

Leaders urge against Trump's isolationism

Associated Press

OTTAWA, Ontario — President Barack Obama and the leaders of Mexico and Canada pushed back forcefully on Wednesday against the isolationist and anti-immigrant sentiments that have roiled Britain and been championed by GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump. The leaders warned against easy solutions peddled by “demagogues” who feed on economic anxiety.

With tensions growing over terrorism and fallout from Britain's exit from the European Union, Obama acknowledged that Americans and others have reason to be concerned about their own future in a rapidly globalizing economy. He said concerns about immigrants had been exploited by politicians in the past, but he insisted he wasn't worried Americans will follow that path.

“We should take some of this seriously and answer it boldly and clearly,” Obama said, without naming the Republican presidential candidate. “But you shouldn't think that is representative of how the American people think.”

Gathering in the Canadian capital, the leaders defended their calls for freer trade within the continent and beyond. They argued that instead of withdrawing from the world, advanced countries should focus on higher standards, wages and legal protections that would ensure the benefits of globalization are widely felt.

“The integration of national economies into a global economy, that's here. That's done,” Obama said.

Obama's comments at a news conference with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto came as the leaders sought to show unity amid growing nationalist movements in Europe and elsewhere, epitomized by Britain's move to leave the EU.

Though Britain's decision has rattled the global financial system, Obama said he believed the markets were starting to settle down. Still, he acknowledged there would be “genuine longer-term concerns” about global economic growth “if, in fact, Brexit goes through.”

“This doesn't help,” he said.

Obama said his message to British Prime Minister David Cameron and to



Sean Kilpatrick/The Canadian Press via AP

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, center, Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto, left, and U.S. President Barack Obama take part in the North American Leaders' Summit at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa on Wednesday.

Canadian Parliament cheers Obama

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — Canada's Parliament broke into chants of “four more years” as President Barack Obama wrapped up the first address there by a U.S. leader since 1995.

Four years for Obama amounts to wishful thinking. He's nearing the end of his second term in office and speaks fondly of life after the presidency. His term ends in mid-January 2017. The U.S. Constitution bars him from running for a third term.

Canada's lawmakers also greeted Obama, who is popular in Canada, with a rousing standing ovation after he arrived in the House of Commons.

The reception prompted Obama to joke that the “extraordinary welcome” tempted him to just “shut up and leave.”

He spoke for nearly an hour.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is largely spearheading Europe's response, was that “everybody should catch their breath.” Though Merkel and other European leaders have urged Britain to start its withdrawal quickly, Obama called for a thought-out process that would be transparent.

“I think that will be a difficult, challenging process, but it does not need to be a panicky process,” the president said.

The Canadian and Mexican leaders largely echoed Obama's calls for staying focused on closer economic ties. Pena Nieto said Mexico sees opportunity for growth and investment by broadening its relationship with the rest of the continent.

“We are competitors, yes, but we have complimentary economies, and that will give more development to our society,” the Mexican leader said.

And Trudeau said the three leaders' strategy for combatting protectionist views was to “highlight how much trade and posi-

tive agreement among our nations are good not only for the economy of the world and the economy of our countries, but it's also good for our citizens.”

Yet it was Trump and his insistence that Americans are better served by reasserting independence that shadowed the leaders' meetings at the annual North American Leaders' Summit. Even as the three took the podium in Ottawa, Trump was threatening to pull the U.S. out of the North American Free Trade Agreement, chanting at a rally, “No more NAFTA.”

When a reporter asked the leaders to weigh in on Trump, Obama intervened, suggesting his counterparts should be careful what they say in case Trump ends up winning.

“I'm not saying they shouldn't answer. I'm just — I'm helping them out a little bit,” Obama joked.

He appeared personally insulted by Trump's claims to represent the public's best interests, accusing the presumptive Republican

“We have to call this mentality what it is: a threat to the values we profess, the values we seek to defend.”

— Barack Obama,
In a speech to Canadian Parliament about Trump and xenophobia

nominee of wrongly purporting to be a populist. He said people like Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders rightly deserve label of “populist” but that Trump is merely resorting to “nativism,” “xenophobia” and “cynicism.”

“We have to call this mentality what it is: a threat to the values that we profess, the values we seek to defend,” Obama said later during a speech to Canadian Parliament, where a packed audience of about 1,000 interrupted him repeatedly with standing ovations. They chanted “four more years” as Obama wrapped up his address.

