

Headlines:

- **Conflict within NATO exposes the West's weakness**
- **US admits that it does not want to remove the Syrian tyrant Bashar al-Assad**
- **Russia's Interest in Afghanistan demonstrates American weakness**

Details:

Conflict within NATO exposes the West's weakness

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has adopted a confrontational approach over military spending in his first meeting with NATO foreign ministers, a meeting that had to be rescheduled to accommodate Tillerson. According to the Washington Post:

Addressing a meeting of NATO's 28 foreign ministers, Tillerson said he wanted alliance leaders to agree at a May summit to come up with concrete plans by the end of the year to meet budget guidelines. Friday's conference — hastily moved up after Tillerson initially announced he would skip it so he could attend meetings between Trump and China's leader next week — was held amid concerns about the U.S. commitment to NATO following Trump's calls to increase spending among other member nations.

"As President Trump has made clear, it is no longer sustainable for the U.S. to maintain a disproportionate share of NATO's defense expenditures," Tillerson told the foreign ministers. "Allies must increase defense spending."

The effort met with resistance from German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, who said the push from Washington was unrealistic and based on a mistaken interpretation of the spending targets, which are not binding. Germany is NATO's largest economy after the United States, but it lags far behind in its defense spending. Twisting Berlin's arm to increase its military expenditures is key to Trump's effort to shift more of the burden for Europe's defense to Washington's NATO partners.

The disbelieving West is plagued by conflict between their countries and even within their countries, whereas Muslims have the capacity to unify strongly on Islam. This is why the Islamic Khilafah State remained a superpower for more than a millennium, and only fell from superpower status when Muslims weakened in their understanding of, and adherence to, Islam.

US admits that it does not want to remove the Syrian tyrant Bashar al-Assad

According to a report in Reuters:

The White House on Friday backed top aides' comments that the United States is not now focused on making Syrian President Bashar al-Assad leave power, saying the U.S. focus is on defeating Islamic State militants.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley on Thursday drew criticism for playing down a long-standing U.S. goal of persuading Assad to leave power to help end the six-year-long Syrian civil war.

Tillerson said Assad's future is up to the Syrian people to decide, while Haley said "our priority is no longer to sit there and focus on getting Assad out."

At his daily news briefing, White House spokesman Sean Spicer said that regarding Assad, "there is a political reality that we have to accept in terms of where we are right now."

Spicer blamed the inability of Trump's predecessor, Democrat Barack Obama, to persuade Assad to step down.

The Obama administration, in its later years, was focused on reaching a deal with Russia that would eventually see Assad go, though it also shifted its focus to the fight against Islamic State militants, who captured swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria in 2014.

"We had an opportunity and we need to focus now on defeating ISIS," Spicer said. "The United States has profound priorities in Syria and Iraq and we've made it clear that counterterrorism, particularly the defeat of ISIS, is foremost among those priorities."

In fact it has been America's purpose from the beginning to crush the revolution in Syria, as it has worked to quell the 'Arab Spring' revolutions throughout the region.

Russia's interest in Afghanistan demonstrates American weakness

According to an AP report published in the New York Times:

As America's effort to end 16 years of war in Afghanistan yields little progress, Russia is resurrecting its own interest in the "graveyard of empires." The jockeying includes engaging the Taliban and leading a new diplomatic effort to tackle Afghanistan's future, with or without U.S. support.

Uncertain of Moscow's intentions, the Trump administration will stay away when Russia hosts regional powers China, India, Iran and Pakistan, and several Central Asian countries, for another set of Afghan talks next month. Afghanistan's government is attending, but the U.S. declined an invitation, saying it wasn't consulted ahead of time. No one has invited the Taliban.

For Russia, dogged by memories of the Soviet Union's disastrous 1980s occupation of Afghanistan, it's a surprising turn at the head of the country's proverbial peace table. And it coincides with the Kremlin's campaign to wield greater international authority at the U.S.' expense elsewhere, including intervening in Syria's war and pushing for a settlement on President Bashar Assad's and its own terms. Moscow even has sought to broker new Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, challenging Washington's grip on the Mideast peace process.

American weakness or Russian ascendancy are not enough to explain the Russia's intrusion onto Muslim lands at America's expense. America is still the pre-eminent global superpower. However, there is a third factor, which is the Islamic renaissance presently underway within the Muslim Ummah. American power is badly stretched across multiple wars across the entire Muslim world. Afghanistan is only one example of a genuine uprising from Muslims against foreign occupation, that America, despite its superpower status, has proved unable to control.

For those who can see, and those who can think, these are powerful lessons about the rapidly changing status quo, and point to our nearness to the re-establishment, by Allah's permission, of the righteous Islamic Khilafah on the method of the Prophet (s.a.w.).