

# China: U.S. Should Lift Sanctions Before Visit



This undated file photo shows Ministry of Commerce spokeswoman Shu Jueting.

BEIJING (China Daily) - China has urged the United States to abandon irrational suppression of Chinese companies and lift unilateral sanctions on them ahead of a possible visit by the U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, the Ministry of Commerce said on Thursday.

In recent years, the U.S. has placed a large number of Chinese enterprises on its blacklist and imposed various types of sanctions to suppress them, citing multiple pretexts like national security, human rights and issues related to Iran and Russia, said Shu Jueting, spokeswoman of the ministry, at a news briefing.

"China is firmly opposed to this as it seriously damages the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises," Shu said.

In response to media inquiries about a possible visit by Raimondo, Shu said: "China is open to and welcomes Raimondo's willingness to visit the country, and communication with the U.S. in this regard is underway."

China will remain committed to addressing each other's concerns in the areas of economics and trade through dialogue and will promote constructive and pragmatic cooperation, Shu said.

Ending the U.S.' arbitrary suppression of Chinese companies

and lifting unilateral sanctions on them can help inject positive energy into bilateral economic relations, she said.

Similar views were expressed by China's Ministry of Finance on Monday in response to media inquiries about an official visit by U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen to Beijing last week. Yellen's visit was described as "candid and constructive" by both sides.

In the Finance Ministry's statement, China renewed its concerns over the U.S. sanctions, and urged the U.S. to scrap tariff increases on China, stop suppression of Chinese enterprises, treat two-way investments fairly, relax export controls, and lift the ban on products related to Xinjiang.

China also said the U.S. should take concrete steps in response to China's major concerns over bilateral economic relations.

The U.S. has long been abusing its financial hegemony and technological clout, and engaging in economic coercion in the name of protecting national security and human rights, said Xu Hongcai, deputy director of the economic policy committee at the China Association of Policy Science.

U.S. sanctions against Chinese entities and individuals only reveal its true attempt to stem the development of China's high-tech enterprises, Xu said.

## North Korea's Ambassador Blames U.S. for Regional Tensions



North Korean Ambassador to United Nations Kim Song addresses a Security Council meeting, Thursday, July 13, 2023.

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — North Korea's UN ambassador Kim Song has defended his country's recent long-range missile launch at the UN Security Council where he also accused the United States of driving the situation in northeast Asia "to the brink of nuclear war."

Kim Song told the council that Wednesday's test-flight of the developmental Hwasong-18 missile was a legitimate exercise of the North's right to self-defense. He said the United States was raising regional tensions with nuclear threats and deploying a nuclear-powered submarine to South Korea for the first time in 14 years.

Kim said the missile launch had "no negative effect on the security of a neighboring country," pointing to Japan's announcement that the ICBM — which flew at a steep angle — landed in open waters outside Japan's exclusive economic zone.

Immediately before the meeting, a

statement from nine council members including the U.S. and Japan, joined by South Korea, was read to reporters condemning the launch "in the strongest possible terms" and stressing that it was the 20th ballistic missile launch this year in blatant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions banning such tests.

In Pyongyang, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, slammed the UN Security Council for convening a meeting to "pick a quarrel with" her country's self-defense step while ignoring the U.S. push to increase the danger of a nuclear war. In a statement carried by state media, Kim Yo Jong called the council "a new Cold War mechanism totally inclined to the U.S. and the West."

She also warned that the United States would pay a price for its hostility toward the North. "I do not conceal the fact that very unlucky things will wait for the U.S."

## News in Brief

LONDON (Al-Jazeera) - The Solomon Islands has denied suggestions by Australia and others its policing deal with Beijing is "a threat to the Pacific region peace" and says China will enhance the capability of its 1,500 police officers in cybersecurity and community policing. The United States, Australia, New Zealand and Solomon Islands' opposition party have called for Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare to "immediately" publish details of the policing deal signed in Beijing.

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LONDON (Reuters) - More than a quarter of Britain's single parent households have recently run out of food and been unable to afford more, according to a survey from the country's statistics agency which highlights the impact of surging inflation. Out of nearly 15,000 households surveyed between Feb. 8 and May 1, 5% said they had run out of food in the previous two weeks and been unable to buy more, rising to 28% for households with a single parent and at least one child. Pressures are greatest for larger families, as support payments since 2017 have been limited to a maximum of two children per household, with limited exceptions.

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BUJA (Reuters) - Nigerian President Bola Tinubu has declared a state of emergency in response to high inflation threatening food security in Africa's most populous country, the State House said. Dele Ake, a spokesman for the president, revealed this at a press briefing in the capital of Abuja, adding that Tinubu "is not unmindful of the rising cost of food and how it affects the citizens ... affordability has been a major issue for many Nigerians in all parts of the country." Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed the headline inflation rate in Nigeria has remained stubbornly high since January 2021.

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TOKYO (Reuters) - A rocket engine exploded during a test in Japan on Friday but there were no injuries, an official at Japan's Education, Science and Technology Ministry said. The explosion of the Epsilon S engine at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) testing site is the latest in a series of failures that have deflated Japan's space ambitions. The explosion took place about a minute into the test of the second stage engine, the official said.

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PARIS (AFP) - The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified aspartame as "possibly carcinogenic to humans," but ruled that small amounts are safe for consumption. A chemical sweetener most commonly found in diet sodas, aspartame has been linked to a litany of health problems. In a report published on Friday, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) found "limited evidence" linking aspartame with hepatocellular carcinoma, a form of liver cancer. The IARC, a WHO body, came to its conclusion after examining three large-scale human studies in the U.S. and Europe.

## Military Deals in Focus as France Rolls Out Red Carpet for Modi



Indian Prime Minister Modi was greeted by French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne at Orly airport outside Paris.

