

## Headlines:

- **Trump tells Davos: 'America First' does not mean 'America Alone'**
- **A Prominent Member of Germany's Far-Right Anti-Islam Party Just Converted to Islam**
- **Taliban Confirms Afghan Peace Meetings with Pakistan, China, Others**

## Details:

### Trump tells Davos: 'America First' does not mean 'America Alone'

US President Donald Trump has given his first speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, declaring that "America First" did not mean "America alone" as he took his familiar message first-hand to the world's elite. It was a relatively short, measured address to political and business leaders, devoid of the fiery rhetoric he uses before his supporters. Painting a rosy picture of the US economy, Trump declared the US as "open for business" and encouraged investment in the country. His speech in the Swiss ski resort did contain a warning on trade: the US would "no longer turn a blind eye" to what he described as unfair practices. The president made no mention of the environment or climate change, both key themes on the forum's agenda. This was the first time a sitting American president had addressed the event in 18 years, and Trump's appearance prompted a frenzy of anticipation and protest. The president immediately launched into a triumphant appraisal of the US economy's boisterous performance. "After years of stagnation, the United States is once again experiencing strong economic growth," he said. "The world is witnessing the resurgence of a strong and prosperous America." "'America First' does not mean 'America alone'. When the United States grows, so does the world," he said. Then followed an attack on unidentified countries for allegedly unfair trade practices - and a pledge that the US would "no longer turn a blind eye". "Only by insisting on fair and reciprocal trade can we create a system that works not just for the United States but for all nations," the president went on. "We cannot have free and open trade if some countries exploit the system at the expense of others. We support free trade but it needs to be fair and it needs to be reciprocal." He singled out "massive intellectual property theft" and countries which provided state aid to industry. Despite his opposition to multilateral trade agreements, Trump said the US would consider bilateral accords that were "mutually beneficial" - including with countries that have signed up to a Trans-Pacific trade agreement from which he has withdrawn. Despite the "open for business" message, the Trump administration has passed measures criticised as protectionist. Before his trip to Davos 30 percent tariffs were imposed on imported solar panels, among the first unilateral trade restrictions to be made. US officials have tried to play down comments by the US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who said the United States benefited from a lower dollar which would make its exports cheaper. Amid the protests the US currency tumbled, and the remarks were slammed by the European Central Bank and others who believe they violate unwritten rules to keep trade balanced. Mnuchin was quoted afterwards as describing Trump's speech as "fabulous" and "great". But in contrast to the buzz of anticipation preceding his appearance, the atmosphere among delegates once it was over was said to be muted. [Source: Euronews]

**Trump's "America not alone" remark is a reference to the continuation of American imperialism, where allies are coerced into shouldering the responsibility of paying for American interventions abroad and suffering high custom taxes on exports to America.**

### A Prominent Member of Germany's Far-Right Anti-Islam Party Just Converted to Islam

A prominent member of a German far-right political party known for its virulent anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant stance has converted to Islam and stepped down from his leadership role in the party. Yes, seriously. Arthur Wagner was a leading member of a state chapter of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, whose slogan "Islam doesn't belong in Germany" encapsulates its extreme nativist and anti-Muslim views. The AfD, which is now the third-largest political party in Germany after its stunning success in last September's elections, has tried to ban the construction of mosques in Germany, called on the country's border police to shoot refugees and migrants if necessary to stop them from entering the country, and run ads reminiscent of World War II-era Nazi propaganda warning of the threat posed by Muslims coming into Germany. Wagner himself in the past has

accused German Chancellor Angela Merkel of making a “huge mistake” by allowing so many Muslim refugees into the country and warned that “Germany is mutating into a different country,” according to German media. Which is why his sudden conversion to Islam and decision to step down from his leadership position is so striking. Wagner has called his decision to convert to Islam “a private matter” and declined to comment further to the press. But German media reports that the 48-year-old father of two has been spending his free time doing volunteer work with Muslim immigrants, including providing translation help to Chechen immigrants, since he speaks Russian and is of Russian descent. That personal interaction seems to have been the catalyst for his change of heart. Wagner is far from the first person to radically change his views of Islam after spending time with Muslims or engaging with Islam’s sacred texts. In the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks, the United States experienced a spike in the number of Muslims in the country. While some of that was undoubtedly due to immigration, a significant portion came from Americans converting to Islam. According to Asma Afsaruddin, a professor of Near Eastern languages and cultures at Indiana University Bloomington, many of those conversions were a direct result of Americans’ heightened interest in Islam in the wake of the terror attacks. “Despite Islamophobia, thoughtful Americans who are curious about the real nature of Islam might go out of their way to discover the teachings of the religion from reliable sources,” Asfaruddin told PRI’s The World back in 2016. Once people do so, they often quickly realize that the violent, bloody interpretation of Islam promoted by groups like al-Qaeda (and later ISIS) — and portrayed in much of the media — is vastly different from what the texts and traditions of Islam actually teach, and represents the views of a tiny fraction of the world’s 1.8 billion Muslims. [Source: Vox]

**No matter how hard the West tries to paint a negative picture of Islam they are failing to not only prevent the conversion of top anti-Islamist politicians but also halt the rapid rise of Islam in the West.**

### **Taliban Confirms Afghan Peace Meetings with Pakistan, China, Others**

Taliban political officials say they have submitted a report to their top leadership after concluding interactions with officials in Pakistan and representatives from other nations, including China and Qatar, on finding a solution to the Afghan war. In a Pashto-language statement circulated to media Wednesday, the Islamist insurgency confirmed for the first time that a five-member delegation from the Taliban’s Qatar-based Political Office recently traveled to Islamabad and held talks with officials there. Both sides shared and listened to each other’s views on how to promote a peaceful settlement to the war, according to the Taliban statement. With the cooperation of Pakistan, it said, the Taliban delegation later met with officials from China, Qatar and other nations to discuss ways to end the conflict in Afghanistan. “We have submitted our report to our leadership based on our discussions and will take further steps after receiving instructions from them,” the statement added. Officials in Pakistan have not yet commented, nor have they confirmed receiving Taliban officials. Diplomatic sources have confirmed to VOA the Taliban delegation visited Pakistan earlier this month. A Taliban official has also confirmed to VOA that several members from the Qatar office traveled to Pakistan, but insisted they only met with their family members and held consultations with elders of the Afghan refugee community in the country. The insurgent delegation consisted of Jan Muhammad Madnai, Maulvi Shahabud Din Dilawar, Syed Rasool Haleem, Muhammad Suhail Shaheen and Qari Deen Muhammad. “The Islamic Emirate (the Taliban) wants to emphasize that it desires a durable solution to the Afghan issue but needs the root causes (to) be addressed first so that our people would be able to live peacefully,” the Taliban reiterated in Wednesday’s statement. The Taliban visited Pakistan at a time when the country is under pressure from the United States to stop sheltering insurgent leaders, including those of the Taliban-allied Haqqani Network of terrorists. Islamabad denies it is allowing the militants to use Pakistani soil for cross-border attacks. U.S. President Donald Trump earlier this month suspended hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid to Pakistan until the country takes “decisive actions” against the terrorists fighting U.S. forces in Afghanistan. After visiting Afghanistan as part of the United Nations Security Council delegation this month, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said Trump’s new strategy was working. “They [the Afghan government] are starting to see the Taliban concede, they are starting to see them move towards coming to the table,” Haley said. [Source: Voice of America]

**True to form the Pakistani government has shown its true colours and continues undertake actions at the behest of American officials.**