

Ukrainian Drones Target Moscow as Foreign Leaders Arrive for Red Square Parade



Russian infantry fighting vehicles roll along the Garden Ring after the Victory Day military parade general rehearsal in Moscow on Wednesday.

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Attacks by Ukrainian long-range drones caused flight disruption at Moscow's main airports for a third consecutive day on Wednesday, the authorities said.

The attacks come as Russia was preparing to receive the Chinese president and other foreign leaders for the annual Victory Day military parade in Red Square.

Russian flag carrier Aeroflot cancelled more than 100 flights to and from Moscow, while more than 140 flights were delayed as planes were repeatedly grounded, flight data suggested, because of what officials described as the Ukrainian drone threat and amid heightened security measures around the Victory Day events.

Russian air defences repelled an attack by nine drones close to the country's capital, Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyenin said.

Although Ukrainian drones have targeted Moscow in the past, the sustained attacks appeared designed to disrupt preparations for the 80th anniversary celebrations in Moscow marking victory over Nazi Ger-

troops are due to march on Red Square - on Tuesday urged countries not to send their militaries to participate in the May 9 parade, saying such participation would go against some countries declared neutrality in the war.

Ukrainian officials said on Wednesday that Russia had launched its own air attack on Kyiv overnight, killing a mother and her son. Russia says it only targets military objects.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said that Russian air defense units had destroyed at least 14 Ukrainian drones headed for the Russian capital overnight.

Moscow's key airports remained out of operation for most of the night, and Russian airlines were forced to cancel many flights.

Xi has called for talks to end the war in Ukraine and has accused the U.S. of stoking the war with weapons supplies to Kyiv. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has in the past urged him to try to persuade Putin to end the war.

Xi is due to hold talks with the Russian leader on Thursday and to join other world leaders for the parade on Friday.

His visit comes as U.S. President Donald Trump is trying to push Moscow and Kyiv to find a way to end the war in Ukraine, with both sides blaming each other for a lack of progress.

Locked in a tariff war with the United States, Xi is expected to sign numerous agreements to deepen an already tight strategic partnership with Moscow, which has consistently seen China crowned Russia's biggest trading partner.

Despite recent efforts under Trump to reset U.S.-Russia ties, Putin is expected to present a united front with Xi against Washington, whose dominance and "exceptionalism" both countries have questioned, arguing for a more multipolar world.

But Ukraine's Foreign Ministry - in comments that seemed directed at China whose

many in the Second World War — Russia's biggest secular holiday of the year.

Security is expected to be tight at Friday's centerpiece parade. Foreign dignitaries, including Chinese president Xi Jinping and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, arrived on Wednesday evening.

The Kremlin said the attempted Ukrainian attacks on Moscow showed Kyiv's tendency to commit "acts of terrorism".

Xi is the most powerful world leader expected to attend a military parade on Moscow's Red Square on Friday to mark the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union and its allies over Nazi Germany.

His expected attendance hands President Vladimir Putin an important diplomatic boost at a time when the Russian leader is keen to show his country is not isolated on the world stage. The Kremlin has touted Xi's presence, along with that of 28 other world leaders, as a sign of Russia's growing global authority.

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New German Chancellor Warns U.S. to 'Stay Out' of Berlin's Affairs



Germany's new Chancellor Friedrich Merz

BERLIN (RT) - German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has told the U.S. government to "stay out" of his nation's domestic politics.

It comes after Trump administration officials slammed the designation of Germany's second-largest party, Alternative for Germany (AfD), as an "extremist" organization.

Following the move last week by Berlin's domestic intelligence agency, the BfV, U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance said the "Ger-

man establishment" had "rebuilt" the Berlin Wall. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in turn, declared that the EU's largest economy has become "a tyranny in disguise" and called upon the German authorities to change course.

Merz, who was elected chancellor only after failing his first confirmation vote in parliament, told the broadcaster ZDF on Tuesday that "absurd observations" were emanating from Washington regarding the treatment of

the right-wing party AfD by German authorities.

The chancellor stressed he "would like to encourage the American government... to largely stay out of" German domestic politics.

The 69-year-old politician noted that he "did not interfere in the American election campaign" last year, which ended with Trump winning a second term in the White House.

He also expressed his belief that U.S. politicians should not support AfD because they "can clearly distinguish between extremist parties and parties of the political center."

Merz said he is planning a phone call with Trump on Thursday, with their first face-to-face meeting set for the NATO summit in the Hague on June 24 and 25.

When asked about the possibility of AfD being outlawed in Germany altogether, the chancellor said the German government needed to show restraint on the issue. "Ten million AfD voters, you cannot ban them," Merz argued. He said the ruling CDU/CSU alliance should instead focus on addressing the causes pushing people to vote for the right-wing party.

