



Weekly Media Report

30 September – 3 October 2013

International Affairs

Syria conflict: Chemical arms experts cross border – BBC (UK), 1 October 2013

A team of international disarmament experts has arrived in Syria to begin work on dismantling the country's stockpile of chemical weapons. Syria says it will co-operate with the mission set up after a US-Russia deal endorsed by the UN Security Council. It is the first time the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has been asked to destroy a country's chemical arms during a war.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24344442>

Weapons Inspection Team Begins Work in Syria – The NY Times (US), 3 October 2013

After weeks of threats and negotiations over Syria's chemical weapons stockpile, an advance team of international weapons inspectors has begun to take the first steps toward dismantling the arsenal. Early indications suggest that they are in for a long, hard slog.

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/03/world/middleeast/weapons-inspection-team-begins-work-in-syria.html?hp&_r=0

Martin Schulze, European Parliament (EP) president, affirmed that the survival of the Italian government led by Enrico Letta is essential for the continuing of the economic recovery of the country. Schulze also labeled those who will support the government as 'responsible' – Repubblica (IT), 1 October 2013

Following the political crisis sparked by Berlusconi and the PdL (the People of Freedom), Martin Schulze affirmed that the stability of the Italian politics is essential to continue the economic recovery of the country. The EP Presidents referred to the support of the government as an act of responsibility. Moreover, the members of the Italian Parliament are asked to go beyond their political membership and to put in front the interest of the country. Giorgio Squinzi (member of Confindustria – association of Italian industrials) is of the same advice: the lack of stability in the Italian politics risks to nullify the efforts made so far to face the economic depression.

http://www.repubblica.it/economia/2013/10/01/news/confindustria_pil_crisi-67648778/?ref=HRER3-1

Netanyahu warns west against Iranian president Rouhani's charm offensive – The Guardian (UK), 1 October 2013

The Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, launched a sustained attack on the new Iranian president Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday, 1 October, deriding his recent charm offensive with western leaders as a "ruse and a ploy" that was designed to fool the international community into dropping its guard against Iran's development of nuclear weapons.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/01/netanyahu-israeli-united-nations-rouhani-iran>

Qatar under growing pressure over workers' deaths as Fifa is urged to act – *The Guardian (UK)*, 3 October 2013

International pressure on Qatar to prevent exploitation of migrant workers in the buildup to the 2022 football World Cup escalated on Wednesday, 2 October, as victims' groups and the United Nations urged the game's governing body to act to halt a death toll that is already in the hundreds.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/02/qatar-workers-deaths-fifa-world-cup-2022>

Asian superpowers jostle to join the aircraft carrier club – *CNN (US)*, 3 October 2013

Want to be an Asian superpower? Then an aircraft carrier, it seems, is the minimum requirement for joining this elite club. In China, a retro-fitted former Ukrainian carrier dating back to the Soviet era is the flagship of the country's hopes for a "blue water" navy - a fleet that can operate on the high seas thousands of nautical miles from base. India has launched its first home built aircraft carrier as part of a plan to operate three carrier battle groups by 2020. And Japan - whose navy is officially classed as a self-defense force - has controversially unveiled what it has classed as a flat-topped helicopter destroyer, but to China looks perilously akin to an aircraft carrier.

http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/02/world/asia/china-india-japan-aircraft-carriers/index.html?hpt=hp_c1

National Affairs

Today, 1 October 2013, Silvio Berlusconi meets Angelino Alfano (PdL member, currently the Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior) to decide the future of the Italian government – *Corriere della Sera (IT)*, 1 October 2013

After Berlusconi requested that the ministers, who are members of his party (the People of Freedom - PdL), to withdraw from the Italian government. After the refusal of some of them to follow the 'instructions', today Angelino Alfano and Silvio Berlusconi meet at Palazzo Grazioli to discuss the future of the PdL, and the Italian government. Alfano, currently the PdL secretary, is amongst those who refused to withdraw from the government. The outcome of this meeting will have repercussions on the Italian government: in fact, the PdL support is essential for the survival of the government, and the Prime Minister Enrico Letta will have to obtain the support of some PdL members in case the party will fall apart. This situation will cause a definitive clash between Berlusconi and those who will follow him, and the left coalition with those PdL members who will decide to move away from their historical leader Berlusconi.

http://www.corriere.it/politica/13_ottobre_01/alfano-berlusconi-incontro_f7f6a22e-2a7c-11e3-b898-f13adc0c04f6.shtml

Today, 2 October 2013, the Italian Senate will be asked for a vote of confidence on the current coalition government. The Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta opened the plenary session with a personal discourse – *Corriere della Sera (IT)*, 2 October 2013

After the political instability caused by the withdraw from the Italian government of some PdL (People of Freedom, Berlusconi's party) ministries, today the members of the

Senate are going to express their opinion through a confidence vote. The Prime Minister Enrico Letta, in his opening speech addressing the voters, referred to culture and education as the central points for the Italian recovery. Unemployment and economic growth have been cited as the two priorities that the government has been working on and that it will continue to focus on. Letta also asked his audience to consider the political and economic instability that the government downfall will cause within the Eurozone, with dramatic repercussions for Italy.

http://www.corriere.it/politica/13_ottobre_02/letta-prova-parlamento-fiducia-e015f9c6-2b2a-11e3-93f8-300eb3d838ac.shtml

Berlusconi supported the Italian government, determining its survival in the confidence vote – *Corriere della Sera (IT)*, 3 October 2013

