

Germany Wants European Nuclear Weapons Report: U.S. to Stop Participating in Future Military Exercises in Europe



UK troops spearheaded NATO's Exercise Steadfast Dart in eastern Romania.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – The U.S. has reportedly informed NATO of its decision not to participate in military exercises in Europe beyond those already scheduled for 2025, raising questions about the future of Washington in the continent.

Swedish media outlet Expressen reported that the decision does not apply to the planning of exercises that have already been agreed upon and will be held in 2025.

However, NATO countries will be forced to plan exercises without the participation of the U.S. military, the largest in the alliance.

U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized NATO countries for not meeting the current goal of spending two percent of GDP on military, arguing that the disparity puts an unfair burden on the U.S.

He has stated that he wants to prioritize the Indo-Pacific region, which primarily targets China.

On Friday, he warned that the U.S. may not defend NATO countries that do not meet the spending target.

“When I came to NATO, when I first had my first meeting, I noticed that people weren’t paying their bills at all, and I said I should wait till my second meeting,” he told reporters.

“And when I said that, as soon as they said that, it was amazing how the money came in, the money came in, and now they have money. But even now, it’s not enough. They should be paying more,” he added.

Since his inauguration, Trump has shocked allies with moves including ending military aid and intelligence sharing with Ukraine and excluding European allies from peace talks held with Russia.

Trump has also threatened NATO by saying that he will pull out U.S. troops from Germany. There are about 160,000 U.S. troops in NATO countries, 35,000 of whom are in Germany. If Trump pulls these troops out of Germany, he will further exacerbate U.S. relations with Western Europe.

German Chancellor-in-waiting Friedrich Merz on Sunday said he would like talks with France and Britain about sharing their nuclear weapons, but not as a substitute for U.S. nuclear protection of Europe.

“Sharing nuclear weapons is an issue that we need to talk about...we have to become stronger together in nuclear deterrence,” he said in an interview on Deutschlandfunk radio, a day after agreeing cornerstones of a coalition deal between his conservative party and the Social Democratic SPD party.

“We should talk with both countries (France and Britain), always also from the perspective of supplementing the American nuclear shield, which we of course want to see maintained.”

Germany, due to its Second World War past, has bound itself to non-nuclear defense in a number of international treaties but participates in NATO weapons-sharing arrangements.

At a summit in Brussels on Thursday, EU leaders backed plans to spend more on defense amid fears that Russia, emboldened by its war in Ukraine, may attack an EU country next and that Europe can no longer rely on the U.S. to come to its aid.

Russia Captures Another Village Ukraine’s Losses Mounting Due to U.S. Intel Freeze



The recent suspension of U.S. intelligence sharing with Ukraine has critically weakened Kiev’s defense capabilities.

MOSCOW (Dispatches) – Russia announced Sunday the capture of another eastern Ukrainian village, in the Donetsk region, as its forces advanced toward the central Dnipropetrovsk region.

The defense ministry said in a briefing that its troops had captured the village of Kostyantynopil, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of the Russia-controlled city of Donetsk.

Russian troops have been advancing steadily in the Donetsk region and are now close to Dnipropetrovsk, which so far has been free of fighting. Kostyantynopil is around 13 kilometers from the regional border line.

The village was founded in the 18th century by Greek settlers from Crimea, who named it after the ancient city of Constantinople.

Meanwhile, Russian special forces crept miles through a major gas pipeline near the town of Sudzha in an attempt to surprise Ukrainian forces as part of a major offensive to eject Ukrainian soldiers from the western Russian region of Kursk, pro-Russian war bloggers said.

Thousands of Ukrainian soldiers seized about 1,300 square km of Russia’s Kursk region in August last year in what Kyiv said was an attempt to gain a bargaining chip in fu-

ture negotiations and to force Russia to shift forces from eastern Ukraine.

The recent suspension of U.S. intelligence sharing with Ukraine has critically weakened Kiev’s defense capabilities, leading to substantial casualties, territorial losses – particularly in the occupied part of Russia’s Kursk Region – and plummeting morale, Time reported, citing Western and Ukrainian officials familiar with the situation.