Ahead of the summit, Canada announced it will lift visa requirements for Mexican visitors as of December 2016, while Pena Nieto agreed to open Mexican markets to Canadian beef.

All three leaders pledged to generate half of their electricity from renewable sources by 2025, and Mexico also committed to joining the U.S. and Canada in tackling methane emissions.

BRIEFLY

Istanbul airport attackers seized on chaos to cause carnage

ISTANBUL (AP) — It was an attack that echoed the carnage earlier this year at the Brussels airport, down to the taxi that carried the men to their target: Inciting panic and then taking lethal advantage, three suicide attackers unleashed a deadly tide of bullets and bombs at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport, leaving 42 dead.

Authorities blamed the Islamic State for the blood bath late Tuesday, a coordinated assault on one of the world's busiest airports and on a key NATO ally that plays a crucial role in the fight against the extremist group.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility by the militant group.

Although the attack took a heavy toll, the assailants were initially thwarted by security at the perimeter, Turkish officials said.

“When the terrorists couldn't pass the regular security system, when they couldn't pass the scanners, police and security controls, they returned and took their weapons out of their suitcases and opened fire at random at the security check,” Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said.

One attacker detonated his explosives downstairs at the arrivals terminal, one went upstairs and blew himself up in the departure hall, and the third waited outside for the fleeing crowd and caused the final lethal blast, two Turkish officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak about the investigation publicly. None of the attackers were Turks, a third official said.

As the chaos unfolded, terrified travelers were sent running first from one explosion and then another. Airport surveillance video showed a panicked crowd of people, some rolling suitcases behind them, stampeding down a corridor, looking fearfully over their shoulders.

Other surveillance footage posted on social media showed one explosion, a ball of fire that sent terrified passengers racing for cover. Another showed an attacker, felled by a gunshot from a security officer, blowing himself up seconds later.

‘Move on’ from Benghazi? Republicans say it's unlikely

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Clinton says it's “time to move on” after a congressional report on the deadly 2012 Benghazi attacks accused the Obama administration of lethal mistakes, but produced no new evidence pointing to wrongdoing by the former secretary of state.

Not likely, especially in an election year with Clinton's presidential rival — Donald Trump — lashing out.

An 800-page report by a special House committee makes no direct accusations of wrongdoing by Clinton, who was secretary of state during the Sept. 11, 2012, attacks that killed four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens.

Still, Republicans point to Benghazi as a major failure by the administration and by Clinton during her tenure leading the State Department. The issue is likely to shadow Clinton in her bid for president.

“Four Americans died, yet no one has been fired. No one even missed a paycheck,” said Rep. Ed Royce, R-Calif., chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. “Americans — including all our men and women serving overseas — deserve better.”

Clinton, now the presumptive Democratic nominee for president, said the report by Republicans on the House Benghazi Committee took more than two years and \$7 million but “found nothing to contradict” the findings of

earlier investigations.

“I think it's pretty clear it's time to move on,” Clinton said at a campaign stop in Denver Tuesday.

Republicans were not ready to let the issue go, especially with an election that will decide who occupies the White House and which party will control the House and Senate. The Benghazi panel has scheduled a July 8 meeting to formally adopt the report — 10 days before the Republican National Convention begins.

EU spells out conditions for single market access to Britain

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union leaders drew a stark line along the British Channel on Wednesday, telling the U.K. that it cannot keep valuable business links with its former continental partners in a seamless single EU market, if it doesn't also accept European workers.

The challenge cuts to the heart of the British vote to leave the bloc following a virulent campaign where migration from poorer EU countries was a key concern. It also sets the scene for the complex departure negotiations facing departing Prime Minister David Cameron's successor, for which nominations opened in London Wednesday.

Meeting for the first time without the U.K., the 27 other EU nations set out a united strategy to face the next British government which will seek to salvage as many of the EU rights as possible while reneging on a maximum amount of obligations.

They emerged from the summit insisting that the “four freedoms” central to European unity are indivisible: the free movement of people, services, goods and finances.

In Cameron's absence, the most palpable remaining link to Britain at the summit was the English language used. The remaining presidents, chancellors and prime ministers showed a firm common resolve, committing to be “absolutely determined to remain united,” EU Council President Donald Tusk said.

The leaders sought to dispel any notion that the referendum result will amount to their Waterloo.