Yesterday, 2 October 2013, the Italian government led by Enrico Letta successfully faced the confidence vote of the Parliament. The final vote consisted of 235 'Yes's' and 70 'No's'. The Berlusconi decision to support the government was decisive for this outcome, despite some members of its party decide not to follow this official line.

http://www.corriere.it/politica/13_ottobre_02/berlusconi-non-muoio-neanche-se-mi-ammazzano-5e07150c-2b37-11e3-93f8-300eb3d838ac.shtml

US begins shutdown amid budget row – *BBC (UK)*, 1 October 2013

The US government has begun a partial shutdown after the two houses of Congress failed to agree on a new budget. The Republican-led House of Representatives insisted on delaying President Barack Obama's healthcare reform - dubbed Obamacare - as a condition for passing a bill. More than 800,000 federal employees face unpaid leave with no guarantee of back pay once the deadlock is over. It is the first shutdown in 17 years and the dollar fell early on Tuesday, 1 October.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-24343698>

US shutdown: Barack Obama warns of default danger – *BBC (UK)*, 3 October 2013

US President Barack Obama has warned that Wall Street should be concerned that a conservative faction of the Republican Party is willing to allow the country to default on its debt. The US government has partially closed after Congress failed to agree on a budget and will run out of cash on 17 October unless its debt ceiling is raised. In a TV interview on Wednesday, President Obama said he was "exasperated". He later held talks with Congressional leaders that ended without agreement.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-24375591>

Bangladesh Member of the Parliament (MP) Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury to hang for war crimes – *BBC (UK)*, 1 Oct 2013

An MP for Bangladesh's main opposition party has been sentenced to death by a war crimes court for charges including murder and genocide during the 1971 war of independence with Pakistan. Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, the first member of the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) to be tried by the court, was found guilty of nine out of 23 charges. The BNP and his lawyers argue that the trial was politically motivated.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24344868>

Golden Dawn head Nikos Mihaloliakos to outline defence – *BBC (UK)*, 2 October 2013

The head of Greece's far-right Golden Dawn party, Nikos Mihaloliakos, is to appear in court to answer for charges of organising a criminal group. He was one of six MPs arrested over the weekend amid outrage over the recent murder of an anti-racist musician. Three of the detained MPs have been freed pending trial while a fourth was remanded in custody. All four denied the charges against them during a marathon court hearing in Athens.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-24359282>

Churches: losers in German reunification? – *DW (GE), 3 October 2013*

Despite the Protestant Church having played a major role in the collapse of former East Germany, churches appear to have lost out in Germany today- the region remains among the most non-religious in the world.

<http://www.dw.de/churches-losers-in-german-reunification/a-17131819>

Economy

Wolseley profits soar on US growth – *The Guardian (UK), 1 October 2013*

Wolseley, the plumbing and building materials company, plans to return £300m to shareholders after benefiting from a strong US housing market and shrugging off concerns over the government shutdown in the world's largest economy. The US market, which accounts for just over half of group revenues, was the stand-out performer for the company in the year to 31 July, helping to drive a sharp rise in pre-tax profits to £473m from £198m. Revenue rose 4.1% to £12.8bn. Reflecting its bullish mood the FTSE 100 company announced a £300m special dividend, which is expected to be paid in December.

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/oct/01/wolseley-profits-soar-us-growth>

Iran staggers as Sanctions Hit Economy – *The NY Times (USA), 1 October 2013*

For years, Iran's leaders have scoffed at Western economic sanctions, boasting that they could evade anything that came their way. Now, as they seek to negotiate a deal on their nuclear program, the leaders are acknowledging that sanctions, particularly those applied in 2010 on international financial transactions, are creating a hard-currency shortage that is bringing the country's economy to its knees. This was evident in New York last week when Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani, emphasized the need to act swiftly to resolve the standoff over Iran's nuclear program, perhaps in three to six months. While there may well be political reasons for him to be in a hurry, Mr. Rouhani and other officials admitted that the sanctions were hurting.

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/01/world/middleeast/iran-staggers-as-sanctions-hit-economy.html?hp&_r=0

German unemployment in surprise increase – *BBC (UK), 1 October 2013*

The number of people out of work in Germany unexpectedly rose by 25,000 in September to just under three million. Analysts had pencilled in a fall of 5,000, following a rise of 9,000 in August. The Federal Labour Office said there had been a cut in the number of government job schemes. Meanwhile, new figures showed unemployment across the Eurozone dropping slightly in August to a rate of 12%.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-24344733>

Hyundai to defer payments due from US government staff – BBC (UK), 2 October 2013

Hyundai Motor will defer payments due from US federal employees affected by the partial government shutdown. More than 700,000 employees face unpaid leave due to the shutdown which was triggered after the two houses of Congress did not agree on a new budget. Hyundai said affected employees who currently own its vehicles will be given a payment relief "for as long as they are out of work". Employees looking to buy a new car will be given a 90-day payment deferral.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-24361142>

'Last Opportunity': The European Central Bank (ECB) and Politicians at Odds Over Stress Tests – Spiegel International (GE) 3 October 2013

The European Central Bank wants to impose rigid tests on financial companies in the euro zone before it assumes its new supervisory role. But even before the tests are set to begin, the ECB is already tangling with policymakers.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/ecb-at-loggerheads-with-policymakers-over-banking-stress-tests-a-925256.html>