

Allies finalise plans to defeat IS

IS 'jihadists' and psychopaths

Agree to corner jihadists in Syria, Iraq bastions; pledge \$2b to rebuild post-war Iraq

AGENCIES

The United States gathered its allies in the coalition fighting the Islamic State group Wednesday and agreed on a plan to corner the jihadists in their final bastions.

US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter told reporters that an accelerated military effort would soon see the group pushed back to Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq.

And US officials said donor countries had pledged a total of \$2 billion towards the cost of rebuilding Iraq and insulating its communities from extremism.

But Carter warned that isolating and taking out what he called the IS "parent tumor" would not eliminate its ability to spring or inspire attacks elsewhere.

And, as if on cue, IS propagandists released a video claiming last week's truck attack in Nice that left 84 dead, and threatening more against coalition states.

Defense ministers from the Western and Arab countries of the coalition said they have a military plan to liberate the cities with local Iraqi and Syrian forces.

"Today, we made the plans and commitments that will help us deliver ISIL the lasting defeat that it deserves," Carter told reporters



DEVELOPMENTS
Syrian opposition calls for suspension of US-led air strikes
US-backed force gives IS 48 hours to leave Manbij
Libya unity gov't condemns French military presence

at an air base outside Washington.

The Pentagon chief did not reveal details, but added: "Let me be clear: They culminate in the collapse of ISIL's control over the cities of Mosul and Raqqa."

Britain's defense minister, Michael Fallon, said London would double to 500 the number of its troops assigned to train Iraqi and Kurdish forces fighting the IS group.

Separately, US Secretary of State John Kerry is meeting with foreign

ministers from the coalition countries to discuss the broader political and humanitarian plan.

The two days of meetings were called as jihadist attacks -- some of them inspired or ordered by the IS group -- are proliferating around the world.

The coalition, and in particular its US leadership, are keen to seize back the narrative and emphasize what they see as progress on the main battlefield.

In recent weeks, jihadists have

claimed horrific attacks in Nice, Istanbul, Baghdad and Dhaka that have left hundreds dead and injured.

For two days, Kerry and Carter will meet with about 40 of their counterparts in Washington.

Washington maintains that since its peak in 2014, IS has lost nearly 50 percent of its Iraqi territory and between 20 and 30 percent of its Syrian strongholds.

The anti-IS coalition, which has conducted 14,000 strikes in two years in Syria and Iraq, is also

facing criticism from its allies on the field.

The head of the opposition Syrian National Coalition called for a suspension of the US-led air campaign against Islamic State in Syria while reports of dozens of civilian deaths from air strikes around the northern city of Manbij are investigated.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 56 civilians were killed in air strikes north of Manbij on Tuesday. SNC president Anas al-Abdah said the US-led air campaign is "proving to be a recruitment tool for terrorist organisations".

But the US-backed force fighting to drive IS out of Manbij yesterday said it was giving the jihadist group 48 hours to pull out of the surrounded northern Syrian city.

A statement from the Manbij Military Council said the Islamic State militants would be allowed to leave the city with light weapons, without a fight.

The council is allied to the US-backed Kurdish and Arab alliance known as the Syria Democratic Forces (SDF), which has been fighting Islamic State in northern Syria with the support of air strikes from a US-led coalition.

AFP, Paris

Not all jihadists are psychopaths, and not all psychopaths turn violent.

However when a person craving violence is drawn in by Islamic State ideology offering them glory and a sense of belonging, it provides a volatile mix that can lead to the kind of massacre seen in the south of France last week, experts say.

French investigators are at a loss to explain the motives of Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlej, a Tunisian who crushed 84 people to death with a truck in an IS-claimed attack in Nice after an apparent lightning-fast radicalisation.

He is the latest in a long line of attackers inspired from afar by IS extremists to be described as suffering from mental or personality disorders.

Like Omar Mateen, who shot dead 49 people in a gay Orlando nightclub, Bouhlej was cruel to his wife and children, according to prosecutors, and was reported to be chillingly calm during the attack.

Investigators found gruesome evidence on his computer of corpses and searches for images of car accidents, and those interviewed by police said he had shown no sign of religious fervour until recently.

"Could he have become extremely religious willy-nilly, or was he cherry-picking what he likes about IS, because what he really liked was the violence?" said Mary-Ellen O'Toole, a retired FBI profiler.

"IS didn't create this guy, but he was already well on his way and IS was the conduit."

Profiling terrorists is a major headache for security and intelligence forces, with motives as wide-ranging as the kind of people drawn to carry them out.

"Terrorist acts are behaviours, with all kinds of different motivations and combinations of motivations. The acts and motivations are usually logical - not 'crazy' or 'senseless' - to the perpetrator," forensic psychiatrist William Reid told AFP.

"History and current news is full of examples of killing people without mental illness or instability."