PARIS (Dispatches) - India has signed a new multibillion-dollar deal with France, buying French fighter jets as Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Paris on a two-day trip.

India's Ministry of Defense said in a statement that the country plans to order 26 Rafale jets as well as three more Scorpene-class submarines, with the price and other terms of

the purchase still under review. Addressing a rousing crowd of Indians living in France on Thursday evening, Modi billed the agreement "a reflection of the unwavering friendship between India and France".

Despite different perspectives on the war in Ukraine and tensions over human rights in India, Western countries view Modi and India as a coun-

terweight to China in Asia.

At a meeting with military leaders on Thursday evening, Macron called India "a strategic partner and a friend".

India will be part of a military parade on Friday, with the Indian air force performing a fly-past.

The naval version of the Rafale Dassault jets is intended for India's aircraft carrier, the INS Vikrant, which was commissioned last year.

India has already bought six Scorpene submarines, and the statement said an additional three ships "with higher indigenous content" will be built by Mazagon Dock shipbuilders near Mumbai, creating "significant employment opportunities in the domestic sector".

New Delhi has been expanding its armed forces, and the West sees an opportunity to replace Russia as a main supplier of weapons to the emerging economic powerhouse.

New Delhi is one of the biggest buyers of French arms, with Modi announcing a landmark deal for 36 Rafale fighter jets during a trip to Paris in 2015, worth around 4.0 billion euros (\$4.24 billion) at the time.

## Communication Cuts, Disease Outbreak in Sudan as Fighting Rages

KHARTOUM (AFP) - War-torn Sudan's capital experienced a communications blackout for several hours on Friday, residents said, as the army and paramilitary forces waged intense battles across Khartoum and humanitarian groups warned of worsening crises.

"Violent clashes" shook the capital, witnesses told AFP over the phone, after residents woke up to an outage of vital internet and mobile phone connections.

The source of the malfunction was not clear, though mobile and internet networks were restored by the afternoon.

Throughout the day, columns of black smoke were seen rising near army headquarters in the centre of Khartoum as well as in the city's south.

Witnesses in Khartoum North said there were "clashes using all kinds of weapons". In Omdurman, just across the Nile River, witnesses reported fighter jets and drones flying overhead.

Since April 15, the forces army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan have been at war with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by his former deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

The fighting has killed at least 3,000 people across Sudan, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, with the worst fighting taking place in Khartoum and the western Darfur region.

According to the United Nations, more than 1.7 million Khar-

tom residents have been forced to flee continuous air strikes, tanks and fighters on the streets and rampant looting.

Those who fled and the millions that remain have relied on the internet to source basic needs, setting up crowd-sourcing initiatives for escape routes, food and medicine.

More than 2.4 million people have been displaced within the country, where supplies have run low even in safe areas and "between two thirds and 80 percent of hospitals are not functioning", Rick Brennan, of the World Health Organization, said Friday.

A summit of leaders from Sudan's neighbors met in Cairo Thursday to discuss the conflict.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi urged international donors "to honor their commitments", referring to \$1.5 billion in aid pledged at a Geneva conference in June -- less than half the estimated needs for Sudan and its affected neighbors.

The summit followed multiple diplomatic efforts to mediate an end to the violence, after successive U.S. and Saudi-brokered ceasefires were all violated.

It echoed calls for a ceasefire made earlier in the week at talks held by east African bloc IGAD, which the Sudanese army had boycotted.

On Thursday, the International Criminal Court said it has commenced investigations into alleged war crimes, after increased reports of atrocities, particularly in Darfur, including of sexual violence and civilians being targeted for their ethnicity.

## Italy Faces Travel Chaos as Airport Workers Stage Strike



Passengers wait for their train at Milan central station during a national train strike, Thursday, July 13, 2023.

ROME (Dispatches) — Air travellers in Italy face major disruption on Saturday due to a nationwide strike by airport ground staff, with baggage handling and check-in services scheduled to stop from 10.00 to 18.00.

The eight-hour strike action has been called by airport workers in protest over a failure to renew their contract which expired six years ago.

Pilots with Malta Air, which operates Ryanair flights, will be striking on Saturday from midday until 16.00, with Vueling pilots and flight attendants also set to strike from 10.00 to 18.00.

ITA Airways says it has been "forced to cancel 133 domestic and international flights" due to the strike, with a list of the cancelled flights available on its website.

However the Italian airline stresses that it has limited the disruption by rebooking as many passengers as possible on the first available flights, meaning that "40 per cent will be able to fly on the same day".

Commuters and tourists alike were also stranded by a major train strike across Italy on a sweltering Thursday, with cancellations affecting even high-speed lines that are usually guaranteed during Italy's frequent work stoppages.

Transport Minister Matteo Salvini signed a decree ordering

the two-day strike be cut in half, but even that truncated stoppage forced the cancellation of service up and down the peninsula on a weekday, at the height of Italy's booming high tourist season.

At Milan's main rail station, for example, eight of 20 scheduled Trenitalia trains scheduled between 10:30-11:30 a.m. were canceled.

Italy's main unions called for the strike of Trenitalia and Italo workers, complaining about staffing shortages and excessive overtime, minimum salaries and other work conditions.

Also, Workers at Britain's No.2 airport Gatwick will strike for eight days at the end of July and in early August, potentially causing cancellations and travel misery for thousands of passengers at the busiest time of year for summer holidays.

European travellers are already on high alert over worries about air traffic control problems arising from both the reduced air space available due to the Ukraine war, plus staffing issues and industrial action at some locations.

The Unite trade union said around 950 Gatwick workers, including ground staff, baggage handlers and check-in agents, would walk out in a pay dispute for four days from July 28-Aug. 1 and then another four days from Aug. 4-8.