

# Leaked Cable Reveals Germany's Fears of Trump Tenure



President-elect Donald Trump talks to reporters after a meeting with Republican leadership at the Capitol, Jan. 8, 2025, in Washington.

BERLIN (Reuters) -- Germany's ambassador to the United States has warned that the incoming Trump administration will rob U.S. law enforcement and the media of their independence and hand big tech companies "co-governing power", according to a confidential document seen by Reuters. The briefing document, dated Jan. 14 and signed by Ambassador Andreas Michaelis, describes Donald Trump's agenda for his second White House term as one of "maximum disruption" that will bring about "a redefinition of the constitutional order - maximum concentration of power with the president at the expense of Congress and the federal states."

caster ZDF, Baerbock said Michaelis was merely doing his job and that Trump had openly stated much of his agenda. The outgoing government of Chancellor Olaf Scholz has largely refrained from direct public criticism of Trump since the election, but the ambassador's confidential assessment offers a blunt view from a senior German official.

Ambassadors are not replaced automatically with the formation of a new government, unless a change is deemed necessary for diplomatic or other reasons. The document cites the judiciary, and especially the U.S. Supreme Court, as central to Trump's attempts to further his agenda, but says that despite the court's recent decision to expand presidential powers, "even the biggest critics assume that it will prevent the worst from happening."

Michaelis sees control of the Justice Department and FBI as key to Trump reaching his political and personal goals, including mass deportations, retribution against perceived enemies and legal impunity. He says Trump has broad legal options to force his agenda on the states, saying "even military deployment within the country for police activities would be possible in the event of declared 'insurrection' and 'invasion'."

The 1878 Posse Comitatus Act bars the federal military from participating in domestic law enforcement, with some exceptions. He says Trump has broad legal options to force his agenda on the states, saying "even military deployment within the country for police activities would be possible in the event of declared 'insurrection' and 'invasion'."

# India Sentences Rapist Killer of Doctor to Life in Prison



Protesters shout slogans after a court sentenced Sanjay Roy, a police volunteer, to life in prison in Kolkata on Jan. 20, 2025.

KOLKATA (Reuters) -- An Indian court handed down a life sentence on Monday to a police volunteer convicted of the rape and murder of a junior doctor at a hospital in the eastern city of Kolkata, rejecting demands for the death penalty saying it was not a rare crime. The woman's body was found in a classroom at the state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, where she worked, on Aug. 9. Other doctors stayed off work for weeks to demand justice for her and better security at public hospitals, as the crime sparked national outrage over a lack of safety for women. Sanjay Roy, the police volunteer, was convicted on Saturday by judge Anirban Das, who said circumstantial evidence had proved the charges against Roy. On Monday, Roy, who denied the charges, said he had been framed and sought clemency. The federal police, who investigated the case, said the crime belonged to the "rarest-of-rare" category and Roy, therefore, deserved the death penalty. But the judge disagreed, saying that he had come to the conclusion after considering all the evidence and the circumstances linked to it. "I do not consider it as a 'rarest-

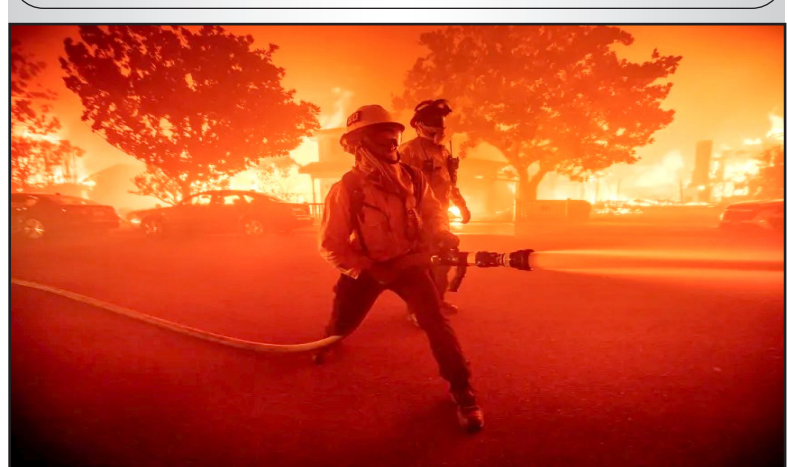
of-rare' crime," Judge Das said as he sentenced Roy to life in jail on both the counts of rape and murder. "Life imprisonment, meaning imprisonment until death." The sentence was announced in a packed courtroom as the judge allowed the public to witness proceedings. The speedy trial in the court had not been open to the public. The parents of the junior doctor were among those in court. Security was stepped up with dozens of police personnel deployed at the court complex. The parents had earlier said that they were not satisfied with the probe and suspected more people were involved in the crime. Their lawyer, Amartya Dey, told Reuters that they had sought the death penalty for Roy and also demanded that those involved in what they called the "larger conspiracy" be brought to book. A group of junior doctors and others demonstrated outside the court, demanding a harsher sentence for Roy. "We want justice. We want to know the other conspirators," they said. "Life imprisonment ... is a travesty of justice," said Amit Malviya, a senior member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party that rules at the federal level.

