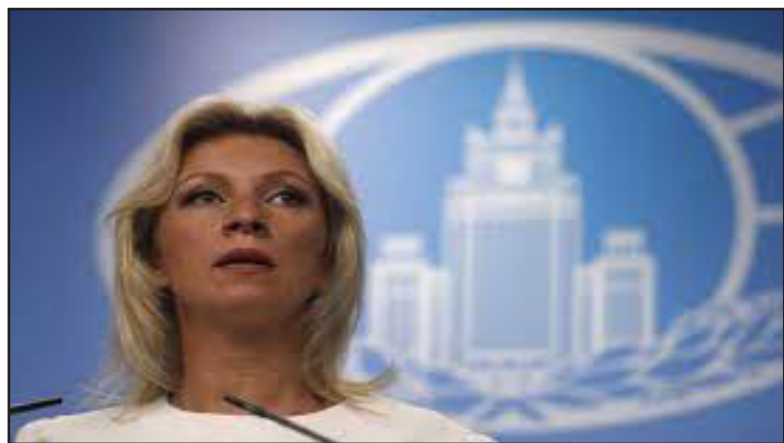


'You Will Never Defeat Moscow'

Russia Dismisses New U.S. Sanctions



Maria Zakharova, the Russian Foreign Ministry's spokeswoman, attends a briefing in Moscow, Russia.

global markets. The U.S., itself a large LNG producer that exports to Europe, is also trying to reduce Russia's LNG shipments to Europe, which has only banned Russian gas sent via pipeline.

The Arctic-2 LNG project - targeted by the new sanctions - had been expecting to start exporting soon and it is uncertain how much Russian LNG will now be blocked.

On Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law revoking the country's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), according to an officially published document.

The Kremlin had stated earlier that Russia's withdrawal from the treaty would not imply the restoration of nuclear tests.

Chairman of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin said Moscow had been waiting for Washington to ratify the treaty for 23 years, but the United States had demonstrated its irresponsible approach towards global security issues.

The CTBT is a multilateral agreement that bans all nuclear explosion tests conducted for peaceful or military purposes.

Early on Friday, Russia launched a massive drone attack, hitting critical infrastructure in the west and south of Ukraine and destroying private houses and commercial buildings in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, officials said.

The air force said it shot down 24 drones out of 40 launched by Russia, the biggest drone attack in weeks to target Kharkiv in the northeast, Odesa and Kherson in the south and the region of Lviv on Ukraine's border with Poland in the west.

One X-59 missile was also shot down, the air force said.

peatedly said they seek to defeat Russia on the battlefield, though some Western leaders have denied what President Vladimir Putin says is a Western plot to carve up Russia and steal its natural resources.

Putin is girding the \$2.1 trillion economy for a long war and Western hopes of stoking a swift Russian economic crisis with some of the toughest sanctions ever imposed have not been realized.

The International Monetary Fund forecasts Russian growth of 2.2% this year - faster than either the United States or the Euro area - though the Fund last month lowered its forecast for 2024 growth to 1.1%.

The West has frozen hundreds of billions of dollars of Russian money, but Putin has joked that the sanctions have not stopped the import of Western goods such as luxury Mercedes to Russia and that Moscow will work to undermine the sanctions by buying what it wants on

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia on Friday dismissed new U.S. sanctions over the war in Ukraine, saying that the United States would never defeat Moscow, while the boss of Russia's fastest growing natural gas company quipped the sanctions were a badge of success.

The United States on Thursday targeted Russia's future energy capabilities, sanctions evasion and a suicide drone that has been a menace to Ukrainian troops and equipment, among others, in sanctions on hundreds of people and entities.

"This is a continuation of the policy of inflicting as they call it - a strategic defeat on us," Maria Zakharova, a spokeswoman for the Russian foreign ministry, told Russian state television when asked about the new sanctions.

"They will have to wait in vain forever before that happens."

Western leaders and Ukraine have re-

North Korea Urges Stronger Nuclear Force After U.S. Missile Test

SEOUL (Dispatches) - North Korea will increase its military deterrent to ensure its security against a U.S. nuclear arsenal aimed at it, its state media reported on Friday, as it criticized the United States for a recent intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test.

The U.S. Air Force launched a nuclear-capable Minuteman III missile from a base in California on Wednesday but the missile was blown up after an anomaly was detected. The test was attended by South Korean defense officials in their first such visit since 2016.

A North Korean military commentator said despite the failure of the test, the presence of South Korean "puppet military gangsters" showed that U.S. nuclear weapons were targeted at North Korea.

