

Quarterly Review of International Relations

January-March 2017

CHIARA D'AURIA

January 1st:

In a packed Istanbul nightclub during New Year Eve Night a man kills, shooting on the crowd, 39 people, remaining at large.

January 2nd:

Islamic State claims responsibility for a New Year's Eve mass shooting in a packed Istanbul nightclub by a lone gunman who remains at large.

January 3rd:

Ivan Rogers, Britain's ambassador to the European Union, who sometimes had clashed with London over its approach to Europe, abruptly resigns less than three months before Prime Minister Theresa May is due to trigger formal Brexit negotiations for «tensions with Downing Street».

January 4th:

Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu declares that the peace talks to face the Syrian crisis will start on January 23rd in Astana, Kazakhstan.

January 5th:

Suspected Kurdish militants clash with police and detonate a car bomb in the Turkish city of Izmirn after their vehicle was stopped at a checkpoint, killing 2 people.

January 6th:

Russia declares it has begun reducing its military forces in Syria under the terms of a fragile ceasefire deal brokered between opposition groups and the Syrian government.

January 7th:

An American intelligence report on Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential elections affirms that the Russian hackers' activity has influenced vote's results.

January 8th:

President-elect Donald Trump accepts the US intelligence community's conclusion that Russia has engaged in cyber attacks affecting the US presidential election and could take actions in response.

January 9th:

A Syrian truce brokered by Russia and Turkey is under growing strain as rebels vow to respond to government violations to retake an important rebel-held area near Damascus.

January 10th:

Iraqi forces push Islamic State fighters back further in Mosul to deal a decisive blow to the militant group.

January 11th:

White House spokesman Josh Earnest states the US intelligence report, presented to President Barack Obama and to the elected President Donald Trump, exposes a number of tactics employed by Moscow in addition to cyber attacks in an attempt to influence the outcome of the November 8th presidential election.

January 12th:

Poland welcomes several thousand US troops along with tanks and heavy equipment under a planned NATO operation to beef up its Eastern European allies, vexing the Kremlin, which declares the troops' presence is a threat to Russia.

January 13th:

British Prime Minister Theresa May declares Christopher Steele, a former MI6 officer who once worked under diplomatic cover in Russia, who has written reports containing details of compromising

material Russia allegedly collected on US President-elect Donald Trump has not worked for the British government for years.

January 14th:

President Donald Trump declares to be ready to remove sanctions against Russia if Moscow will be cooperating.

January 15th:

The final statement of a Middle East peace conference held in Paris with 70 countries, reaffirms that only a two-State solution between Israelis and Palestinians can resolve the conflict and warns that they will not recognize any unilateral steps taken by either side that could prejudice negotiations.

January 16th:

Germany's Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier states that US President-elect Donald Trump's comments that NATO is obsolete make concern across the 28-member Alliance.

January 17th:

In a decisive speech, British Prime Minister Theresa May declares that the United Kingdom will quit the EU single market when it leaves the EU.

January 18th:

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko calls for a worldwide effort to counter the threat of Russian cyber warfare and urges the United States to «be great again» by demonstrating leadership on issues such as global security.

January 19th:

Senegalese troops, which support the Gambia's elected President Adama Barrow, cross the border with Gambia heading toward the capital Banjul, where the outgoing President Yahia Jammeh refuses to leave his office even though he has lost the elections.

January 20th:

Gambia's outgoing President Yahya Jammeh agrees to step down and go into exile. In Washington Donald Trump settles as 45th President of United States of America.

January 21st:

In Ankara Turkish Parliament approves some amendments to the Constitution within 18 articles, which will transform Turkey in a presidential republic, a reform made by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Its last approval depends by the outcome of a *referendum* fixed on April 2017.

January 22nd:

Libyan and Italian authorities declare that the recently re-opened Italian embassy in Tripoli is a clear target of a terroristic attack as a car bomb has exploded on January 21st close to it.

