



Shock as the US pulls out of Syria

To the great surprise and shock of its allies, Donald Trump has announced that then United States will pull its troops out of Northern Syria. This was apparently done on the egging of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The lack of US presence gives a green light to Turkey's own invasion in Northern Syria. However, this move has been vociferously opposed by other US allies, the American democratic party and members of Trump's own Republican party. The primary reason for such opposition is the presence of Kurdish communities and fighters in Northern Syria. The Kurds have been America's main ally in Syria and are largely responsible for the defeat of ISIS. However, Erdogan sees the Kurds as an existential threat due to separatism among Turkish Kurds. Allowing Turkey to enter Northern Syria could possibly lead to the genocide of the Kurds. There are also fears that since it is the Kurds who have been monitoring ex-ISIS territories, the fall of the Kurds could result in the revival of the ISIS.



Donald Trump and Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Socialists to return to power in Portugal

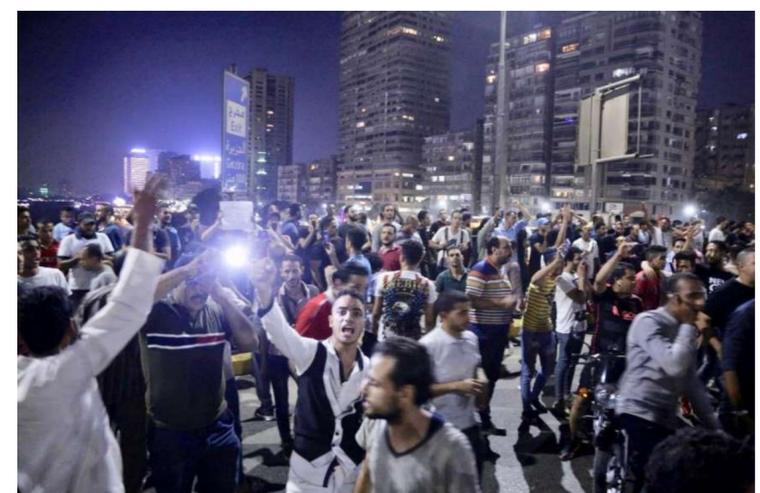
Portugal's socialist party has been invited to form a new government in Portugal. While the socialists did not win a majority, they expanded their parliamentary representation to 106 seats in the 230-member house. In their first term the Socialists ruled in coalition with two far-left allies, the Communists and the Left Bloc. They toppled the previous right-wing government with the promise to "turn the page" on the EU backed austerity policies. Since then, the alliance has confounded expectations by maintaining political and economic stability in a country that required bailouts from the EU and the IMF just eight years ago. High economic growth, low unemployment and reversing of cuts in public spending convinced the voters to give the socialists another chance. Prime Minister Antonio Costa and Finance Minister Mario Centeno have governed the country with an idealistic pragmatism, maintaining government spending while sticking to fiscal discipline. The next major test for the new government will be the new budget, with the leftist parties expected to demand an increase in public spending. The government will also need to adapt to Brexit as the UK is Portugal's biggest export market.



Socialist Party Logo (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Protests Roil Egypt

Protests broke out in Egypt with people demanding the resignation of President Fateh Al-Sisi. People took the streets across Egypt, in defiance of a six-year ban on public demonstrations. Sisi runs one of the most repressive regimes in the world, with widespread corruption and stifling of dissent. The government has responded to the recent protests with teargas, rubber bullets, live ammunition, mass detainment and imprisonment and internet shutdowns. The catalyst for these protests is Egyptian contractor and actor currently living in Barcelona, Mohamed Ali. Ali is a former beneficiary of Sisi's regime having previously obtained lucrative building contracts and starring in a film funded by the Egyptian government. However, Ali is now in exile and has posted a series of videos with claims of high-level corruption in Sisi's inner circle. These videos appear to have lit the fuse in a country currently experiencing an economic downturn and where 1/3rd of the population is still living in poverty.



Protests in Egypt. (Source- NYT)