July. In a significant move, the Syrian Army raised the national flag in al-Balad district of Deraa, the capital city of the province, where anti-government protests started seven years ago. The Western-made weapons surrendered by armed groups in Deraa are "material evidence of gross interference" in Syria, said the Russian Foreign ministry. The Syrian province was under militant control for years.



The **Iraqi** central government is seeking to contain protests against unemployment and a lack of basic services which broke out on 8 July, in Southern Iraq, with the number of victims killed reaching eight while 60 others were injured, according to Iraqi health officials who said that the protests were marred by riots.



Pakistan is heading for one of its 'dirtiest' elections in many years, observers and political campaigners have warned, with candidates alleging widespread interference by the country's powerful army. If the vote goes ahead as planned, it will be only the second time Pakistan has made a transition from one civilian government to another. But the security of the election process has been thrown into doubt by a string of attacks on election rallies, including one in Mastung that killed 149 people.

Europe. A tweet by Mr Trump suggested his key goal in meeting with the Russian president: "I would rather take a political risk in pursuit of peace than to risk peace in pursuit of politics."

Political commentator Pat Buchanan in his article, "*Trump calls off Cold War II*", says: "Helsinki showed that Trump meant what he said when he declared repeatedly, 'Peace with Russia is a good thing, not a bad thing.'" Republican Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky commended the president for being willing to meet with known adversaries in order to "try to prevent us from having World War Three".

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Mr Trump faces incredible bipartisan opposition in the US to his meeting with Mr Putin (and to statements made after the meeting), but there are commentators who continue to point out the role that Mr Trump is playing on the world stage in terms of peace-making. His unprecedented meeting with North Korea's Kim Jong-Un in June is another case in point. China welcomed the recent meeting between the US and Russian presidents, stating: "Russia and the United States have important responsibilities to ensure world peace and security. We would like to see more

collaboration in the future." As of June 2018, it is estimated that the US and Russia possess over 90% of the world's nuclear weapons, and such key role-players being on speaking terms may prove to be more preferable than being on a "war footing". In a *Fox News* interview after the summit, Mr Putin pronounced the meetings "the beginning of the path" back from the West's past efforts to isolate Russia. "I think you see for yourself that these efforts failed, and they were never bound to succeed," he said.

Mr Trump has been described as a "wrecking ball" with the potential of "wrecking" both good and bad aspects of American policy. Despite much rhetoric in his most recent trip to Europe, it would seem that the prospect of rapprochement with Russia could possibly outstrip the "hurt feelings" among long-time friends and allies, but only time will tell since much work still needs to be done.

PRAY > For the US president to pursue peace, despite criticism and opposition > For US leadership to work consistently towards diplomatic solutions to the numerous conflicts > For US believers to continue to faithfully uphold their leaders in prayer

NEW ETHIOPIAN PM'S RADICAL REFORMS



By **Donnelly McClelland**

Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki arrived in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, for a three-day state visit, as part of an unprecedented softening of tensions between the neighbouring countries. Saturday's visit [14 July] by Isaias, his first in 20 years, comes a week after Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed made a landmark visit to Eritrea's capital, Asmara. (*Aljazeera*)

Historic developments

Since Abiy Ahmed was appointed in April 2018, he has not rested on his laurels. His actions have been dramatic. He ended the state of emergency, reshuffled his cabinet, fired a series of controversial civil servants (including the head of Ethiopia's prison service), lifted bans on websites and other media, ordered the partial privatisation of massive state-owned companies, released thousands of political prisoners, and, most importantly, announced Ethiopia's willingness to abide by the Algiers Agreement (2000), to accept the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission ruling (2002) and to withdraw from disputed territories pursuant to peace. Ethiopia and Eritrea have spent the last two decades as bitter enemies, ever since a border dispute in the late 1990s turned into a

brutal war that killed nearly 100,000 people, according to some estimates.

Nic Cheeseman, an expert in African politics at Birmingham University, said in *The Guardian*: "[Mr] Abiy's extraordinary campaign is a test of the argument that only repressive government can guarantee the levels of development so desperately needed across Africa."

Isaias Afwerki, the "hard and rigid" leader of Eritrea since 1991, took a while to respond to Mr Abiy's overtures of peace. The Eritrean president has justified his decades-long grip on power by claiming that Ethiopia wanted to wipe his country off the map. A nation of about 5.1 million people, Eritrea is the only African country where elections are not held. It is estimated that as many as 5,000 Eritreans flee their country every month, notably to avoid indefinite military conscription. The UN has accused the Eritrean government of crimes against humanity.

Mr Abiy, in contrast to his Eritrean counterpart, is seen as a 'rising star', and despite his youth has already amassed numerous achievements: he has a PhD (2017) in conflict resolution and has already served as Minister of Science and Technology (2016-2017), Director of the Federal Science and Technology Information Centre (2013-2016), and Director of the Federal Information Network Security Agency (2007-2010). He is also the first leader from Ethiopia's largest ethnic community, the Oromo, who have complained for decades of economic, cultural and political marginalisation.

