

President Obama Attends The G-7 Summit; House To Consider COOL Legislation And Possibly TPA; While The Senate Resumes Its FY 2016 NDAA Floor Debate

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G-7 Summit

President Barack Obama arrived in Germany on Sunday to attend the G-7 Summit. The leaders are expected to review the current situation in Ukraine; discuss continued support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity; and underscore their support for a diplomatic solution based on full implementation of the Minsk agreements. Many expect the G-7 will issue a new statement of condemnation of – but not new sanctions against – Russia for its suspected role in the escalating violence in Ukraine. The G-7 countries will also review terrorists threats faced by the spread of ISIL in Syria, Iraq, and Libya, and Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Also on Sunday, President Obama met with United Kingdom Prime Minister David Cameron. They discussed the importance of maintaining the sanctions regime to put pressure on Russian and separatist forces to fully implement the Minsk agreements. Both also discussed ISIL, Iraq, Syria, the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP), Libya, Nigeria, and climate change. President Obama is also expected to meet separately with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Russia/Ukraine Crisis

According to OSCE monitors in Ukraine, fighting erupted near the town of Marinka early last Wednesday morning, preceded by the movement of heavy weapons in separatist-controlled areas generally west towards the contact line. The columns included Russian T64 tanks and armored personnel carriers. Monitors later reported hundreds of salvos of rockets, heavy artillery, and mortar fire from Russian-occupied positions. Ukraine returned artillery fire, with reports indicating that dozens of fighters died on both sides before calm returned on Wednesday afternoon. U.S. officials expressed concern about the increased fighting in eastern Ukraine.

Prior to heading to the G-7 Summit, on Friday, President Obama spoke with Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko. Both expressed concern about the recent assault by combined Russian-separatist forces across the current line of contact near Donetsk. President Obama reaffirmed U.S. support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and stated support for a diplomatic solution, while maintaining costs on Russia and the separatists until they fulfill all provisions of the Minsk

agreements.

Iran

The P5+1 Talks with Iran resumed negotiations last Thursday, with negotiators seeking to overcome remaining differences and achieve a final deal before the self-imposed 30 June deadline.

On Wednesday, 10 June, the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East will hold a hearing titled, “Iran’s Ballistic Missile Capabilities.”

COOL Bill – House Action Scheduled

The House is scheduled to take up legislation this Wednesday that would repeal country-of-origin labelling (COOL) requirements for beef, pork and poultry. If it passes the House, passage in the Senate of the measure remains unclear. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kansas) has indicated repealing the COOL requirements may be the best option, while Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-Michigan) is inclined to oppose that approach.

With Congress yet to act on COOL, the Governments of Canada and Mexico issued a statement last Thursday saying that they have asked the World Trade Organization (WTO) for a special Dispute Settlement Body meeting to request retaliation rights against the United States, to take place on 17 June. Canada is seeking more than \$3 billion following a WTO ruling faulting U.S. COOL requirements for pork and beef; Mexico is seeking more than \$653 million. Andrew Bates, a spokesperson for the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, said the United States would object to these retaliation requests.

Trade Promotion Authority

The White House and House Republicans are making a final push to lock in the 217 votes necessary to pass a Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) bill. A controversial funding offset for the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program has emerged as an additional hurdle to the legislation’s passage. If the House Republican leadership is confident they have the votes for passage, the TPA bill, TAA bill, a customs measure, and a trade preferences measure (AGOA/GSP/Haiti program) may be on the House floor for consideration as early as this week.

As expected, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wisconsin) indicated the Republican leadership plans to hold separate votes on TPA and TAA, ultimately deferring to the House Rules Committee on the mechanism by which this could occur.

Customs Measure

Chairman Ryan told reporters last week that he expects quick resolution to differences with the Senate over a customs and trade enforcement bill that the House is set to pass this month. According to the Chairman, “We’ve already in some areas done some pre-conferencing.” One issue to be resolved via the House customs bill is the inclusion of a human trafficking provision in the Senate-passed TPA bill that could potentially strip fast-track protections from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal if it is not changed.

AGOA/GSP/Haiti Bill

Chairman Ryan also indicated that there would also have to be “a very simple conference” on a trade preferences bill for Africa and other developing countries, due largely to House concerns over how the Senate version would pay for the package. Last Friday, the United States and South Africa said they have reached an agreement that paves the way for renewed sales of U.S. bone-in chicken in the South African market for first time in 15 years. This is an issue that threatened South Africa’s continued participation in the *African Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA) program.

Ex-Im Bank

House leaders are waiting to see if the Senate can pass an Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank reauthorization bill first. The lack of Senate floor time this month – combined with few must-pass legislation awaiting action this month – increasingly means the Bank’s charter will likely expire at the end of this month. House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Maryland) expressed confidence on Thursday that the chamber would pass a reauthorization measure before the August recess.

At a Senate Banking Committee hearing last week, Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Alabama) said that after years of efforts to reform the Ex-Im Bank, he is not convinced it has made enough progress to warrant long-term reauthorization.

Defense Update

On Wednesday, 3 June, the Senate began debate of its *Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA). Senator Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island) has offered an amendment that would limit the amount of funding available for the Overseas Contingency (OCO) account unless discretionary spending caps are lifted. Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Arizona) hopes the amendment will be defeated so that Senators can “move forward with the amendment process.” Frustrated with the delayed floor debate, Senator McCain reminded his colleagues that Congress has set aside bipartisan differences for 53 years in passing an NDAA measure. The Senate will reconvene today and resume NDAA floor debate later this afternoon. Senator McCain has expressed a desire to see a final vote on the measure by the end of this week.

This Tuesday, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense will markup its defense spending measure. The full Appropriations Committee will hold its mark-up on Thursday.

Syria/Iraq Crisis

Last week, the United States accused the Syrian military of carrying out air strikes to help ISIL advance around the northern city of Aleppo. Meanwhile, the media reported last Thursday that 15,000 fighters from Iran and Iraq have arrived in Syria to help the Assad regime counter ISIL.

Foreign Authorization Act

This Tuesday, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will consider its *FY 2016 Department of State Operations Authorization and Embassy Security Act*.

FIFA

International Federation of Association Football (“FIFA”) President Sepp Blatter unexpectedly resigned last Tuesday, amid reports the U.S. Department of Justice is investigating him, among other

FIFA officials, for corruption and bribery.

Asia and the Pacific

On Thursday, 11 June, the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific will hold a hearing titled, "Retreat or Revival: A Status Report on Democracy in Asia."

Cuba

On Wednesday, 10 June, the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere will hold a hearing titled, "U.S.-Cuba Policy and Property Claims."

Looking Ahead

Washington will likely focus on the following upcoming matters:

- 7-8 June: G-7 Summit in Schloss Elmau, Germany
- 16 June: President Obama will host President Park Geun-hye of the Republic of Korea
- 24-24 June: NATO Defense Ministerial in Brussels
- 30 June: S. Export-Import Bank charter expires
- 30 June: P5+1 Talks with Iran deadline to reach a deal
- 13 July: President Obama to host Conference on Aging
- [TBD] July: President Obama to travel to Kenya attend the Global Entrepreneurship Summit
- 15 September: 70th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) opens in New York City
- 24 September: Pope Francis to address Congress and meet with President Obama
- 28 September: General debate of the UNGA begins

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