

UK to Send Warships to Black Sea as West Taunts Russia



Royal Navy aircraft carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, is towed by tugs as it arrives at Portsmouth Naval base, Britain August 16, 2017.

LONDON (Dispatches) — British warships will sail for the Black Sea in May amid rising tensions between Ukraine and Russia, the Sunday Times newspaper reported, citing senior naval sources.

The deployment is aimed at showing solidarity with Ukraine and Britain's NATO allies, the newspaper reported.

One Type 45 destroyer armed with anti-aircraft missiles and an anti-submarine Type 23 frigate will leave the Royal Navy's carrier task group in the Mediterranean and head through the

Bosphorus into the Black Sea, according to the report.

RAF F-35B Lightning stealth jets and Merlin submarine-hunting helicopters will stand ready on the task group's flag ship, the carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, to support the warships in the Black Sea, the report added.

Tensions between Moscow and Kyiv have been rising amid a clash in eastern Ukraine between the army and pro-Russian separatists.

A UK Ministry of Defense spokesman told the newspaper that the UK govern-

ment was working closely with Ukraine to monitor the situation and continued to call on Russia to de-escalate.

World powers should draw "clear red lines" with Russia and consider possible sanctions against Moscow when they're crossed, French President Emmanuel Macron told U.S. news network CBS in an interview.

Macron said he "fully" shares U.S. President Joe Biden's desire to open dialogue with Russia. However, he said it was important to be clear with Putin "when we are not aligned."

"This is the only way to be credible. I think that sanctions are not sufficient in itself, in themselves, but sanctions are part of the package. I do prefer constructive dialogue, you need credibility," Macron said.

On Thursday, Biden announced more sanctions against Russia this week after accusing it of the SolarWinds cyber hacking and interference in the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

On Friday, Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel voiced their support for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, calling on Russia to rapidly withdraw its troops from the border region.

Russia says it is using its own territory for defensive activity amid increased NATO presence near its borders.

China Warns U.S., Japan to Stop Meddling in Its Affairs



President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga leave a news conference in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, Friday, April 16, 2021.

BEIJING (Dispatches) — China has called on the United States and Japan to immediately halt their interference in the country's domestic affairs and stop harming Beijing's interests.

The warning came after U.S. President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga issued a joint statement following a meeting on Saturday, in which they expressed concern over issues concerning Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), the Diaoyu Islands, Hong Kong, Xinjiang and the South China Sea.

"We urge the U.S. and Japan to take China's concern seriously, abide by the one-China principle, and immediately stop meddling in China's domestic affairs and harming Chinese interests," a

foreign ministry spokesperson said in a statement. "China will take all necessary measures to resolutely defend its sovereignty, security and development interests."

Stressing that Chinese Taipei and the Diaoyu Islands are both Chinese territory, the spokesperson said issues relating to Hong Kong and Xinjiang are purely Beijing's internal affairs and that China has indisputable sovereignty over islands in the South China Sea and waters around them.

The spokesperson said Beijing "deplores and rejects" the joint statement by the U.S. and Japanese leaders as a gross interference in China's domestic affairs and a severe violation of basic norms governing international relations.

Biden hosted Suga on Saturday in his first face-to-face White House summit since taking office, as part of his efforts to work further on his pledge to revitalize U.S. alliances already frayed under his Republican predecessor, Donald Trump.

The two leaders reportedly addressed an array of geopolitical issues, with China topping the agenda.

During the meeting, Biden sought to present a united front with the Japanese leader to counter what he claimed to be "challenges" by China.

The Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson censured the U.S.-Japan alliance and said the two were in fact ganging up to form cliques and fanning bloc confrontation while talking about a "free and open" Indo-Pacific.

"This anachronistic move runs counter to the aspiration for peace, development and cooperation shared by the overwhelming majority of countries in the region and beyond," the spokesperson said.

It will only enable the world to see with increasing clarity the detrimental nature of the U.S.-Japan alliance, which attempts to undermine regional peace and stability, the spokesperson added.

China had hoped for an improvement in relations under Biden, who succeeded President Trump in January, but the new administration has shown no sign of backing down on hardline policies toward China.

Indian Capital Under COVID Siege Amid Dire Shortages

NEW DELHI (Reuters) — India's capital New Delhi recorded 25,500 coronavirus cases in a 24-hour period, with about one in three people tested returning a positive result, its chief minister said, urging the federal government to provide more hospital beds to tackle the crisis.

Less than 100 critical care beds were available in the city of more than 20 million people, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday, as social media was flooded with people complaining about lack of beds, oxygen cylinders and drugs. "The bigger worry is that in last 24 hours positivity rate has increased to around 30% from 24% ... The cases are rising very rapidly. The beds are filling fast," Kejriwal told a news briefing.

In a separate statement, the city government said it had informed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's federal administration about "the dire need of beds and oxygen" and beds were now being set up in schools.