January 23rd:

The President of United States Donald Trump signs three executive orders: banning the Federal funds to the ONG which practice abortions; retreating of the USA from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); arranging advantages for companies which will produce in the United States, proposing «substantial custom duties» on foreign goods entering in the country.

January 24th:

The Supreme Court of London rules that Prime Minister Theresa May must obtain Parliament's approval before she begins Britain's formal exit from the European Union.

January 25th-26th:

Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto scraps a planned summit with US President Donald Trump in the face of insistent tweets from Trump demanding Mexico pay for a border wall.

January 27th:

US President Donald Trump meets at the White House British Prime Minister Theresa May as his first host in an official visit, underling the current strong relations between their two countries.

January 28th:

Five Iraqi passengers and one Yemeni are barred from boarding an EgyptAir flight from Cairo to New York after on January 27th US President Donald Trump has halted the entry in the USA of citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries.

January 29th:

In Southern Yemen, during the first military operation authorized by US President Donald Trump against al Qaeda, a US commando dies.

January 30th:

In Quebec City, Canada, a 27 years-old French-Canadian student is under arrest after six people have been killed in a shooting at a Quebec City mosque in a supposed terroristic attack.

January 31st:

US President Donald Trump fires Sally Yates, regent Secretary to Justice, who has ordered to her Department not to defend at the Court the act on immigration signed by Trump on January 27th.

February 1st:

British House of Commons votes for the draft act which authorizes Theresa May's government to start negotiations for Brexit.

February 2nd:

In Rome Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni and Libyan premier Fayeze al Serraj sign a *memorandum* for cooperating to fight illegal immigration and for enforcing the borders between Italy and Libya.

February 3rd:

In Paris a French soldier shoots and wounds a man armed with *machete* and carrying two suspected bags on his back as he has tried to enter the Louvre museum in what the government declares appears to have been a terrorist attack.

February 4th-5th:

In the USA the Court of Appeals rejects the urgent appeal presented by the American Department of Justice asking the suspension of Seattle's Federal judge which has blocked the entrance ban in the USA for citizens of 7 Muslim countries.

February 6th:

In Brussels, at the EU foreign affairs council meeting, European foreign ministers declare the European Union will keep sanctions on Russia until Moscow drops its support for the separatist rebellion in Ukraine.

February 7th:

In a conference press in Warsaw, after various declarations to journals and newspapers, German Chancellor Angela Merkel finally states that the European Union must not be divided in areas at two speeds and must not host exclusive clubs forbidden to member States.

February 8th:

British Prime Minister Theresa May wins approval from the House of Commons to trigger Britain's exit from the European Union to be started within March 2017.

February 9th:

Russian air strikes accidentally kill three Turkish soldiers and wound 11 others during an operation against Islamic State in Northern Syria. Russian President Vladimir Putin calls Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan and expresses his excuses.

February 10th:

In Montpellier, in Southern France, a special forces' blitz foils an imminent terroristic attack to be done in Paris and planned by some ISIS militants.

February 11th:

United States object to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' choice of former Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad as the body's new representative to Libya.

February 12th:

North Korea makes a new rocket test, launching a missile for 500 km before it has fallen in Japanese Sea.

February 13th:

UN Secretary general Antonio Guterres «firmly condemns» the rocket launch made by North Korea. USA, Japan and South Korea ask for a urgent UN Security Council's convocation to study the countermeasures to Pyongyang.

February 14th:

World's *media* report the killing of Kim Jong-nam, North Korean leader's Kim Jong-un older brother, occurred on February 13th in Malaysia and, according to local police, behind his death there would be North Korea's government.

February 15th:

The European Parliament votes to ratify the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), a trade deal with Canada which will offer consumers more choice and lower costs.

February 16th:

The United States, South Korea and Japan issue a joint statement condemning North Korea's test firing of a ballistic missile on February 12th and stating Pyongyang should face an «even stronger» international response for violating UN resolutions.

