

Headlines:

- **Spain's National Challenges**
- **The Syrian Conspiracy continues**
- **Hollywood Rocked**

Details:

Spain's National Challenges

Spain's Constitutional Court has overturned Catalonia's declaration of independence, announced by the court spokeswoman said. The news came as deposed Catalan President Carles Puigdemont was giving a speech in Brussels, his first since Madrid filed charges against him and he fled to Belgium. Earlier the Spanish attorney general filed a lawsuit against the secessionist leaders over their push for independence. Catalonia's landmark referendum held October 1 saw the region overwhelmingly (over 90 percent) voting to break away from Spain. Fewer than 50 percent of those eligible to vote took part, with pro-independence supporters blaming Madrid's crackdown, including blocking of polling stations and confiscation of votes, for the turnout. Madrid called the vote illegal, and deployed thousands of extra officers from the National Police and Civil Guard ahead of referendum day. The Catalan health service later claimed that over 900 people in Barcelona and elsewhere in the region were injured, some of them seriously. Spain has struggled for hundreds of years in creating a unified stable state for different people, this latest secession is just the most recent failure of the nation state.

The Syrian Conspiracy continues

At the Astana conference in Kazakhstan; Russia, Turkey and Iran issued a joint statement referred to an "initiative of Russia" to bring the Syrian regime and its opponents together for a "congress" to help peace efforts towards a more lasting political settlement. However, representatives of the Syrian opposition in Astana immediately cast doubt on the plan calling it a jump in the air to another place. The talks that began in January have run parallel to negotiations taking place in Geneva with the backing of the United Nations. What was not revealed was the real issue in discussion which were the de-escalation zones, which is a continuation of Russia and Iranian killing of the people who refuse to submit to the plan to keep Bashar al-Assad in power.

Hollywood Rocked

Revelations continue to rock both Hollywood and much of the entertainment world as Harvey Weinstein, the American film producer, academy award winner and studio executive faces numerous allegations of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape against him. What has shocked many is the decades of abuse, widescale and length these have been taking place and Hollywood producer used his position to take advantage of hundreds of women, including many who are now celebrities. What has been really shocking is he was known for such practices and many senior Hollywood executives knew of his behavior but accepted it as normal practice. Hollywood is an industry that exploits and uses women in order to make billions of dollars for its executives, so it should not be surprising that such an executive was abusing his positions. What was shocking was how normal this practice was that even the actresses who were targeted and became famous remained silent until the *New Yorker* decided to print it as a story.