New Delhi, which has imposed a weekend curfew, is among the worst hit cities in India, where a second major wave of coronavirus infections is straining health infrastructure.

Nationwide, India reported 261,500 new cases on Sunday, taking the total number of cases to nearly 14.8 million, second only to the United States, which has reported more than

31 million infections. The country's deaths from COVID-19 rose by a record 1,501 to reach a total of 177,150.

As cases rise across India, criticism is mounting over how Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration has handled the health crisis, as religious festivals and election rallies attended by thousands continue.

India's government relaxed almost all lockdown curbs of last year by the beginning of 2021, although some regions including New Delhi and the state of Maharashtra, home to financial hub Mumbai, have introduced localized restrictions.

While Mumbai remains under curfew on all days as per state guidelines, New Delhi has allowed cinema halls to operate at 30% capacity and people to move freely during weekdays.

"There is no option but to lockdown Delhi for 1-2 weeks," said Dr. Ambrish Mithal, a top doctor of endocrinology and diabetes at hospital operator Max Healthcare, adding that weekend curfews "won't do."

Amid reports of severe shortage of oxygen supplies and critical medicines such as the anti-viral drug Remdesivir, Modi on Saturday asked authorities to pull out all the stops to ramp up production of COVID-19 vaccines and asked his teams to work closely with local governments.

Sikhs Call for Gun Reforms After Indianapolis Massacre



Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogarth speaks at a vigil April 17, 2021 at Krannert Park on Indianapolis' west side to memorialize the eight people killed in the mass shooting at a FedEx warehouse.

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Members of Indianapolis' tight-knit Sikh community joined with city officials to call for gun reforms as they mourned the deaths of four Sikhs who were among the eight people killed in a mass shooting at a FedEx warehouse.

At a vigil attended by more than 200 at an Indianapolis park Saturday evening, Aasees Kaur, who represented the Sikh Coalition, spoke out alongside the city's mayor and other elected officials to demand action that would prevent such attacks from happening again.

"We must support one another, not just in grief, but in calling our policymakers and elected officials to make meaningful change," Kaur said. "The time to act is not later, but now. We are far too many tragedies, too late, in doing so."

The attack was another blow to the Asian American community a month after authorities said six people of Asian descent were killed by a gunman in the Atlanta area and amid ongoing attacks against Asian Americans during the coronavirus pandemic.

About 90% of the workers at the FedEx warehouse near the Indianapolis International Airport are members of the local Sikh community, police said Friday.

Kiran Deol, who attended the vigil in support of family members affected

by the shooting, said loopholes in the law that make it easier for individuals to buy guns "need to be closed now," and emphasized that anyone who tries to buy a firearm should be required to have their background checked.

"The gun violence is unacceptable. Look at what's happened ... it needs to be stopped," Deol said. "We need more reform. We need gun laws to be harder, stronger, so that responsible people are the ones that have guns. That's what we want to bring awareness to."

Satjeet Kaur, the Sikh Coalition's executive director, said the entire community was traumatized by the "senseless" violence.

"While we don't yet know the motive of the shooter, he targeted a facility known to be heavily populated by Sikh employees," Kaur said.

There are between 8,000 and 10,000 Sikh Americans in Indiana, according to the coalition. Members of the religion, which began in India in the 15th century, began settling in Indiana more than 50 years ago.

One of the victims of Thursday night's shooting was Amarjit Sekhon, a 48-year-old Sikh mother of two sons who was the breadwinner of her family.

Kuldip Sekhon said his sister-in-law began working at the FedEx facility in November and was a dedicated worker whose husband was disabled.

Mistreatment of Black Officer Just Tip of Iceberg in U.S.



In this Dec. 5, 2020 file frame from Windsor, Va., police body camera, Lt. Caron Nazario is helped by an EMT after he was pepper-sprayed by Windsor police during a traffic stop in Windsor.

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — The police officers' guns were trained on the uniformed U.S. Army lieutenant, his arms raised and palms outstretched as he sat in his SUV under a brightly lit gas station awning.

Lt. Caron Nazario had been pulled over in rural Virginia by the two officers, who repeatedly demanded that he step out of the vehicle. Nazario, who is Black and Latino, didn't move and continually asked, "What's going on?"

"I'm serving this country, and this is how I'm treated?" he said at one point. "Yeah well, guess what? I'm a veteran, too," police officer Joe Gutierrez responded. "And I know how to get out, to which Gutierrez replied: "You should be."

Within minutes, Nazario was pepper-sprayed, struck to the knees to force him to the ground and handcuffed. No charges were ever filed.

Videos of the December incident taken by the officers' body cameras and Nazario's cellphone became public last week, sparking outrage and accumulating millions of views. Nazario has sued the two officers, alleging his constitutional rights were violated during the traffic stop in the small Vir-

ginia town of Windsor. Officer Gutierrez has also been fired.