"The DPRK will as ever continue its military action to bolster up the deterrence and ensure the strategic security in the Korean peninsula and the region," the unidentified commentator said in a report carried by the KCNA state news agency, referring to the country by the initials of its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The commentary also criticized the U.S. and South Korea for various recent military steps including the deployment of U.S. nuclear strategic bombers to South Korea.

"The nuclear threat by the U.S. and its vassal forces to the DPRK nears a new red line," the North Korean commentator said, calling for the strengthening of "self-defensive nuclear armed forces".

North Korea denounces the exercises as preparations by the United States and its South Korean ally to invade it.

Ten Dead as Storm Ciaran Batters Western Europe



Much of northwestern Europe went on high alert as a storm dubbed Ciaran threatened to bring gale-force winds and extreme rainfall to the region.

BRUSSELS (AFP) - At least 10 people were killed as Storm Ciaran battered Western Europe with record winds of up to 200 kilometers per hour, causing travel mayhem with closed ports and flight and rail disruptions.

Three people died in Tuscany, Italian authorities announced on Friday, reporting record rainfall and the declaration of a state of emergency.

Tuscany governor Eugenio Giani said the three dead included an 85-year-old man who was found drowned in his house.

"What happened tonight in Tuscany has a name: climate change," he wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Florence mayor Dario Nardella said the "situation is critical" in the city.

Trees felled by gale-force winds caused most of the deaths in Europe. In the Belgian city of Ghent, a five-year-old Ukrainian boy and a

64-year-old woman were killed by falling branches.

Falling trees had earlier killed a lorry driver in his vehicle in northern France's Aisne region, and French authorities also reported the death of a man who fell from his balcony in the port city of Le Havre.

A man in the Dutch town of Venray, a woman in central Madrid and a person in Germany also died.

Some 1.2 million French homes lost electricity as the storm lashed the northwest coast. Almost 700,000 remained without power on Thursday evening, according to network manager Enedis.

French President Emmanuel Macron was due to visit the storm-battered region of Brittany on Friday, the Elysee presidential palace said.

The storm interrupted rail, air and maritime traffic in Belgium where the port of Antwerp was closed and flights from Brussels were disrupted.

The wind gusts in the western Brittany region were "exceptional" and "many absolute records have been broken," national weather service Météo-France said on X.

The perfect for the local department said gusts as high as 207 km/h (129 mph) were recorded at Pointe du Raz on the tip of the northwest coast, while the port city of Brest saw winds hit 156 km/h.

In southern England, hundreds of schools were closed as large waves powered by winds of 135 km/h crashed along the coastline.

On the Channel Island of Jersey, residents had to be evacuated to hotels overnight as gusts of up to 164 km/h damaged homes, according to local media.

More than 200 flights were canceled at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, a major European hub.

Air, rail and ferry services saw cancellations and long delays across several countries.

The effects of the storm were felt as far south as Spain and Portugal, with Spanish authorities warning of waves as high as nine meters (29 feet) along the Atlantic coast.

In Spain, more than 80 flights were canceled at 11 airports.

There was disappointment for the hardy athletes of the annual Dutch "headwind cycle championships" race.

They only hold their race along the Oosterscheldekering storm surge barrier in the western Netherlands if the wind is above a gale seven on the Beaufort Scale (up to 61 km/h).

But they finally met their match with Storm Ciaran and had to postpone it.

UN Votes Overwhelmingly Against U.S. Embargo on Cuba



The UN General Assembly (UNGA) has adopted its annual resolution calling on Washington to end its decades-long economic blockade of Cuba.

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - The UN General Assembly has voted by a large margin against the United States' economic and trade embargo against Cuba, first imposed in 1960.

Titled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba," the resolution put forward each year against the embargo garnered support from 187 states, with only the United States and Israel casting against and Ukraine abstaining.

Debate on the resolution began Wednesday and extended into Thursday.

The General Assembly reiterated its call for all states to refrain from promulgating and applying such restrictive laws and measures in line with their obligations under the UN Charter and international law.

The more than 60-year blockade violates the rights of all Cubans, said Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, noting that 80 percent of the population in his

country has never known life without the crippling U.S. blockade.

He added that it is "an act of economic warfare, in times of peace," creating a situation of ungovernability and an attempt to destroy the constitutional order.

Aurelie Flore Koumba Pambo, representative of Gabon to the UN, voiced her country's concern over the continuing embargo.

"The scale of its impact is more and more harmful to the Cuban people," she said during the debate, noting that the economic blockade is "clearly a hostile act to region and continental cohesion."

