

# Kremlin: Russia Has Developed Immunity to Sanctions



MOSCOW (Reuters) - The Kremlin said on Wednesday it continues to monitor statements by U.S. President Donald Trump regarding sanctions against Moscow, but that Russia had acquired immunity to such measures thanks to long experience.

Trump said on Tuesday that the United States would start imposing tariffs and other measures on Russia in 10 days if Moscow showed no progress towards ending its more than three-year-long war in Ukraine.

"We have been living under a huge number of sanctions for quite a long time, our economy operates under a huge number of restrictions,"

not let go of the issue of sanctions. It seems as if they are constantly stuck in a rut," Zakharova told a news briefing in Moscow.

"Apparently, there are no other options left - they have been exhausted. We are responding and taking measures to counteract all of this or even turn it to our own advantage."

On Wednesday, Ukrainian authorities a Russian missile hit a Ukrainian army training ground, killing three soldiers and wounding 18 others, in the latest attack to embarrass military officials as they struggle to make up a severe manpower shortage in the nearly 3½-year war.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that the strike killed or wounded about 200 Ukrainian troops. The ministry said that Ukraine's 169th training center near Honcharivske in the Chernihiv region was hit with two Iskander missiles, one armed with multiple submunitions and another with high explosives.

Meanwhile, Russia continued its stepped-up aerial campaign against Ukrainian civilian targets, launching 78 attack drones overnight, including up to eight newly developed jet-powered drones, Ukraine's air force said Wednesday. At least five people were wounded.

## 18 EU Countries Apply for Billions to Provide for Own Security Without U.S.



Spanish Air Force Eurofighter Typhoon military fighter jets participating in NATO's Baltic Air Policing Mission operate in Lithuanian airspace, Sept. 12, 2023.

BRUSSELS (AP) — Eighteen European Union countries have applied for billions of euros from a new defense fund aimed at helping Europe provide for its own security, the bloc's executive branch said Wednesday, with Poland seeking more than a third of the money.

The Security Action for Europe (SAFE) fund is a 150-billion-euro (\$173 billion) program of cheap loans that member countries, Ukraine and outsiders with

Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain had applied for money so far.

They have requested at least 127 billion euros (\$147 billion) in total, it said.

Polish Defense Minister Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz said on Tuesday that his government has identified defense projects worth around 45 billion euros (\$52 billion), but that the amount it receives will depend on how the commission allocates funds.

Countries using the fund are urged to buy much of their military equipment in Europe, working mostly with European suppliers — in some cases with EU help to cut prices and speed up orders.

Earlier this month, 15 EU countries were also permitted to use a "national escape clause" to allow them to spend more on defense without breaking the bloc's debt rules.

U.S. allies in Europe are convinced that President Vladimir Putin could target one of them if Russia wins its war on Ukraine. The SAFE fund and budget leniency are aimed at preparing Europe to defend itself from attack by the end of the decade, but even EU governments concede that this is an ambitious target.

## China Says to Hold Military Drills With Russia in August

BEIJING (AFP) - China said Wednesday it would conduct joint military drills with Russia in August, including sea and air exercises near Vladivostok and joint naval patrols in the Pacific.

Alongside economic and political ties, Moscow and Beijing have deepened military cooperation in recent years as both countries seek to counterbalance what they see as a United States-led global order.

The drills, named "Joint Sea-2025," were part of regular bilateral cooperation plans and "not directed against third parties," Chinese defense ministry spokesperson Zhang Xiaogang told a press conference Wednesday.

After the drills, they will also conduct naval patrols in "relevant waters of the Pacific," Zhang said.

Last year's "Joint Sea-2024" exercises were held along China's southern coast.

The "Joint Sea-2025" drills are due to take place ahead of a planned visit to China by Russian President Vladimir Putin beginning late August.

Putin will attend a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as well as celebrations, including a



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, Chinese and Russian warships take part in a joint naval drills in the East China Sea, Dec. 27, 2022.

military parade, to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

He will also hold talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Relations between the two countries have deepened since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

China has never denounced Russia's more than three-year military war nor called for it to withdraw its troops, and many of Ukraine's allies

believe that Beijing has provided support to Moscow.

China insists it is a neutral party, regularly calling for an end to the fighting while also accusing Western countries of prolonging the conflict by arming Ukraine.

Xi told Russia's foreign minister earlier in July that their countries should "strengthen mutual support" during a meeting in Beijing.

## U.S.-EU Trade Deal Sparks Criticism Across Europe



President Donald Trump and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen talk after reaching a trade deal at the Trump Turnberry golf course in Turnberry, Scotland, July 27, 2025.

PARIS (Dispatches) - French President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday criticized a framework deal struck between the European Union and the United States on Sunday, saying it showed the bloc had not managed to be "feared" by U.S. President Donald Trump.

"To be free, you need to be feared. We were not feared enough," he was quoted as telling ministers by French officials.

International Trade, warned that the deal could undermine the bloc's economic stability and job security, describing it as "unsatisfactory" and "significantly imbalanced."

"This is a deal with a slant. Clearly, concessions have been made that are difficult to bear," Lange said in a statement on Sunday. "Overall, this deal will contribute to weakening the EU's economic development and harming its gross domestic product."

Although the deal offers more visibility to French businesses, Macron said it was only a first step and would continue to be negotiated.