The episode was a grim reminder to many Black Americans that even being in military uniform doesn't necessarily protect them from mistreatment by police. Further, there's a long history of violence against veterans and service members of color, whose military status was seen by some as a provocation.

"I don't think the uniform provokes in the same way that it once did, but it absolutely doesn't shield," said Bryan Stevenson, executive director of the Alabama-based Equal Justice Initiative. "And there will be people who will be provoked by Black achievement. ... It can create a kind of a desire to humiliate and demand obedience."

Thousands of Black men who served in the Civil War, World War I, and World War II were targeted because of their service and threatened, assaulted or lynched, according to a 2017 Equal Justice Initiative report.

One was Sgt. Isaac Woodard, a uniformed World War II veteran who was headed home on a bus in 1946. He was removed and beaten by a white South Carolina police chief, leaving Woodard permanently blind.



KENOSHA, Wis. (AP) — A shooting at a tavern in Wisconsin killed three people and seriously injured two others early Sunday, a sheriff's department official said. The shooting happened at Somers House Tavern in the Village of Somers, Kenosha County Sgt. David Wright said. The suspected shooter was not immediately captured. Wright said the shooting appeared to be a "targeted and isolated incident," and authorities didn't believe the general public was in danger. Officials were still working to determine the identities of the people who died. The two people who were wounded were taken to area hospitals, Wright said. The road leading up to the tavern remained closed early Sunday as officials investigated the latest in a string of recent mass shootings across the country, including the killings of eight people at a FedEx warehouse in Indianapolis on Thursday. Last month, four people were killed at an office shooting in California, eight people were fatally shot at massage businesses in the Atlanta area, and 10 died in gunfire at a supermarket in Boulder, Colorado.

PRAGUE (AP) — The Czech Republic announced that it was expelling 18 Russian diplomats who it has allegedly identified as spies in a case related to a huge ammunition depot explosion in 2014. Interior Minister Jan Hamacek, who is also serving as the country's foreign minister, said the 18 Russian embassy staffers were clearly identified as spies from the Russian intelligence services known as GRU and SVR and were ordered to leave the country within 48 hours. "The United States stands with its steadfast ally, the Czech Republic," Jennifer Bachus, chargé d'affaires at the U.S. embassy in Prague, said. The Czech announcement came two days after the U.S. said it was expelling 10 Russian diplomats and imposing sanctions against several dozen people and companies. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said her country would answer the Czech move. "Prague is well aware of what will follow such tricks," Zakharova was quoted by the RIA Novosti news agency. Hamacek said the case will significantly harm Czech-Russian relations. He said the country's allies in NATO and the European Union have been informed about the findings and "we've asked for their support."

WASHINGTON (AP) — The State Department on Saturday ordered non-essential diplomats at the U.S. Embassy in Chad to leave the African nation due to potential insurgent attacks on the capital. In addition to non-essential embassy staff, the department also ordered the families of American personnel stationed there to leave because armed groups appear to be moving on the capital of N'Djamena. The department has long warned Americans not to travel to Chad because of unrest and the presence of the Boko Haram group. It said any Americans there now who wanted to leave should do so. Landlocked Chad is home to nearly half a million refugees from neighboring Sudan, Nigeria and Central African Republic. Another 330,000 Chadians are internally displaced, the majority in the volatile Lake Chad region where Boko Haram militants are active.

ATHENS (Reuters) — Greece cannot ignore its differences with Turkey over territorial disputes in the Mediterranean and other issues but while a solution is difficult, it is not impossible, its foreign minister told a newspaper on Sunday. The two countries are NATO allies but at odds over many issues, including competing claims over the extent of their continental shelves in the Mediterranean, air space, energy resources and ethnically split Cyprus. "It is not possible to hide under the rug issues where we have different views and approaches," Nikos Dendias told Kathimerini newspaper in an interview. On Thursday, Dendias and his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu clashed openly at a joint news conference in Ankara that began with hopes of improved relations but quickly descended into acrimonious accusations from both sides. It was the first visit by a Greek foreign minister to Turkey since 2015 in an effort to find common ground for a positive agenda of discussions with Ankara.

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — A woman who served a 10-year sentence in U.S. prison for lying about her role in the 1994 Rwandan genocide to obtain American citizenship, and then lost her bid for a new trial, has been deported to the East African nation and is likely to face prosecution there. Beatrice Munyenyezi, who a U.S. judge said "was actively involved" in the killing of Tutsis in Rwanda, was convicted and sentenced in 2013 in New Hampshire. It was her second trial; the first jury could not reach a verdict. Munyenyezi served a 10-year sentence in Alabama and had faced deportation. She lost her latest court battle in March, when the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a federal district judge's rejection of her petition challenging how the jury was instructed during her trial in federal court in New Hampshire. Her lawyer, Richard Guerriero, confirmed in an email Saturday that Munyenyezi had been deported to Rwanda. She arrived Friday and was handed over to Rwandan authorities, according to state-run media there.