One unnamed official claimed that the lack of U.S. intel directly resulted in “hundreds of dead Ukrainians”, adding that “the biggest problem is morale”, as Kiev is unable to effectively use some of its most powerful Western-supplied weapons.

According to Time, the abrupt halt in intelligence sharing has affected the Ukrainian foothold in the Russian border region of Kursk, which Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky regards as a bargaining chip in potential peace talks with Russia. The magazine said, citing sources, that Russia has made swift advances in the area, aiming to cut off Ukrainian supply lines into the region.

According to Ukrainian media reports citing the Deep State monitoring website, Russian forces have nearly cut off Kiev’s foothold in Kursk Region from the border.

Thousands Protest in Paris Against Macron’s ‘Militaristic Foreign Policy’

PARIS (RT) – Thousands of protesters marched through Paris to oppose what they see as French President Emmanuel Macron’s militaristic approach to foreign policy and his lack of interest in achieving peace in the Ukraine war.

The demonstration was organized by Florian Philippot and his party, The Patriots.

Chanting slogans and carrying signs such as “We don’t want to die for Ukraine”, and “Macron, we don’t want your war”, the crowd moved from the Place du Palais Royal to the Place Pierre Laroque.

Macron has proposed expanding France’s nuclear deterrent to protect EU nations and urged European members of NATO to take more responsibility for their own defense. He cited uncertainty over Washington’s commitment to Ukraine, especially as relations between Kiev and U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration experienced a setback after President Volodymyr Zelensky rejected calls to negotiate peace with Russia.

Macron has argued that continued aid to Ukraine was crucial, warning that if Russian President Vladimir Putin succeeded in Ukraine, he wouldn’t stop there – a claim that Moscow has repeatedly dismissed as nonsense. Russia has identified NATO’s expansion toward its borders and the U.S.-led bloc’s promise of eventual membership for Ukraine as being among the key reasons for the



French PM Francois Bayrou recently dismissed the idea of consulting the public on key defense decisions.

conflict.

Many demonstrators at the Paris rally criticized Macron for prioritizing military matters over domestic issues. “When you declare war, it’s to erase all the other failures,” one protester stated.

Another accused Macron of pursuing conflict while leaders such as Trump and Putin are talking about peace.

Addressing the crowd, Philippot condemned Macron’s attitude, declaring that the president “absolutely does not want peace”.

Philippot, formerly a member of the National Front, has been a vocal critic of Macron’s administration and EU’s policies. His party opposes what it perceives

as unnecessary military interventions and advocates for a more independent French foreign policy.

Macron’s push for increased defense spending faces hurdles as France grapples with a budget deficit and pressure to rein in spending. Approval of the 2025 budget has been delayed due to a divided parliament. In January, Budget Minister Amelie de Montchalin announced plans to cut €32 billion (\$34.6 billion) in public spending while raising taxes by €21 billion.

Critics argue that these measures would burden middle-class families, small business owners, and retirees already struggling with rising costs.

Floods, Mass Power Cuts as Wild Weather Bashes Eastern Australia

SYDNEY (AFP) – Gusts and torrential rain have blacked out more than a quarter of a million properties and swamped parts of Australia’s east coast, officials said Sunday, with one driver confirmed dead and a dozen troops injured in the wild weather.

After days hovering off the coast as a category 2 tropical cyclone and battering a 400-kilometre (250-mile) stretch of coastline, Alfred weakened into a tropical depression before making landfall on Saturday evening.

But as the remnants of the cyclone moved inland, hundreds of thousands of people remained without power on Sunday, and video images showed knee-high water pouring through roads in some of the worst-hit areas of southeast Queensland and north-east New South Wales.

A total of 23 centimeters of rain had descended on the Queensland resort of Hervey Bay in just a few hours, flooding homes and forcing emergency rescues in rapid waters, the state’s premier, David Crisafulli, told a news conference.

The weather system “continues to pack a punch” as it moves inland, Crisafulli said, adding that more than 1,000 schools shuttered across the state would gradually start reopening on Monday.

Utility companies said about 268,000 homes and businesses in southeast Queensland and another 12,500 in northeast New South Wales were still without power on Sunday afternoon.