Study: World's Richest 10% Responsible for Two Thirds of Global Warming

PARIS (AFP) - The world's wealthiest 10 percent of individuals are responsible for two thirds of global warming since 1990, researchers said Wednesday.

How the rich consume and invest has substantially increased the risk of deadly heatwaves and drought, they reported in the first study to quantify the impact of concentrated private wealth on extreme climate events.

"We link the carbon footprints of the wealthiest individuals directly to real-world climate impacts," lead author Sarah Schoengart, a scientist at ETH Zurich, told AFP.

"It's a shift from carbon accounting toward climate accountability."

Compared to the global average, for example, the richest one percent contributed 26 times more to once-a-century heatwaves, and 17 times more to droughts in the Amazon, according to the findings, published in Nature Climate Change.

Emissions from the wealthiest 10 percent in China and the United States -- which together account for nearly half of global carbon pollution -- each led to a two-to-threefold rise in heat extremes.

Burning fossil fuels and deforestation have heated Earth's average surface by 1.3 degrees Celsius, mostly during the last 30 years.

Schoengart and colleagues combined economic data and climate simulations to trace emissions from different global income groups and assess their impact on specific types of climate-enhance extreme weather.

The researchers also emphasized the role of emissions embedded in financial investment rather than just lifestyle and personal consumption.

"Climate action that doesn't address the outsized responsibilities of the wealthiest members of society risk missing one of the most powerful levers we have to reduce future harm," said senior author Carl-Friedrich Schleussner, head of the Integrated Climate Impacts Research Group at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis near Vienna.

Owners of capital, he noted, could be held accountable for climate impacts through progressive taxes on wealth and carbon-intensive investments.

Earlier research has shown that taxing asset-related emissions is more equitable than broad carbon taxes, which tend to burden those on

lower incomes.

Recent initiatives to increase taxes on the super-rich and multinationals have mostly stalled, especially since Donald Trump regained the White House.

Last year, Brazil -- as host of the G20 -- pushed for a two-percent tax on the net worth of individuals with more than \$1 billion in assets.

Although G20 leaders agreed to "engage co-operatively to ensure that ultra-high-net-worth individuals are effectively taxed," there has been no follow-up to date.

In 2021, nearly 140 countries agreed on work toward a global corporate tax for multinational companies, with nearly half endorsing a minimum rate of 15 percent, but those talks have stalled as well.

Almost a third of the world's billionaires are from the United States -- more than China, India and Germany combined, according to Forbes magazine.

According to anti-poverty NGO Oxfam, the richest 1 percent have accumulated \$42 trillion in new wealth over the past decade.

It says the richest one percent have more wealth than the lowest 95 percent combined.

Thousands March Over Concern Panama Bending to U.S. Gov't



Students and teachers in Panama protest the government's decision on security cooperation with the U.S. t in Panama City, Tuesday, May 6, 2025.

PANAMA CITY (AP) — Thousands of Panamanians have marched in the capital in the largest protest yet against an agreement signed during last month's visit by U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth giving U.S. troops access to strategic air and naval facilities in the Central American nation.

U.S. President Donald Trump thrust Panama into the spotlight even before winning election last November by suggesting that his country should consider retaking control of the Panama Canal and accusing Panama of ceding influence to China.

Panama has vehemently rejected those comments but also tried to pacify the new administration, which has slapped tariffs on many trade partners.

University students led Tuesday's protest accusing President José Raúl Mulino of sacrificing Panama's sovereignty with the deal.

"We feel like our president is acting against the wishes of many Panamanians and in very sensitive affairs," 30-year-old student Tony Ruiz said. "He signs an agreement behind our back that compromises our sovereignty, our neutrality with the world.

Bases where the U.S. will get access for military personnel and contractors will always remain under the control of Panama and it can terminate the agreement with six months notice, he said.

Martínez-Acha said the U.S. government acted in bad faith in how it handled the sensitive issue in the media, an apparent reference to Trump's inflammatory comments

on the canal, but nonetheless Panama was being "prudent" and trying to avoid sanctions that have befallen other countries.

"International cooperation is necessary to strengthen our capabilities," he said. "Collaborating with the United States in this case helps us improve security without affecting our sovereignty or our laws."

The details of the deal only became public days after Hegseth's visit.

In a separate agreement, Panama also agreed to look for a way for the U.S. government to be reimbursed for fees its naval ships pay to transit the Canal. The Trump administration has argued that it should not be obligated to defend the canal and pay to use it.