Mr Abiy was born in the restive, Muslim-majority Jimma region of south-western Ethiopia in 1976. The youngest of 13 children, his father was a polygamous Muslim and his mother (the fourth wife) a Christian.

NEWS HEADLINES



Yemen's Houthi rebel chief says he is ready to hand over control of the key port of Hodeida to the United Nations if the Saudi-led coalition backing pro-government troops halts its offensive against Hodeida. Such an arrangement would mean the rebels would keep control of the city, a situation the UAE has rejected, demanding the unconditional withdrawal of the Houthis.



Israel's political leadership has reportedly instructed the army to prepare for a military offensive in the **Gaza** Strip, to be initiated if the launching of incendiary devices from the Hamas-run coastal enclave into Israeli territory continues. Over the weekend (14-15 July), Hamas fired some 200 rockets and mortar shells at Israel and the IDF carried out multiple strikes inside the Palestinian enclave.



Nicaraguan police and armed pro-government civilians on 17 July laid siege to and then retook a symbolically important neighbourhood – that had recently become a centre of resistance to President Daniel Ortega's government – for the first time since massive protests against Ortega's government began in mid-April.

Deutsche Welle notes that when violent unrest erupted between the region's Muslim and Christian communities, Mr Abiy "actively engaged in a peace forum for reconciliation". His doctoral thesis focused on resolution of conflicts between Christian and Muslim communities in his hometown of Beshasha.

Not without opposition

On Saturday 23 June, a man reportedly dressed in police uniform attempted to throw a grenade towards the speaker's platform during a pro-government rally in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. Attendees tackled the man and the grenade went off, killing two and injuring over a hundred others. The rally in Meskel Square was a show of support for Mr Abiy and for his radical reform agenda. Mohammed Ademo, a political commentator, told *Aljazeera*: "[Mr] Abiy's effort to move the country forward has angered those who for a very long time maintained a stronghold on the country's politics and economy. They are trying to scare people and undermine the prime minister, so they can send a signal that he is not capable of stabilising the country. Many Ethiopians are shocked that people would go to such lengths to stop what they [many Ethiopians] see as a really positive move – the reforms they say this country really needs." Mr Abiy said after the attack: "Love always wins ... To those who

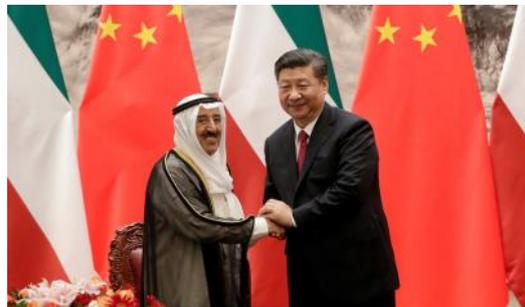
tried to divide us, I want to tell you that you have not succeeded."

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Analysts believe peace could totally transform both Ethiopia and Eritrea and the strategic trajectory of the Horn of Africa. Mr Abiy is currently playing a deeply significant and impactful role in trying to realise just that. Numerous news sources maintain that Mr Abiy is Muslim, due to his father being Muslim, but it is significant to note that in his inaugural speech he never mentioned his father, but thanked his mother (a Protestant Christian) and acknowledged the role she played in shaping him: "I politely ask you to thank one Ethiopian mother who, while I was still a 7-year-old boy, knew that I would someday stand before you and who planted this distant and deep and elaborately sophisticated vision in me, who raised me, and brought me to fruition." If Mr Abiy's legacy of being an agent of peace is anything to go by, he demonstrates fruits of the Spirit, or at the very least, a strong moral compass. He faces a huge task of leading the second most populous nation in Africa, in a politically and religiously volatile region, and is set to impact the lives of citizens (including persecuted believers) in his own country, as well as in neighbouring Eritrea where Christians have suffered tremendous persecution, with many languishing in prison for years in appalling conditions.

PRAY > For protection for Mr Abiy as he strives to pursue Godly solutions to his nation's challenges, and those of the region > For Godly counsellors to surround Mr Abiy > For greater freedom for Ethiopian and Eritrean believers as relations between the nations improve

CHINA INCREASES INFLUENCE IN ARAB WORLD



By Andrew Richards

China will provide Arab states with \$20 billion in loans for economic development, President Xi Jinping told top Arab officials Tuesday [10 July], as Beijing seeks to build its influence in the Middle East and Africa. The money will be earmarked for "projects that will produce good employment opportunities and positive social impact in Arab States that have reconstruction needs," said Xi, without providing further details. (*AFP*)

Investment

By the end of 2016, China was the largest foreign investor in the Arab world, investing more than \$29 billion, surpassing the United States and the United Arab Emirates and representing 31.9 percent of the total market share of the region. The major driving force behind China's large investment is the Belt and Road Initiative, with special economic zones being developed that will bring economic transformation to poorer countries

and closer industrial cooperation between the oil-rich Arab nations and China.