“Customers need to be prepared to be without power for several days,” Queensland’s Essential Energy said.

“The biggest challenges to getting power back on will be rising flood waters and swollen creek beds, fallen vegetation and mud slides impacting access roads,” it said in a statement.

About 14,600 people are under emergency warnings related to the weather system in New South Wales, the state’s emergency services said.

“In the last 24 hours, 17 incidents have occurred as a result of people driving into flood waters,” said emergency services deputy commissioner Damien Johnson.

“Not only is it a danger to yourself and your family, it is also dangerous as well for the volunteers, the emergency services workers that need to rescue you.”

A 61-year-old man’s body was found Saturday, a day after his four-wheel-drive pickup truck was swept off a bridge into a river in northern New South Wales.

He had escaped from the pickup and tried in vain to cling to a tree branch in the river before disappearing into the rapid waters, police said.

In a separate incident Saturday, police said 13 soldiers were injured and taken to hospital when two army trucks rolled over during a deployment to clear roads near the flood-prone New South Wales city of Lismore.

Twelve soldiers were still in hospital Sunday, two of them in a serious condition, New South Wales Premier Chris Minns told a news conference.

China-U.S. Trade War Heats Up With Beijing’s Tariffs to Take Effect

BEIJING (AFP) – Trade tensions between the world’s two leading economies are set to escalate on Monday, as Beijing begins levying tariffs on certain U.S. agricultural goods in retaliation for President Donald Trump’s latest hike on Chinese imports.

Since retaking office in January, Trump has unleashed a barrage of tariffs on major U.S. trading partners, including China, Canada and Mexico, citing their failure to stop illegal immigration and flows of deadly fentanyl.

After imposing a blanket 10 percent tariff on all Chinese goods in early February, Trump hiked the rate to 20 percent last week.

Beijing reacted quickly, its finance ministry accusing Washington of “undermining” the multilateral trading system and announcing fresh measures of its own.

The moves will see fresh tariffs of 10

and 15 percent imposed on several U.S. farm products, starting on Monday.

Chicken, wheat, corn and cotton from the United States will now be subject to the higher charge while soybeans, sorghum, pork, beef, aquatic products, fruit, vegetables and dairy will face the slightly lower rate.

Analysts say Beijing’s retaliatory tariffs are designed to hurt Trump’s voter base while remaining restrained enough to allow room to hash out a trade deal.

The increasing trade headwinds add to difficulties faced by Chinese leaders currently seeking to stabilize the country’s wavering economy.

Sluggish consumer spending, a prolonged debt crisis in the vast property sector and high youth unemployment are among the issues now facing policymakers.

China’s exports -- which last year

reached record highs -- might not provide the same economic lifeline for Beijing as its trade war with Washington intensifies.

Experts say the full effects of the recent wave of tariffs have yet to be fully felt, though early signs already indicate a downturn in shipments.

China’s exports grew 2.3 percent year-on-year during the first two months of 2025, official data showed Friday, missing expectations and slowing significantly from the 10.7 percent growth recorded in December.

“As exports face downside risk with trade war looming, the fiscal policy needs to become more proactive,” wrote Zhiwei Zhang, president and chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management.

The latest trade data came as Chinese officials congregated in Beijing for the country’s largest annual political gathering, known as the “Two Sessions”.



KINSHASA (FT) – The United States is reportedly engaged in exploratory talks with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) regarding a potential deal on rare earth elements, marking the latest effort by the Donald Trump administration to secure access to vital resources overseas following unsuccessful negotiations with Ukraine. According to a report, the proposed agreement involves the U.S. gaining access to crucial minerals in exchange for providing security assistance to the African nation. FT cited unnamed sources as saying talks between Washington and Kinshasa about a potential mineral deal have intensified recently, “although several obstacles remain and they are “at a relatively early stage.” According to reports by the United Nations, rebels backed by Rwandan troops have taken large swathes of land in eastern DRC, looting the resources of the mineral-rich region. Kinshasa “invites the USA, whose companies source strategic raw materials from Rwanda ... to purchase them directly from us the rightful owners,” Tina Salama, a spokesperson for President Felix Tshisekedi, wrote on X last month. Rebels are aiming to consolidate their hold in Congo’s east, which has trillions of dollars of mostly untapped mineral wealth, including cobalt, lithium, tantalum, and uranium.