# TikTok Restores Service in U.S. After Trump Comments

WASHINGTON (AFP) -- TikTok restored service in the United States after briefly going dark, as a law banning the wildly popular app on national security grounds came into effect. The video-sharing platform credited President-elect Donald Trump, who retook power on Monday, for making the reversal possible -- though the outgoing administration of President Joe Biden had earlier said that it would not enforce any ban. TikTok had shut down in the United States late Saturday as a deadline loomed for its Chinese owners ByteDance to sell its U.S. subsidiary to non-Chinese buyers. Earlier Sunday, as millions of dismayed users found themselves barred from the app, Trump promised to issue an executive order delaying the ban to allow time to "make a deal."

He also called in a post on his Truth Social platform for the United States to take part ownership in TikTok. Trump said he "would like the United States to have a 50 percent ownership position in a joint venture," arguing that the app's value could surge to "hundreds of billions of dollars -- maybe trillions." "By doing this, we save TikTok, keep it in good hands," wrote Trump, who had previously backed a TikTok ban and during his first term in office made moves towards one. In a statement posted on X following Trump's comments, TikTok said it "is in the process of restoring service." "We thank President Trump for providing the necessary clarity and assurance to our service providers that they will face no penalties providing TikTok to over 170 million Americans."

# Southern California Braces for New Wildfires



Firefighters battle the Palisades Fire as it burns multiple structures in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood of Los Angeles, Jan. 7, 2025.

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Southern Californians braced for gusty winds and a heightened risk of wildfires, less than two weeks after the outbreak of deadly blazes that have killed at least 27 people and charred thousands of homes. The National Weather Service issued a warning of a "particularly dangerous situation" for parts of Los Angeles and Ventura counties from Monday afternoon through Tuesday morning due to low humidity and damaging Santa Ana winds. Gusts could peak at 70 mph (113 kph) along the coast and 100 mph (160 kph) in the mountains and foothills. Windy weather and single-digit humidity are expected to linger through Thursday, said Rich Thompson, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service. He said the fire risk is also elevated because the region hasn't seen rain since April. Critical fire weather with wind gusts up to 60 mph (97 kph) was also forecast for Southern California communities stretching to San Diego on Monday and Tuesday, with residents urged to take steps to get ready to evacuate such as creating an emergency kit and keeping cars filled with at least a half tank of gas. A wind-blown dust and ash advisory was also issued, as high winds could disperse ash from existing fire zones across Southern California. The warnings come as firefighters

continue to battle two major blazes in the Los Angeles area, the Palisades and Eaton fires, which have destroyed more than 14,000 structures since they broke out during fierce winds on Jan. 7. The Palisades fire was 52% contained on Sunday and the Eaton fire 81% contained, according to fire officials. Firefighters have made progress on the perimeter of the Palisades fire, which has blackened more than 37 square miles (96 square kilometers) near the Pacific coast, but there are areas in the interior that continue to burn, said Dan Collins, a spokesperson for the Palisades fire incident. "There is always a possibility in a red flag warning something hot, or some type of burning material from the interior, could be perhaps whipped up and blown across the containment lines," Collins said. While firefighters are fairly confident the Eaton fire further inland will remain contained, there are concerns a new fire could break out with vegetation especially dry for this time of year, said Carlos Herrera, an Eaton fire spokesperson. Damage estimates have continued to climb for the Palisades and Eaton fires nearly two weeks since they began. Inspectors have fanned out to check buildings and assess damages, but Collins said it is impossible to know whether the remaining structures affected in the Palisades fire are intact.

# South Korea's Impeached President Continues to Shun Questioning



A television at a bus station in Seoul shows President Yoon Suk Yeol of South Korea arriving at the Corruption Investigation Office.

SEOUL (Reuters) -- South Korea's impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol refused on Monday to be questioned by investigators under a probe into whether he supported insurrection, as dozens of his supporters faced being charged over a violent rampage on a court building. Authorities said security was being beefed up at the Seoul Detention Centre where Yoon is being held as a pre-trial inmate and at the Constitutional Court which is holding an impeachment trial to decide whether to permanently remove him from office. Yoon became the first incumbent South Korean president to be arrested last week over his short-lived declaration of martial law on Dec. 3. On Sunday, he was formally processed for detention, including having his mugshot taken, after a court approved a warrant, citing concern the suspect could destroy evidence. Following the midnight news, angry Yoon supporters stormed the Seoul Western District Court building early on Sunday destroying property and clashing with police who were at times overpowered by a mob wielding broken barricades to attack them. Out of 90 people who were detained after the clashes, police plan to keep 66 in custody on charges of trespass, obstruction of official duty and assaulting police

officers, Yonhap News Agency reported. Other offenders were still being identified and police will also take legal action against them, acting Justice Minister Kim Seok-woo told a parliament judiciary committee. Acting President Choi Sang-mok expressed deep regret over the "illegal violence" at the court building and also urged police to enforce the law strictly to prevent a repeat of what happened on Sunday. The unrest comes amid South Korea's worst political crisis in decades, which has rattled Asia's fourth-biggest economy. South Korea's central bank on Monday downgraded its economic growth projection for 2025 to between 1.6% and 1.7%, down from the 1.9% it forecast in November, citing political uncertainty. Hundreds of protesters, some blasting fire extinguishers at lines of police, broke through a cordon to enter the court building soon after the 3 a.m. ruling on Sunday to approve the detention of Yoon. Some of them were seen in video footage roaming halls where the offices of judges were located calling out the name of the judge who approved the warrant. At least one judge's chamber was broken into by force, Chun Dae-yup, the head of the National Court Administration, said.

