

Your Evening Briefing

By Victoria Shannon

Aug. 22, 2014

Here's what you need to know from NYT Now:

- **Urgent mission to Ukraine.**

As a Russian convoy moves unilaterally into Ukraine and NATO complains that Russian forces are engaged in artillery combat there, a fresh mediator enters the fray: Angela Merkel.

The chancellor of Germany travels to Kiev on Saturday for talks with Ukraine's leaders, a task made more delicate by today's heightened tensions, says Alison Smale, our Berlin correspondent.

"Her knowledge of Russia, its language and culture and indeed of Vladimir Putin, with whom she has been dealing for almost nine years, make it possible for her to talk to the Russian leader," Ms. Smale says.

"But the chancellor does have to heed developing dangers."

Today, Ms. Merkel phoned Mr. Putin to tell him of her "deep concern" over the convoy's presence in Ukraine without permission.

"She, of course, is used to leading in Europe — she did so in the euro debt crisis," Ms. Smale says.

But it will be her first trip to Ukraine as European peacemaker in the conflict.

- **Fed, rates and sun.**

Sun and a little fun mixed with speeches are the hallmarks of the annual retreat of central bankers in Jackson Hole, Wyo.

But today was the first time participants could remember demonstrators showing up.

Protesters with green T-shirts reading “What Recovery?” were organized by the Center for Popular Democracy, a nonprofit group, to greet the bankers at their resort hotel.

“The demonstrators want to remind Fed officials, who tend to deal in abstractions, that real people are affected by their decisions,” says our Fed correspondent, Binyamin Appelbaum.

“Their presence has been mentioned repeatedly by Fed officials and speakers, suggesting that it has made an impression.”

Notably, the Fed chairwoman, Janet L. Yellen, stopped by to express sympathy. In a speech today, she said the central bank needed more evidence of growing employment before deciding when to raise interest rates.

“Historically, particularly during the 1980s, the Fed faced a lot of public pressure as it raised interest rates,” Mr. Appelbaum says, “so this may be the first sign of things to come.”

- **Getting the world’s attention.**

“The report shows the killing in Syria has not merely dragged on but even appears to have accelerated over the past year.”

That’s Nick Cumming-Bruce, our correspondent in Geneva, on the U.N. findings today that documented more than 191,000 deaths during the conflict in Syria.

“It serves as a harsh reminder of Syria’s role as the epicenter of the conflict spilling into surrounding countries,” Mr. Cumming-Bruce says.

“That message will be rammed home again in the next few weeks when the number of refugees who have fled Syria will surge past the three million mark,” he says, “putting more pressure on the funding available for all the world’s humanitarian crises.”

The U.N.'s human rights chief, Navi Pillay, today berated the Security Council for failing to curb the conflict, and she urged countries to stop fueling it with arms.

But Western governments are vigorously arming antimilitant forces, and a top adviser to President Obama said today that the United States was considering direct military action in Syria.

MARKETS

- **Wall Street stocks** closed mixed. The S.&P. 500 lost 0.2 percent.

TONIGHT

- **Bring your tissues.**

“If I Stay,” based on the best-selling book, opened today in theaters with a style similar to a blockbuster earlier this summer, “The Fault in Our Stars”: Both want to make you cry.

A.O. Scott, our film critic, writes of the new release, “The grief and sorrow are punctuated, and to some extent made bearable, by jabs of warmth and humor arising from family affection and adolescent romance.”

- **If you're staying up ...**

On “The Tonight Show”: Ethan Hawke of “Boyhood”; the writer and actress Amy Sedaris; the Secret Sisters perform. (11:35 p.m. Eastern, NBC)

THIS WEEKEND

- **President Obama** returns from vacation on Sunday, which is also the 200th anniversary of a British force's setting fire to the White House, the Capitol and other buildings during its occupation of Washington.
- **“Doctor Who”** begins its new season Saturday with Peter Capaldi taking the lead role in a feature-length episode that will also be shown in movie theaters around the world. (8 p.m. Eastern, BBC America)

- **The Little League World Series** concludes Saturday (the international title, between Seoul and Tokyo, 12:30 p.m. Eastern) and Sunday (the U.S. championship, 3 p.m. Eastern) on ABC.
- **“True Blood”** series finale: Seven seasons of vampires, werewolves and witches come to an end. (Sunday, 9 p.m. Eastern, HBO)
- **The MTV Video Music Awards**: Beyoncé leads the field with eight nominations. She’ll also squeeze in a performance. Other acts: Usher, Iggy Azalea, Jessie J, Nicki Minaj, Usher and Maroon 5. (Sunday, 9 p.m. Eastern)

Rick Rojas and Adeel Hassan contributed reporting.

Your Evening Briefing is posted at 5 p.m. weekdays.

Don’t miss Your Morning Briefing at 6 a.m. weekdays.

What would you like to see here? Email us at NYTNow@NYTimes.com.

Follow us on Twitter: [@NYTNow](https://twitter.com/NYTNow).