WASHINGTON (AFP) – U.S. Secret Service agents shot a gunman near the White House, a spokesman said early Sunday, adding that the man had been hospitalized and his condition was “unknown.” The agents had earlier been warned by local police of a “suicidal” man traveling to Washington from Indiana, and encountered him on a street very near the White House, where “an armed confrontation ensued, during which shots were fired by our personnel,” according to a statement posted by spokesman Anthony Guglielmi on X.

MONTREAL (AFP) – The remains of an Indigenous woman murdered by a convicted serial killer three years ago have been found in landfill in central Canada, local authorities confirmed following a months-long search. Morgan Harris was one of the Indigenous women slain by Jeremy Skibicki, who is serving multiple life sentences after being convicted of four murders last year. Skibicki met his victims in homeless shelters, in a case seen as a symbol of the dangers faced by Indigenous women in Canada, where they disproportionately fall victim to violence, termed a “genocide” by a national public inquiry in 2019. Testimony at Skibicki’s trial said he raped, killed and dismembered Harris and another woman, Mercedes Myran, in 2022. Police believed their remains were dumped at the Prairie Green Landfill site, north of Winnipeg, the capital of the province of Manitoba.

PARIS (AFP) – French officials are urging their country’s research institutions to consider welcoming scientists abandoning the United States due to President Donald Trump’s funding cuts, AFP learned on Sunday. Since Trump returned to the White House in January, his government has cut federal research funding and sought to dismiss hundreds of federal workers working on health and climate research. “Many well-known researchers are already questioning their future in the United States,” France’s minister for higher education and research, Philippe Baptiste, wrote in a letter to the country’s institutions. “We would naturally wish to welcome a certain number of them.” Baptiste urged research leaders to send him “concrete proposals on the topic, both on priority technologies and scientific fields”. The government is “committed, and will rise to the occasion”, he added, in a statement sent to AFP on Sunday. This week, Aix-Marseille University in the south of France announced it was setting up a program dedicated to welcoming U.S. researchers, notably those working on climate change.

SEOUL (Dispatches) – Tens of thousands of people were expected to gather in Seoul on Sunday to rally for or against impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol a day after his surprise release from detention. Sarang Jeil Church, led by conservative activist pastor Jeon Kwang-hoon, held a Sunday service outdoors near the presidential residence in central Seoul. Around 4,500 people had gathered as of noon, according to an unofficial police estimate, Yonhap news agency reported. “With President Yoon’s release, the impeachment trial has become meaningless. It’s over,” Jeon said. “In the event the Constitutional Court does something funny, we will exercise the people’s right to resist and get rid of them with a single slash.” On Saturday, Yoon was released from the detention center where he had been held since mid-January over his failed martial law bid in December, after a court ruled that his detention was invalid.

PARIS (AFP) – A prominent French journalist on Sunday announced he was stepping down from his role as an expert analyst for broadcaster RTL after provoking an uproar by comparing French actions during colonial rule in Algeria to a World War II massacre committed by Nazi forces in France. Jean-Michel Aphatie, a veteran reporter and broadcaster, insisted that while he would not be returning to RTL he wholly stood by his comments made on the radio station in late February equating atrocities committed by France in Algeria with those of Nazi Germany in occupied France. “I will not return to RTL. It is my decision,” the journalist wrote on the X, after he was suspended from air for a week by the radio station. On February 25 he said on air: “Every year in France, we commemorate what happened in Oradour-sur-Glane -- the massacre of an entire village. But we have committed hundreds of these, in Algeria. Are we aware of this?” He was referring to the village of Oradour-sur-Glane, where an SS unit returning to the front in Normandy massacred 642 residents on June 10, 1944. Leaving a chilling memorial for future generations, the village was never rebuilt. Challenged by the anchor over whether “we (the French) behaved like the Nazis”, Aphatie replied: “The Nazis behaved like us”.