"Now more than ever, it is important to accelerate the European agenda of sovereignty and competitiveness," Macron said, according to the officials.

Finnish Minister of Finance Riiikka Purra voiced sharp criticism of the trade agreement, saying that while the EU may be negotiating from a weaker position, the reported agreement appeared terribly imbalanced.

Purra also raised questions about the promised purchase and investment valued at up to 1.3 trillion dollars, what she referred to as a "sweetener" accompanying the agreement.

Under the agreement, the EU will purchase \$750 billion's worth of energy products from the United States and increase its investment in the United States by \$600 billion.

She challenged the legitimacy of such a financial commitment from the EU, wondering under what mandate it had been negotiated.

The deal, which the White House said marked "a generational modernization of the transatlantic alliance," has sparked criticism from political leaders to experts across multiple European countries, with French Prime Minister Francois Bayrou calling Sunday "a dark day" for the EU as it has chosen to "submit."

Professor Julian Hinz of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy warned that the new transatlantic trade deal risks undermining the global rules-based trading system, calling the agreement "appeasement" that marks a serious departure from multilateral trade principles.

A document released by the White House shows that the vast majority of EU exports to the United States, including pharmaceuticals, automobiles and parts, and semiconductors, will face a 15-percent tariff rate, while European steel, aluminum, and copper products exported to the United States will continue to be subject to a 50-percent tariff.

While the EU may avert a trade war in the short term, it is paying a high price in the long term by abandoning the principles of the multilateral, rules-based world trade system of the World Trade Organization, which has been instrumental in guaranteeing Europe's prosperity to date," said Hinz.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said on Monday that the agreement would significantly harm the German economy, as tariffs pose a serious burden for Germany's export-oriented economy.

Clemens Fuest, president of the Munich-based ifo Institute, said the trade deal is a humiliation for the EU while reflecting an imbalance of power.

Bernd Lange, chair of the European Parliament's Committee on

"The Europeans need to wake up, focus more on economic strength and reduce their military and technological dependence on the U.S. Then they can renegotiate," he said.

## Poll: Trump Approval Rating Sinks to 40%, Lowest of His Term

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump's approval rating dropped one percentage point to 40%, the lowest level of his second term in office, as Americans remained concerned about his handling of the economy and immigration, a Reuters/Ipsos poll found.

in Reuters/Ipsos' most recent prior poll, conducted on July 15 and 16.

The three-day poll surveyed 1,023 U.S. adults nationwide and had a margin of error of 3 percentage points. It showed a nation deeply polarized over Trump, with 83% of Republicans and just 3% of Democrats approving of his performance. About one-third of independents approved.

Trump had a 41% approval rating

The Republican campaigned on promises to supercharge the U.S. economy and crack down on immigration, and the poll found that Americans gave him mixed marks on both those areas, where his administration is using aggressive tactics.

Some 38% of respondents approved of Trump's handling of the economy, up from 35% approval in the mid-July poll. His numbers were also up slightly on immigration, with 43% of respondents approving, compared with 41% in the earlier poll.

All the shifts were within the poll's margin of error.

## News in Brief

LONDON (Reuters) - The U.S. cancelled a meeting with Taiwan's defense minister in June, highlighting concern that President Donald Trump is wary of supporting the island in ways that could harm U.S. relations with China, the Financial Times reported on Wednesday.

Taiwan's Wellington Koo had planned to visit the Washington area for defense talks with Elbridge Colby, U.S. undersecretary of defense for policy, but the U.S. called off the meeting at the last minute, the FT reported, citing sources. The White House, Pentagon and Taiwan's embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

LONDON (AFP) - Australia's first Muslim MP and government minister has said his country should recognize a Palestinian state, following in the footsteps of the UK as part of a tide of "moral momentum." The appeal by Labor's Ed Husic, who was elected in 2010, came as Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is to hold further talks with his British counterpart Keir Starmer in the coming days. Starmer pledged this week to recognize a Palestinian state in September if Israel fails to reach a ceasefire with Hamas, among other conditions.

BANGKOK (AFP) - At least nine people died and two others were injured in a fireworks factory explosion in central Thailand on Wednesday, police told AFP, as officers continued to search for casualties. The factory ignited around 11:00 am (0400 GMT) in Mueang district of Suphan Buri province, north of Bangkok, where images shared by a rescue group showed a charred building reduced to rubble. Thai police said nine people were confirmed dead — up from an earlier toll of four — and two others were being treated at a nearby hospital. Last year, an explosion at another firework factory in the same province killed at least 23 people.

SHANGHAI (Reuters) - Shanghai has evacuated almost 283,000 people as Typhoon Co-May approaches the city, bringing lashing rains and high winds, state media reported Wednesday. "From last night to 10:00 am today, 282,800 people have been evacuated and relocated, basically achieving the goal of evacuating all those who needed to be evacuated," state broadcaster CCTV reported.

TUNIS (Reuters) - A strike halted transport services across Tunisia on Wednesday, as workers demanded higher wages, improved working conditions and urgent reforms, adding to pressure on President Kais Saied to deal with a deepening economic crisis. Tunisians have for years endured poor public services, especially in the health, transportation, and education sectors, due to weak funding and public investment, along with frequent interruptions in drinking water and electricity supply. Saied, who has tightened his grip on power since 2021, blames what he calls conspirators seeking to undermine the state and fuel social tensions.