February 17th:

Pakistani security forces kill dozens of ISIS's suspected militants after Islamic State has claimed a suicide bombing that has killed on February 16th more than 80 worshippers at a Sufi shrine in Sindh province.

February 18th:

At Munich Security Conference US Vice President Mike Pence brings a message of support for Europe and NATO from President Donald Trump.

February 19th:

US-backed Iraqi forces launch a ground offensive to dislodge Islamic State militants from the Western part of the city of Mosul.

February 20th:

In Brussels US Vice President Mike Pence assures the European Union that the Trump administration will develop their cooperation in trade and security and backs the EU as a partner.

February 21st:

French President François Hollande invites the leaders of Germany, Italy and Spain at a summit in Versailles on March 6th to prepare the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome (March 25th) and to trace the future of post-Brexit European Union.

February 22nd:

Chinese President Xi Jinping promises Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte that Beijing will not build military structures on a rocky outcrop in the South China Sea, which has been causing a dispute between the two countries.

February 23rd:

In Geneva Syrian peace talks resume after breaking down on May 2016 as the battle for Aleppo escalated, with the UN mediation hoping to corral the warring sides into a rare face-to-face meeting.

February 24th:

In the Syrian village of Sousian, an ISIS' stronghold, an Islamic State car bomb kills more than 50 people.

February 25th:

In Geneva, at the peace talks on Syria, the Syrian government and opposition delegates warn of the impact on negotiations after violence in Syria on February 24th.

February 26th:

The Syrian army and its allies make a sudden advance into areas held by Islamic State in Northwest Syria, as the jihadist group has retreated after losing the city of al-Bab to Turkey-backed rebels.

February 27th:

US President Donald Trump is seeking an increase in military spending of more than 9 percent, \$54 billions presented in his first budget proposal and slash the same amount from non-defense spending, including a large reduction in foreign aid.

February 28th:

At least 9000 citizens go away from Western Mosul, where the fight is still going on between government forces and ISIS militants, which control the main part of this area.

March 1st:

In Brussels the President of European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker presents his White Book on the post-Brexit Union, where is underlined the option of two-speed Europe, also known as variable geometry Europe, after the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU.

March 2nd:

Turkish Foreign Affairs' Ministry declares to have convened German Ambassador to ask about the cancellation of a meeting of Turkish Minister of Justice, Bekir Bozdogan, in Gaggenau (Germany) on the forthcoming Turkish *referendum* on presidentialism of April 16th, and tension between the two countries increases.

March 3rd:

In Geneva Syrian opposition provisionally accepts 12 principles given to delegates by the United Nations at the end of the round of peace talks.

March 4th:

In Pristina, Kosovo, the High EU Representative for Foreign Policy and Security Federica Mogherini appeals to the Kosovan political forces to ratify the agreement on the borders with Montenegro, the last condition asked by the European Union to liberalize the visas of Kosovan citizens traveling to Schengen countries.

March 5th:

In Mosul US-backed Iraqi forces are about to reach the main government complex, the main target in the offensive to dislodge Islamic State from the city.

March 6th:

North Korea fires four ballistic missiles into the sea off Japan's Northwest, angering South Korea and Japan, after it has promised retaliation over US-South Korea military drills.

March 7th:

At the summit in Versailles between Germany, France, Italy and Spain a two-speeds Europe takes place: from the final declaration of the four leaders, the EU must show its solidarity to all the 27 member States but also the ability to develop itself at different levels.

March 8th:

In Mosul Iraqi forces see off an overnight Islamic State counter-attack near main government buildings and take full control of the last major road leading West to the militant-held town of Tal Afar.

March 9th:

In Brussels, at the end of a summit of the European Council, its President Donald Tusk is reconfirmed for a second mandate in spite of the adverse vote and the strong opposition of his country, Poland.

March 10th:

At the Brussels summit the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker declares that the project of a various-speeds' Europe is not a border between East and West and that would not be a new iron curtain but it would imply for «who wants to do more, to be able to do more».

