

Russia Starts Third Stage of Tactical Nuclear Drills



Russian air force crewmen at an undisclosed location in Russia prepare a Tu-22M3 bomber for a training mission as part of drills for using tactical nuclear weapons.

MOSCOW (Dispatches) – Russia defense ministry said on Wednesday Russia has begun the third stage of drills to practice the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons.

“In accordance with the decision of the president of the Russian Federation, the third stage of the exercise of non-strategic nuclear forces has begun,” the defense ministry said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app, Reuters reported.

Soldiers from the Southern and Central military districts will train

how to deploy dummy warheads for Iskander-M operational and tactical missile systems and covertly moving them to launch sites, the defense ministry said.

“The current stage of the exercise is aimed at maintaining the readiness of personnel and equipment of units of combat use of non-strategic nuclear weapons of Russia to perform combat missions,” the ministry said.

Russia held the first stage of the drills in May and ally Belarus joined the second stage in June.

Russia says the United States and its

European allies are pushing the world to the brink of nuclear confrontation by giving Ukraine billions of dollars worth of weapons, some of which are being used against Russian territory.

Since the start of the Ukraine war on Feb. 24, 2022, President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly said Russia could use nuclear weapons to defend itself in extreme situations.

On Wednesday, Ukraine’s air force said it repelled one of Russia’s largest long-range drone attacks of the war overnight, shooting down all 89 drones launched at Kyiv, the surrounding region and other areas.

The attack primarily targeted Kyiv and the surrounding region where authorities said more than 40 drones were shot down. An air raid alert remained in place most of the night.

“This is one of the most massive attacks by Shahed-131/136 strike drones,” the air force said, naming the type of drone it says Russia has used in the thousands for strikes on Ukraine.

Military spy agency spokesman Andriy Yusov said in televised remarks that Russia had used a “significant” number of decoy drones that were not loaded with explosives to try to deplete Ukraine’s air defenses and also identify their locations.

U.S. Not a Party to South China Sea Issue, Says Beijing



Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian said curtly at the regular press briefing in Beijing on March 19 2024.

BEIJING (Dispatches) – A spokesperson for China’s foreign ministry said on Wednesday that the United States is not a party to South China Sea issues and warned the Philippines that wooing other countries to provoke confrontation will undermine regional stability.

The United States pledged funding of \$500 million for the Philippines’ military and coast guard in a big show of support for Manila.

“China has repeatedly stated its position that the United States is not a party to the South China Sea issue and has no right to intervene in maritime issues between the two coun-

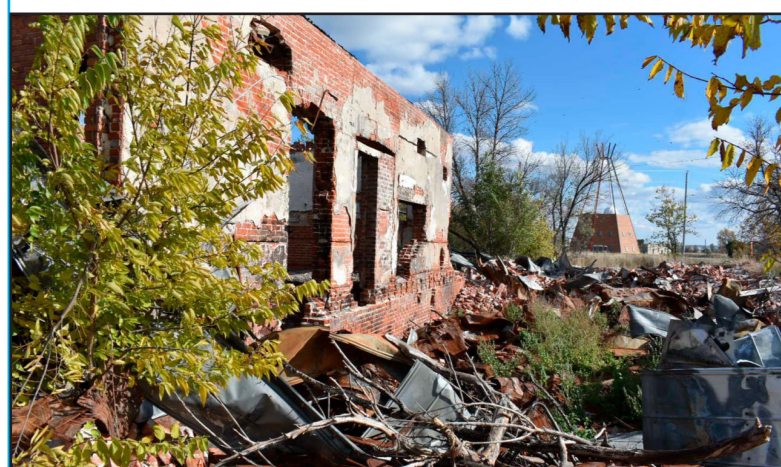
tries,” said Lin Jian, spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry.

China has also imposed sanctions on U.S. lawmaker Jim McGovern on the grounds of interference in the country’s affairs, freezing assets and barring him from conducting transactions in China, the Chinese foreign ministry said.