However experts are not surprised that IS, with its brutal propaganda videos, appeals to those considered mentally disturbed.

Brian Michael Jenkins, a terrorism expert with the US-based RAND think tank, said that IS' brutal online propaganda would likely only appeal to those who were "already sliding between a fantasy world and a real world."

"It is difficult to remotely motivate ordinary individuals to carry out horrendously destructive and self-destructive acts. IS in particular is a magnet for psychopaths."

Experts say there are numerous reasons why IS lures jihadists, from resonating with their personal anger and feelings of injustice to offering them an extreme belief system and psychological rewards of participation or rewards in the afterlife.

Jenkins said the poor level of understanding of Islam of many jihadists meant religion alone could not explain their acts. "Radicalisation may consist of nothing more than embracing Daesh's flag, the religious component may be no more than brief encounters on the internet."

The Islamic State "will applaud their actions, it will make them a hero. It offers identity, meaning, participation in an epic struggle. It offers them a passage to paradise."

Psychopathy is a personality disorder, not a mental illness, although it can be present alongside other psychological disorders.



France urges Brexit talks 'as soon as possible'

AFP, Dublin

French President Francois Hollande yesterday urged Britain to begin talks to leave the EU "as soon as possible" and ruled out granting access to the EU's single market without access by EU workers to Britain.

"The sooner these negotiations begin the better, and the shorter they are the better," Hollande said after meeting Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny in Dublin, calling for negotiations "as soon as possible".

"Things should not drag on," Hollande said, hours before he is due to meet British Prime Minister Theresa May in Paris.

He said he expected May to give her "reasons" on why she was planning to delay until next year invoking Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty -- the formal procedure for withdrawal from the European Union.

Hollande's tough talk contrasted sharply with a more accommodating German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who agreed to give Britain more time to prepare its departure during May's visit to Berlin on Wednesday.

Britain on Wednesday took the first step towards Brexit by announcing it was relinquishing its six-month EU presidency which had been due to start in July 2017 and will be taken up by Estonia instead.

Turkish democracy not under threat

Claims Erdogan amid widening nationwide purge after failed coup

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has insisted the Turkish democracy is not under threat, but said there could be more arrests in the wake of last week's failed coup attempt, in a wide-ranging interview with Al Jazeera.

"We will remain inside a democratic parliamentary system, we will never step back from it," he told Al Jazeera's Jamal Elshayyal, speaking through a translator, from inside the presidential palace in Ankara.

"However, whatever is necessary for the nation's peace and stability will be done," Erdogan said, expressing doubts, however, that the coup attempt was entirely over.

"I don't think we have come to the end of it yet."

Erdogan's comments came moments ahead of announcing a three-month state of emergency in response to the failed coup.

"I would like to underline that the declaration of the state of emergency has the sole purpose of taking the necessary measures, in the face of the

terrorist threat that our country is facing," he said in a televised address, vowing that the "virus in the military will be cleansed".

In his interview with Al Jazeera, Erdogan described the attempted coup as "a crime against the Turkish state", adding that the government



was making sure "every step is taken within the law".

The Turkish government's purge of state institutions following Friday night's failed coup has already cleared out about 60,000 people.

This has led rights organisations and Turkey's

allies to voice some concern about the direction the country is taking after the coup attempt, with some claiming that the president was using the weekend's events to legitimise the crackdown of any kind of opposition.

The Turkish president also repeated his claim that US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen and his movement was behind the coup attempt and said it would be a big mistake if the US decided not to extradite him. Gulen, who lives in exile in the US state of Pennsylvania, has denied any involvement.

But, Erdogan also emphasised that he did not want to strain Turkey's relations with the US as a result of the extradition request.

"We need to be more sensitive," he said. "Relations between our countries are based on interests, not feelings. We are strategic partners."

The Turkish president said he believed foreign countries might have been involved in the failed coup attempt, though he declined to name any.

Erdogan also reiterated Turkey would consider reinstating the death penalty after the failed attempt to overthrow his government.

RIO OLYMPICS 2016

Brazil arrests group planning terror acts

AFP, Brasilia

Brazilian police have arrested 10 members of a group allegedly planning terrorist attacks during the upcoming Olympic Games, Justice Minister Alexandre de Moraes said yesterday.

The group, made up of Brazilians, allegedly declared loyalty to the Islamic State organization and discussed buying weapons.

"There was an order between them to start training in martial arts and to (obtain) ammunition, weapons with which they could carry out an act," de Moraes told a hastily called press conference.

"This was in progress. One of them had got in contact with an underground weapons site in Paraguay, asking to buy an AK47" assault rifle, he said.

The group was monitored when it discussed the alleged plans in Internet communications, the minister said.

In a statement, the justice ministry said that it had launched "Operation Hashtag to break up a group involved in the promotion of Islamic State and the preparation for carrying out terrorist attacks and other criminal acts."