March 11th:

The Netherlands ban Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu from landing in Rotterdam in a row over Ankara's political campaigning among Turkish immigrants, increasing tension between the two countries.

March 12th:

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan declares the Netherlands should face sanctions for barring Turkish Foreign Minister from speaking in Rotterdam, while in Istanbul and Ankara many demonstrations against the decision of the Dutch government take place.

March 13th:

Turkish Minister for Europe Omer Celik announces the renegotiation of the agreement on refugees with the European Union, while Turkey convenes the highest Dutch diplomat to protest against the treatment to its Foreign Minister in Holland on March 11th.

March 14th:

In London the *iter* for Brexit is concluded with the House of Lords' approval of an act which allows to start without any bond the road for the exit of Great Britain from the European Union within two years (unless extended), while Scotland pushes for a *referendum* on secession from the United Kingdom to be done between 2018 and 2019.

March 15th:

Iraqi government forces battling Islamic State for Mosul take control of a main bridge over the Tigris river and advance towards the mosque where the group's leaders declared their 'Caliphate' in 2014.

March 16th:

The EU welcomes the results of the political elections in the Netherlands where the Liberal VVD party of Mark Rutte largely wins on the populist, Islamophobic and anti-EU of Geert Wilders.

March 17th:

US President Donald Trump and German Chancellor Angela Merkel meet in Washington to discuss about the European commitment in NATO, immigration, Ukrainian crisis and commercial relations between US and EU.

March 18th:

In Paris security forces shoot dead a radicalized Muslim who had tried to seize a soldier's gun at Orly airport.

March 19th:

Iraqi army helicopters strafe and rocket Islamic State positions inside Mosul's old city as ground troops fight street battles to close in on the strategic prize of the al-Nuri mosque.

March 20th:

British Prime Minister Theresa May announces she will trigger Britain's divorce proceedings with the European Union on March 29th, launching two years of negotiations.

March 21st:

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon seeks backing from the Edinburgh Parliament for her proposal to hold a new *referendum* on independence from the United Kingdom, the first formal step in a process resisted by London.

March 22nd:

In London at least a dozen people are injured and two reported dead after a car has crashed into pedestrians near the British Parliament and an assailant has stabbed a policeman in what police calls a terrorist incident.

March 23rd:

The attacker who has killed three people near Parliament in London on March 22nd was a 52-year-old British-born man, named Khalid Masood, who was once investigated by MI5 intelligence officers over concerns about violent extremism. Islamic State claims responsibility for the attack.

March 24th:

British authorities declare that, before killing at least four people on March 24th, Khalid Masood was considered by intelligence officers to be a criminal who posed little serious threat. In the meantime in Rome there is maximum alert for 60th anniversary's celebrations of the Treaties of EEC to be held on March 25th.

March 25th:

The leaders of EU, in Rome to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the EEC Treaties, declare that Europeans must contain their squabbling and carping about the EU if the Union is to survive, by signing a formal declaration of unity.

March 26th:

In Moscow and all over the country police detains hundreds of protesters, including liberal leader of opposition Alexei Navalny, after thousands have taken to the streets to demonstrate against corruption demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

March 27th:

The Court of Moscow convicts Alexiei Navalni to 15 days of imprisonment and to pay a fine for organizing a non authorized demonstration, violating public order. USA and EU blame the arrest.

March 28th:

Scottish Parliament votes with majority for the request of a new *referendum* on secession from the United Kingdom in response to the Brexit.

March 29th:

British Prime Minister Theresa May notifies EU Council President Donald Tusk in a hand-delivered letter that Britain formally begins Britain's divorce from the European Union.

March 30th:

In Archangel, Russia, takes place the Fourth International Arctic Forum, a round table on Arctic, a strategic and commercial place of interest for the oil reserves under the ice and for the control of commercial roads with of hydrocarbons.

March 31st:

US President Donald Trump officially announces two acts against «commercial abuses against the USA» and with the aim to impose substantial duties on external goods.