# News in Brief

DAVOS, Switzerland (Reuters) -- Climate activists sprayed green paint over Amazon's base in Davos on Monday and disrupted helicopter landings at the start of the World Economic Forum's annual meeting. Swiss police swarmed to close down both protests as global business and political leaders descended on the mountain resort on the opening day of the meeting, where demonstrations over fossil fuels and climate change have become a regular feature. Demonstrators protesting over fossil fuel subsidies daubed orange symbols on the shop front where Amazon has set up a temporary base on the main street in Davos, as well as splattering green paint over the plate-glass windows. Greenpeace, which briefly blocked the heliport in Davos, said in a statement that it had taken the action to call for "a fair tax on the richest people, to fund environmental protection and invest in a fair and sustainable future for humanity."

MOSCOW (AFP) -- Russia on Monday said it had shot down 31 Ukrainian drones which mainly targeted industrial sites. "Last night, anti-air defense systems intercepted and destroyed 31 Ukrainian drones," Russia's defense ministry said on Telegram. "There was an attempted attack by enemy drones" to target "industrial enterprises" in Tatarstan, about 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) from the Ukrainian border, the regional government said. "All the drones were neutralized. There were no victims or damage," it said, without elaborating. In the Kaluga region flanking Moscow, debris from a downed drone sparked a fire at a business but it was quickly put out, regional governor Vladislav Shapsha said. In the region of Bryansk, which borders Ukraine, 14 drones were neutralized, regional governor Alexander Bogomaz said, adding that Kyiv had also fired four HIMARS missiles.

TIBÚ, Colombia (AFP) -- A fresh outbreak of guerrilla violence amid a faltering peace process in Colombia has left more than 80 people dead, including civilians, and displaced thousands in just four days, officials reported. As residents fled for their lives, the army deployed some 5,000 troops to the cocaine-growing Catatumbo region at the center of a fast-escalating territorial war. The National Liberation Army (ELN) armed group, officials said, launched an assault in Catatumbo last Thursday on a rival formation comprised of ex-members of the now-defunct FARC guerrilla force who kept fighting after it disarmed in 2017. Civilians found themselves caught in the middle, and by Sunday, it was estimated that "more than 80 people have lost their lives," according to governor William Villamizar of the Norte de Santander department. Terrified residents carrying backpacks and belongings on overloaded motorcycles, boats, or crammed onto the backs of open trucks, fled the region over the weekend.

BEIJING (AFP) -- China on Monday executed a man who killed 35 people in a car rampage in the southern city of Zhuhai in November, state media said. A court in the city "executed Fan Weiqiu in accordance with the execution order issued by the Supreme People's Court", state broadcaster CCTV said. On November 11, 62-year-old Fan deliberately drove a small SUV through crowds of people exercising outside a sports complex. He killed 35 and wounded 43, state media reported at the time, in China's deadliest attack since 2014. Fan was detained at the scene with self-inflicted knife wounds and fell into a coma, police said at the time. He was sentenced to death last month, with a court saying his motives "were extremely vile, the nature of the crime extremely egregious, the methods particularly cruel, and the consequences particularly severe, posing significant harm to society."

BEIJING (Reuters) -- The Myanmar military and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) signed a formal agreement for a ceasefire that began on Saturday, China's foreign ministry said, halting fighting near the border of both countries. The two sides held talks in China's southwestern city of Kunming where they thanked Beijing for its efforts to promote peace, ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said during a regular news briefing on Monday. The MNDAA is one of several ethnic minority armed groups fighting to repel the military from what they consider their territories. It is part of the so-called Three Brotherhood Alliance, with the Ta'ang National Liberation Army and the Arakan Army, that launched an offensive against the military junta in late October 2023 seizing swathes of territory near the border with China. The MNDAA, made up of ethnic Chinese, said last July it had taken control of a major military base near the Chinese border.

BELGRADE (AFP) -- A fire broke out early Monday at a retirement home on the outskirts of the Serbian capital, Belgrade, killing eight people and injuring seven. Luka Causic, a police officer overseeing the emergency response, said there were around 30 people inside when the fire broke out at 3:30 a.m. (02:30 GMT). "Unfortunately, eight individuals lost their lives in the fire. I must say that members of the emergency response sector reacted very promptly and successfully rescued, or rather evacuated, 13 people," Labor Minister Nemanja Starovic told local media. Causic said the blaze was extinguished by firefighters who acted quickly, despite the facility being located in a remote area.