The arrests and 19 searches were conducted in states across the country, ranging from the Amazonas region to the financial capital Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, where the Olympics open on August 5.



French police officers stand guard during an anti-terrorist operation yesterday in Argenteuil, northwestern suburbs of Paris. "Searches are being conducted in two locations by French intelligence agency (DGSI) and French Police unit (Raid)", according to police.

Chicken odour prevents malaria: study

BBC ONLINE

The smell from a live chicken could help protect against malaria, researchers have found.

Ethiopian and Swedish scientists discovered that malarial mosquitoes tend to avoid chickens and other birds.

The experiments, conducted in western Ethiopia, included suspending a live chicken in a cage near a volunteer sleeping under a bed net.

Last year malaria killed nearly 400,000 people in Africa, the UN says.

Infection and death rates are declining but health officials are continuing to look for new ways to prevent the spread of the illness.

The malaria parasite, which initially hides in the liver before going into the bloodstream, is carried from person to person by mosquitoes when they drink blood.

The scientists, whose work was published in the Malaria Journal, concluded that as mosquitoes use their sense of smell to locate an animal they can bite there must be something in a chicken's odour that puts the insects off.

Addis Ababa University's Habtie Tekie, who worked on the research, said that the compounds from the smell of the chicken can be extracted and could work as a repellent.

Field trials for this stage of the research are now "in the pipeline", he told the BBC.

Researchers from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences were also involved in the project.

Compounds extracted from chicken feathers were also used in the experiments, as well as live chickens.

'Don't think we have right to lecture'

Trump says US may not defend Nato allies if he is president

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The US may not come to the aid of its Nato allies under attack if Donald Trump becomes president because domestic issues in America must be given priority, the Republican hopeful has said.

Trump's remarks are at odds with Nato's core principle of collective defence for members, which has been in place since the formation of the alliance at the beginning of the Cold War.

The US, he said, needs to try to "fix our own mess" before coming to the aid of foreign partners.

"I don't think we have a right to lecture," Trump said in an interview with the New York Times. "Look at what is happening in our country. How are we going to lecture when people are shooting policemen in cold blood?"

He said that under his leadership, the US would first consider countries' contribution to the Nato alliance before coming to their aid, and added

that other member states should begin bearing more of the defence costs borne by Washington.

Trump's comments could cause anxiety among Baltic states, many of which see Nato as a key guard against Russian belligerence.

When asked if the US would automatically protect these countries from

said, but only if America was not asked to continue to pay for what he called an era of American largesse he claimed was no longer affordable.

Speaking about plans to have a less interventionist foreign policy, Mr Trump highlighted economic concerns in the US, and said he would press on with his "America First" rally-



Russian aggression, he said it would depend on their contributions: "If they fulfill their obligations to us, the answer is yes."

The world would learn to adjust to his approach, Mr Trump said. "I would prefer to be able to continue" with existing international agreements, he

ing cry. "If we decide we have to defend the United States, we can always deploy" from American soil, he said, "and it will be a lot less expensive."

He added: "We are going to take care of this country first, before we worry about everyone else in the world."

'Vote for someone you trust'

Ted Cruz booted off stage as he refuses to back Trump

AFP, Cleveland

Onetime presidential challenger Ted Cruz shocked the Republican convention Wednesday by thumping his nose at Donald Trump and urging Americans to "vote their conscience," sending the 2016 nominee's bid to unify the party careening off course.

Cruz received a standing ovation as he took the stage, but cheers turned to boos when it became clear the US senator from Texas did not come to Cleveland to endorse his former rival.

Trump himself tipped the drama needle into the red by striding into the arena shortly before Cruz finished speaking, giving a thumbs up to people in the arena and surveying the remarkable scene of delegates thrown into turmoil by the Texan's remarks, and who hounded him off the stage.

"We deserve leaders who stand for principle, who unite us all behind shared values, who cast aside anger for love," said Cruz, effectively listing criticisms leveled at Trump.

"If you love our country and love your

children as much as I know that you do, stand and speak and vote your conscience," he said.

The two men fought a bitter and at times deeply personal primary campaign, in which Trump mocked Cruz's wife and tarred his rival with a nasty nickname: "Lyin' Ted."

Cruz dropped out of the race in early May, finishing second to Trump in the delegate count.

Cruz is widely expected to run in 2020 should Trump lose to Hillary Clinton.

His none-too-subtle message landed like a political hand grenade in a convolution already marred by an opening day floor revolt from anti-Trump delegates and other missteps by the campaign.

The political theater stepped all over Indiana Governor Mike Pence's moment in the Republican spotlight as he introduced himself to US voters as Trump's running mate.

Pence accepted the vice presidential nomination, saying he was "deeply humbled by your confidence." The delegates rose