She called it an "obstacle to the social and economic development of Cuba."

Peruvian UN Ambassador Luis Ugarelli said his country "shares the view of practically the entire international community" that the embargo is against the principles of the UN Charter and international human rights law, noting Peru would support the resolution, as it has done for more than 30 years.

UN Official: 'Horrible Suffering' in Sudan Growing



More than 5,000 South Sudanese refugees live in Al-Nimir camp where they arrived after fleeing war and famine in their country.

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) - As fierce fighting in Darfur once again pushes thousands of Sudanese to flee their homes, more must be done to alleviate the suffering of the millions already displaced, a UN official said.

"Six months and six million people forced to move, that's an average of one million per month, it's horrible suffering," said Mamadou Dian Balde, the top regional official for the UN's refugee agency (UNHCR).

The war between troops loyal to Sudanese army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhane and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of General Mohamed Hamed Daglo has left more than 9,000 dead since April, according to a UN report.

Of the nearly six million who have fled, 1.2 million have left the country, "very proud people who find themselves begging" and whose lives have been "totally disrupted," the UN official said.

He warned that while the world's attention has been shifted to the war in Gaza, the number of people fleeing their homes in Sudan had started to rise again, as RSF forces advance toward Nyala, the country's second city in the heart of Darfur.

Another UN official in the region, Dominique Hyde, said on social media Thursday she had witnessed "dramatic scenes at the border with Sudan."

"10,000 people seeking safety have arrived in the last three days," she said.

More and more people from Darfur are being pushed south, first to Chad in recent weeks and now to South Sudan.

Mamadou Dian Balde said the priority was for a cessation of hostilities, noting that ongoing negotiations in Saudi Arabia's Jeddah need to "succeed in stopping the fighting."

Talks between the warring parties resumed at the end of October. Previous attempts at mediation only resulted in brief truces, which were systematically violated.

In the meantime, "we must alleviate the suffering (of refugees) by providing resources to these people whose numbers are only increasing," he said.

The UN's humanitarian response plan in August called for around \$1 billion in funding, anticipating a number of 1.8 million refugees by the end of 2023.

News in Brief

MANILA (AFP) - Japan and the Philippines said Friday they will start negotiations for a defense pact that would allow the countries to deploy troops on each other's territory. Tokyo and Manila -- longtime allies of the United States -- are deepening their defense cooperation. The accord would create the legal basis for the countries to send defense personnel to each other's territory for training and other operations. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced the start of reciprocal access negotiations following talks in Manila.

MOSCOW (RT) - U.S. House Republicans are fast approaching a point where they will have to decide whether to impeach President Joe Biden, but following the evidence and observing due process takes time, speaker Mike Johnson said. "I do believe that very soon we are coming to a point of decision on it," Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, told reporters on Capitol Hill. "We're gonna follow the evidence where it leads and we'll see, and I'm not gonna predetermine it this morning." Johnson pointed out that Democrats had twice used impeachment for "raw partisan political purposes" against president Donald Trump.

KYIV (AP) - President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen will visit Ukraine this month, the TSN.ua media outlet reported, citing Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Olga Stefanishina. During her visit, von der Leyen will hold talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky ahead of the European Union (EU) announcement of its decision regarding the start of negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the bloc, Stefanishina said. The parties will discuss Ukraine's progress toward EU membership, which will be presented by the European Commission in the final report on Nov 8, she said.

HELSINKI (AFP) - Finland and the United States have concluded the fifth round of negotiations for a Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA), the Finnish Foreign Ministry announced this week. Finland's chief negotiator Mikael Antell said that the draft agreement would proceed to the political process. The text of the agreement will not be considered final until both parties have signed it. Subsequently, it will be published, but its entry into force is contingent on approval by the parliament. According to Finnish media, parliamentary approval is not expected by the end of 2023.

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - India's capital New Delhi was wrapped in a thick layer of toxic haze on Friday and some schools were ordered closed as the air quality index (AQI) plummeted to the "severe" category. New Delhi again topped a real-time list of the world's most polluted cities compiled by Swiss group IQAir, which put the Indian capital's AQI at 640 in the "hazardous" category on Friday, followed by 335 in the Pakistani city of Lahore. Regional officials said a seasonal combination of lower temperatures, a lack of wind and crop stubble burning in neighboring farm states had caused a spike in air pollutants. Many of New Delhi's 20 million residents complained of irritation in the eyes and itchy throats with the air turning a dense grey as the AQI hovered around 480 in some monitoring stations.