“With a disunited United Kingdom, we need a united Europe more than ever,” Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel said.

Health officials prepare for Zika, but efforts tight

HOUSTON (AP) — The poorest parts of Houston remind Dr. Peter Hotez of some of the neighborhoods in Latin America hardest hit by Zika.

Broken window screens. Limited air conditioning. Trash piles that seem to re-appear even after they're cleaned up. On a hot, humid day this month, Hotez pointed at one pile that included old tires and a smashed-in television with water pooling inside. It was a textbook habitat for the mosquitoes that carry and transmit the Zika virus, and one example of the challenge facing public health officials.

“I'm showing you Zika heaven,” said Hotez, the tropical medicine dean at Baylor College of Medicine. Hotez is most concerned about impoverished urban areas along the Gulf Coast, where the numbers of the mosquito that spreads Zika are expected to spike. Texas already has dealt with dengue fever, transmitted by the same mosquito.

Zika causes only a mild and brief illness, at worst, in most people. But it can cause fetal death and severe brain defects in the children of women infected during pregnancy.

So far, Texas officials have reported 48 people infected with Zika, all associated with travel. In one case, the virus was sexually transmitted by someone who had been infected abroad.

Military seeks more time on transgender policy

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senior military leaders expressed deep concerns this week that the launch of new Pentagon rules allowing transgender service members to serve openly in the U.S. military is moving too quickly, arguing that a number of details and questions must still be resolved, several senior U.S. officials told The Associated Press.

The Pentagon plans to unveil the new regulations in the next day or two. Under the new policy, transgender individuals will be allowed to serve in the military, and can no longer be forced to leave based on their gender identity. Officials familiar with the plan said it states that service in the military should be open to anyone who can meet the rigorous service standards, regardless of their gender identity.

Officials said the plan also says that people with gender dysphoria, a history of medical treatments associated with gender transition and those who have had reconstruction surgery may be disqualified as military recruits unless a medical provider certifies that they have been clinically stable in the preferred gender for 18 months, and are free of significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas. They also said transgender troops receiving hormone therapy must have been stable on the medication for 18 months.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to talk about sensitive



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster, File

In this 2015 file photo, Defense Secretary Ash Carter testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington.

policy discussions before the decisions were made public.

The military service chiefs said during a private meeting earlier this week they were concerned that they were being given as little as 45 days to develop an implementation plan, and another 45 days to put it in place. They said that timeline isn't enough and asked Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to relay their concerns to Defense Secretary Ash Carter this week.

In the private meeting, the military service chiefs said the Defense Department should set up a panel of experts that could have up to a year to go over and fully implement the policy, to ensure that decisions are fair and consistent.

According to defense officials, the service chiefs made it clear that they are not opposed to the policy change. But they believe the new draft policy doesn't include enough specifics to guide commanders who will have to make decisions about

people in their units. They said the new rules should be rolled out in phases over the next several months.

The officials said that the military leaders, including Gen. Mark Milley, the Army chief of staff, and Gen. Robert Neller, commandant of the Marine Corps, pointed to the move several years ago to allow gays to serve openly in the military, and said that the transition went smoothly because they were given time to prepare and train their forces.

Carter made it clear last July that he intended to rescind the ban on transgender service members serving in the military, calling it outdated. He has long argued that the military must be more inclusive to bring in the best and brightest. At the time he ordered a six-month study aimed at formally ending one of the last gender-based barriers to military service, but officials say he has been frustrated with the slow progress.

Officials estimate there

are likely several thousand transgender individuals serving in the military, and the policy provides broad guidelines for those service members.

For example, transgender troops will be able to use the bathrooms, housing, uniforms and fitness standards of their preferred gender only after they have legally transitioned to that identity, according to officials familiar with the decisions.

The plan says that transgender troops must be fit for duty and able to serve as their birth gender, and then be able to meet all standards and be fit for duty in their preferred gender once the transition is done.

The new rules, however, note that transitions are all unique. So they give commanders flexibility, allowing them to make some decisions on a case-by-case basis.

The policy also allows commanders to approve certain accommodations when possible, such as when troops are showering. That could include installing shower curtains, towel hooks or allowing transgender troops to shower at different times or wear minimal clothing.

The military policy differs from civilian gender transitions, where transgender individuals often dress, live socially and work fulltime in their preferred gender during the process. Under the new policy, service members would only be able to do that when off-duty and away from their duty station.