The ministry said McGovern has in recent years frequently “engaged in words and deeds that interfere in China’s internal affairs and undermine China’s sovereignty, security and development interests”.

The sanctions, effective July 31, also include restricting visas for him and family.

Report: Over 970 Native American Children Died at Federal Boarding Schools



The ruins of a building that was part of a Native American boarding school on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in Mission, South Dakota, are shown here Oct 15, 2022.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – At least 973 Native American children died at Indian Boarding Schools from 1819 to 1969, according to a federal report that calls on the U.S. government to apologize for the 150-year-long forced assimilation policy used to separate children from families and destroy tribal identity.

Many of the children who died were buried at 65 former schools across the country in at least 74 marked and unmarked burial sites, according

to a U.S. Department of the Interior study released.

It was the second and final report on the schools commissioned by US Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, the United States’ first Native American cabinet secretary.

Haaland, a member of New Mexico’s Pueblo of Laguna tribe, talks of the horrors her grandmother and other relatives suffered as they were forced onto trains to attend the schools. The report recommends ways the United States can amend

for the alleged physical and sexual abuse generations of children suffered as they were stripped of their names and prohibited from speaking their languages.

“Federal policies were set out to break us, obtain our territories, and destroy our cultures and our lifeways,” Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland, of the Bay Mills Indian Community (Ojibwe), wrote in a preface to the study.

The department was able to identify 18,624 Indian children who entered the Federal Indian Boarding School system between 1819 and 1969, though it acknowledged many more attended.

At least 59 religious groups received U.S. government funding to run the boarding schools, with 210 of the 417 schools operated by religious institutions, the study found.

The United States spent more than \$23.3 billion, in 2023 inflation-adjusted terms, between 1871 and 1969 to run the schools and associated assimilation policies, the report said.

It recommended a similar amount be invested in remedies for intergenerational trauma caused by the schools, which ranges from substance abuse to the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and relatives.

Venezuelan President Blames Opponent for Post-Election Violence



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro (center) gestures to supporters during a speech from the presidential palace in defense of his reelection, in Caracas, Venezuela, July 30, 2024.

CARACAS (Reuters) – Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has blamed the opposition’s presidential candidate, Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, for the post-election violence unleashed across the nation.

“I hold you responsible, Mr. Gonzalez Urrutia, for everything that is happening in Venezuela, for the criminal violence, for the criminals, for the injured, for the dead, for the destruction,” the president said in a message broadcast to the nation during a joint meeting of the Council of State and the Defense Council.

The president also announced the creation of a fund to aid victims of the violence.

Venezuelan authorities have arrested 749 people for participating in violent riots following Sunday’s presidential elections, Attorney General Tarek William Saab said.

Those arrested face charges of “incitement, obstructing public roads, hate crimes ... resisting arrest and, in the most serious cases, terrorism,” the attorney general said at a press conference.

According to Saab, as a result of the violence, 48 military and police officers have been injured, some by gunshots, and a military officer

in northern Aragua state was killed.

Authorities have verified that far-right groups have been using minors and people under the influence of drugs in riots in various cities in Venezuela.

Also on Tuesday, Venezuelan Foreign Affairs Minister Yvan Gil announced that the Venezuelan government has decided to sever diplomatic relations with Peru.

“The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has decided to sever diplomatic relations with the Republic of Peru, on the basis of Article 45 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961,” Gil said on social media platform X.

Gil’s announcement followed statements by his Peruvian counterpart, Javier Gonzalez-Olaechea, who said, “Peru will not accept the violation of the popular will of the Venezuelan people,” referring to the country’s presidential election.

“We are forced to make this decision after the reckless declarations of the Peruvian foreign minister that ignore the will of the Venezuelan people and our constitution,” the Venezuelan diplomat added.

Man Shot, Killed in Ambush Outside Philadelphia Mosque, Police Say

WASHINGTON (AP) – A man was ambushed, shot and killed while outside a North Philadelphia mosque Tuesday afternoon, police said.