The U.S. built the canal in the early 1900s as it looked for ways to facilitate the transit of commercial and military vessels between its coasts. Control of the waterway transferred to Panama in 1999 under a treaty signed in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter.

The Trump administration has also pressured for the Hong Kong-based operator of ports at either end of the canal to sell those interests to a U.S. consortium that includes BlackRock Inc.

While Martínez-Acha suggested that politically motivated opponents are stirring controversy, the student protesters expressed concern about a U.S. return to a country it invaded as recently as 1989.

"We are a neutral country; we cannot take sides with any country," said Jam Allard, another student.

Cardinals Begin Choosing New Pope in Largest Ever Conclave



Cardinals Mario Aurelio Poli (front) and Vicente Bokalic Iglic leave after a congregation meeting.

VATICAN CITY (Reuters) - Catholic cardinals who will choose the next pope were locked behind the heavy wood doors of the Sistine Chapel on Wednesday, sequestered from the world to elect the man they hope can unite a diverse but divided global Church.

In a ritual dating back to medieval times, 133 cardinal electors walked slowly into the chapel before taking an oath of perpetual secrecy under the gaze of the stern Christ depicted in Michelangelo's Last Judgement fresco, which adorns the chapel.

Archbishop Diego Ravelli, the Vatican's master of ceremonies, then pronounced the Latin command "Extra omnes!" (Everyone out!), telling all those not involved in the conclave to leave.

The chapel's doors were slammed shut, allowing the cardinals to hold their first ballot to look for a successor to Pope Francis, who died last month.

No pope has been elected on the first day of a conclave for centuries and vot-

ing could continue for several days before one man receives the necessary two-thirds majority to become the 267th pontiff.

There was only one ballot on Wednesday. Thereafter, there can be as many as four votes a day.

During a formal procession into the Sistine Chapel, the cardinals beseeched nearly 100 men and women believed to reside in heaven to pray for them as they prepare to make the momentous decision.

The only expected signal from the cardinals during the conclave will come in the form of smoke from a chimney atop the chapel, as the clerics burn their ballots.

Black smoke will mark an inconclusive vote; white smoke and the peeling of bells will signal that the 1.4-billion-member Church has a new leader.

A record 133 cardinals from 70 countries entered the Sistine Chapel, up from 115 from 48 nations in the last conclave in 2013 - growth that reflects efforts by Francis during his 12-year reign to extend the reach of the Church.

News in Brief

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian President Vladimir Putin and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Wednesday signed a strategic partnership agreement in a ceremony shown on state TV. The two leaders discussed energy and oil during their talks in Moscow on Wednesday, Russia's Interfax news agency reported. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov had told reporters earlier that the strategic agreement would be a "weighty, substantial and very important framework document", without providing details.

SEOUL (AFP) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected munitions factories that make shells and machinery, state media KCNA said on Wednesday. Kim lauded the shell factory for increasing production to "four times the average-year level" and playing "an important role in increasing the basic combat power" of North Korea's armed forces, KCNA said.

KHARTOUM (Reuters) - A major Sudanese naval base was targeted by armed drones, the fourth such raid on the Red Sea coast in as many days, as authorities struggle to tame a blaze at a nearby port that's crucial to the flow of humanitarian aid. The Wednesday attacks — the latest salvo in a two-year war between Sudan's army and the Rapid Support Forces militia — targeted the Flamingo Bay naval base, according to two port officials at the scene of the attack. The extent of the damage was unclear. Ships docked at Port Sudan's southern terminal have been removed from their berths for safety, the officials said, while emergency workers battle to contain a fire that broke out when fuel-storage facilities were hit by drones on Tuesday. That forced the terminus to shut down, halting operations at Sudan's main conduit for trade and humanitarian assistance.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — U.S. President Donald Trump's administration may deport migrants to Libya for the first time this week, three U.S. officials said, as part of his immigration crackdown and despite Washington's past condemnation of Libya's harsh treatment of detainees. Two of the officials said the U.S. military could fly the migrants to the North African country as soon as Wednesday, but stressed that plans could change. The Pentagon referred queries to the White House. The White House and Department of Homeland Security did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

ROVANIEMI (AFP) - A Finnish F/A-18 Hornet fighter jet crashed Wednesday near the Rovaniemi airport in Finland's Arctic north, but the pilot was rescued after ejecting, the armed forces said. No details were available about the cause of the crash, which occurred "in the Rovaniemi airport area" around 11:00 am (0800 GMT), the military said. Dark smoke could be seen rising from the scene and several emergency vehicles were dispatched to the area, public service broadcaster YLE said. The road leading to the airport was closed to traffic, and police blocked access to the airport, it added.