For economic and industrial development, China aims to export a Chinese labour force to the region, together with the technological know-how in order to make sure there is good return on their investment. Companies like Huawei and ZTE are already operating in several Arab countries and will consequently increase their footprint elsewhere, due to China's investment.

China has a lot to gain from investing in countries like Syria, Yemen and Iraq, whose infrastructure has been gravely destroyed by wars and terrorist activities. A good return on investment would be for Chinese companies to be allocated contracts to help rebuild once the wars are over. In the case of Palestine, however, there is little hope of financial return since Palestine is unable to pay back the loan. This has not stopped China from extending financial aid to Palestine, which it recognises as a sovereign state.

Apart from economic investment and development projects, China has also 'invested' in poorer Arab countries in the form of humanitarian and food aid. During the recent China-Arab forum held in Beijing, Mr Xi promised aid worth \$15 million to Palestine, and a further \$91 million to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen.

FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

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Influence

China's influence in the Arab world took a significant step forward when it opened its first foreign military base in Djibouti in July 2017. The building of the base, according to Chinese officials, forms part of its Belt and Road Initiative and cost \$590 million to build. China's Belt and Road maritime route goes through the Gulf of Aden that borders Yemen, Somalia and Eritrea, which are all considered unstable, and there is an added danger of pirates from Somalia who have been known to hijack cargo ships. China's base in Djibouti is said to provide naval support for its cargo ships going through the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean Sea and European ports.

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, China also plans to build and operate five additional ports: in Tanzania (providing easier access to the southwest Indian Ocean around Mozambique), Pakistan (providing access to the Arabian Sea), Maldives (opening up access to the Indian Ocean from where it can challenge Indian influence over the same waters), Sri-Lanka (adding to their influence in the Indian Ocean) and Myanmar (providing access to the Bay of Bengal).

China may choose to station military troops at each of these ports, giving China the economic influence it needs to topple the United States as the largest economy in the world as well as political power (through military presence) in regions of the world where Western mediation has often failed to bring peace. China's recognition of the Palestinian State hints at this possibility. In July 2017, Mr Xi hosted several high-ranking Israeli officials and their Palestinian counterparts for a two-day symposium to promote international efforts to advance peace talks.

World peace

For many people, Chinese investment throughout the world is viewed as a way for China to either control the world economy (by flooding developing countries with financial aid and 'pulling them away' from the West) or a means to 'export' Communism. Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi claims that "world domination" is not the goal, saying: "China sees the world as equally shared by all, that well-being of people from all countries is intertwined." This idea is shared by President Xi, who at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China put forth

his vision of building a community "with a shared future for humanity".

The Belt and Road Initiative plays well into the idea of a "shared future" and as an intentional result, the Chinese government has encouraged people-to-people and culture-to-culture interaction between China and the more than seventy countries worldwide that have signed into this initiative. In the words of Xi Jinping: "Our friends in Southeast Asia say that the lotus flowers grow taller as the water rises. Our friends in Africa say that if you want to go fast, walk alone, and if you want to go far, walk together. Our friends in Europe say that a single tree cannot block the chilly wind. And Chinese people say that when big rivers have water, the small ones are filled, and when small rivers have water, the big ones are filled. All these sayings speak to one same truth, that is, only through win-win cooperation can we make big and sustainable achievements that are beneficial to all."

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

China's economic ambitions with respect to the Belt and Road Initiative have opened up previously closed doors to Chinese missionaries who now have the ability to serve outside China, with some referring to these new opportunities as the "One Belt, One Road, One Mission" initiative. Many Chinese workers have already made use of China's new relationships with countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Egypt and Qatar, but there is a concern that the Church in China might be moving too fast into this new mission field. Several Chinese pastors have commented on the obvious pitfalls that actually slow down missionary work, rather than speed it up: "The biggest problem is that many missionaries do not understand how to adapt to a different culture. Many missionaries go to other places and simply establish Chinese-style churches, instead of churches that are integrated into the local culture."

Pray for Chinese missionaries to overcome this tendency towards cultural isolation so that they may be able to immerse themselves in their host cultures, and promote a more indigenous Church.

PRAY > For the pledged aid to reach those most in need > For increased opportunities for Chinese Christian business people in the region > For Chinese missionaries as they endeavour to plant indigenous churches

KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION



PROJECT RESTORATION

Providing trauma counselling and trauma counselling training for South Sudanese refugees

The next trauma counselling training will be in **August 2018**, and again we ask you to please consider supporting this project.

There are various expenses that need to be covered in order to see this happen (such as travel costs, accommodation and meals) and it will not be possible without the support of friends, partners and fellow believers.

To support this project, please make use of the **INcontext** bank details and use 'Rest' together with your email address (as much as possible of it) as reference.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact our project department (gustav@incontextministries.org) or [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the website.