Philadelphia Police Chief Inspector Scott Small said at a media briefing that surveillance footage shows the victim, a 43-year-old man, walking with another male to the Al-Aqsa Islamic Society when the shooter runs up behind them and starts firing shots at the victim, The Philadelphia Inquirer reported.

Small said the shooter kept firing at the victim even after he was on the ground. The shooter then fled the parking lot in a vehicle.

“Clearly an execution-type homicide,” Small said.

Small said responding officers found the unresponsive victim lying in the parking lot with gunshot wounds to his



Police were talking to witnesses and reviewing other surveillance footage.

head, chest and torso. He was pronounced dead at a hospital.

No suspect has been arrested and a motive wasn’t known.

The person with the victim was not hurt, Small said. The victim’s name hasn’t been released.

Seventeen spent shell casings were found in the parking lot from a large-caliber semiautomatic weapon, Small said.

Police were talking to witnesses and reviewing other surveillance footage.

News in Brief

ALGERIA (Reuters) – Algiers announced the immediate withdrawal of its ambassador to France in response to French President Emmanuel Macron’s official support of Moroccan sovereignty over the Sahara under the autonomy plan. Algerian diplomatic representation in France is now the responsibility of a chargé d’affaires, said the Algerian government. In a letter to King Mohammed VI on the occasion of Throne Day, Macron declared French support for Morocco’s autonomy plan as the sole solution to the Sahara dispute. Last week, France privately conveyed to Algeria its intent to recognize Moroccan sovereignty over the Sahara under the autonomy plan. The Algerian Foreign Ministry characterized France’s move as “unexpected” and expressed “great regret.”

LONDON (Reuters) – Former British TV presenter Huw Edwards, the long-time face of the BBC’s flagship news program, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to three counts of making indecent pictures of children. Edwards was the BBC’s highest paid journalist and top news anchor until he quit in April, following allegations he had paid a young person thousands of pounds for sexually explicit photos, something which is unconnected to the criminal charges. The 62-year-old was a household name in Britain for more than two decades, announcing the death of Queen Elizabeth to the nation in 2022 and leading coverage of elections, royal weddings and the 2012 Olympics.

ISLAMABAD (Reuters) – Pakistan’s former prime minister Imran Khan has offered to hold “conditional negotiations” with the powerful military as he serves a year into a jail term that he said he was given on trumped up charges designed to keep him out of power. Khan did not specify what he wanted to discuss with the military, but in a post on his official X account on Wednesday said that one of the conditions for negotiations was that “clean and transparent” elections be held and that “bogus” cases against his supporters be dropped. He said he had appointed Mahmood Khan Achakzai, a close political ally and a known critic of the military, to represent him in any talks. The military has previously ruled out talks with Khan. “We will hold conditional negotiations if the military leadership appoints its representative,” Khan said on X. “The country is under an undeclared martial law,” he added.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) – The recent heavy rains in northwestern North Korea flooded thousands of houses and a vast extent of farmland and left many residents homeless and living in makeshift tents, North Korea’s state media reported Wednesday. North Korea earlier said more than 5,000 people stranded in Sinuiju city and Uiju town were rescued by airlift and other evacuation work after Saturday’s rains caused a river on the Chinese border to swell. But it hadn’t mentioned any specific damage, or said if there were any casualties. North Korea is prone to flooding from heavy summer rains because of poor drainage, deforestation and dilapidated infrastructure. The official Korean Central News Agency said Wednesday that about 4,100 houses, 3,000 hectares (about 7,410 acres) of agricultural fields and numerous public buildings, roads and railways in Sinuiju and Uiju were flooded.

WAYANADN (AFP) – Relentless downpours and howling winds hampered Wednesday’s search for survivors of landslides that struck Indian tea plantations and killed at least 150 people, most believed to be laborers and their families. Days of torrential monsoon rains have battered the southern coastal state of Kerala, with blocked roads into the Wayanad district disaster area complicating relief efforts. With the only bridge connecting the worst-hit villages of Chooralmala and Mundakkai washed away, rescue teams were forced to cart bodies on stretchers out of the disaster zone using a makeshift zipline erected over raging flood waters.