

U.S. Reinterprets Pact to Ease Military Drone Exports



An MQ-9 Reaper drone is on display before President Donald Trump speaks at Al Udeid Air Base, May 15, 2025, in Doha, Qatar.

TEHRAN (Reuters) - The United States can export “Reaper”-style and other advanced military drones more easily following a re-interpretation of its export control policies approved by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the State Department announced.

Drones will now be treated like fighter jets, such as the F-16, rather than missile systems, allowing the U.S. to sidestep the 35-nation Missile Technology Control Regime

agreement it signed in 1987 and enabling drone sales to countries like the UAE and Eastern European nations that have struggled to acquire America’s unmanned aerial vehicles.

More immediately, the change unlocks the sale of more than 100 MQ-9 drones to Saudi Arabia, which the kingdom requested in the spring of this year and could be part of a \$142 billion arms deal announced in May. U.S. allies in the Pacific and Europe have also expressed interest.

The new policy lets large drone manufacturers General Atomics, Kratos, and Anduril have their products treated as “foreign military sales” by the State Department, allowing them to be easily sold internationally.

The MTCR agreement was signed to curb long-range missile sales, and military drones that proliferated years later were considered to be covered by the agreement because they can fly far and carry weapons.

Trump Claims Second Deadly Attack on Venezuelan Vessel

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump said that the U.S. military carried out a strike on an alleged Venezuelan drug cartel vessel heading to the United States, the second such strike against a suspected drug boat in recent weeks.

“This morning, on my Orders, U.S. Military Forces conducted a SECOND Kinetic Strike against positively identified, extraordinarily violent drug trafficking cartels and narcoterrorists in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility,” Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Trump provided no evidence for his assertion that the boat was carrying drugs.

“These extremely violent drug

trafficking cartels POSE A THREAT to U.S. National Security, Foreign Policy, and vital U.S. Interests,” Trump said. U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) is the military’s combatant command which encompasses 31 countries through South and Central America and the Caribbean.

The post also included a nearly 30-second video, with markings of “Unclassified” on the top, which appeared to show a vessel in a body of water exploding and then on fire.

Hours before Trump’s post, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said that recent incidents between his country and the United States were an “aggression”, by the U.S. and that communications between the two gov-

ernments had largely ended.

“Today I can announce that communications with the U.S. government have been severed by them,” Maduro told a press conference in Caracas, Venezuela’s capital, Xinhua reported.

The president blamed the breakdown on “threats and blackmail” from Washington.

Maduro stressed that Venezuela has “managed to preserve peace” despite provocations from the United States.

For the past five weeks, he said, Venezuela has faced challenges while working to maintain stability. He added that Venezuela is exercising its legitimate right to defend itself against political, diplomatic and potential military aggression.

Ukraine Claims Overnight Strike on Russia’s Oil Refinery

KYIV (Dispatches) - Ukraine carried out an overnight strike on the Saratov oil refinery in southwestern Russia, the general staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces said in a statement on Tuesday.

Explosions and a fire were recorded in the area of the facility, and the extent of the damage is currently being assessed, the statement said.

The Saratov refinery, which processed 4.8 million tons of oil in 2023, produces over 20 types of petroleum products, including gasoline and diesel fuel.

Ukrainian authorities previously reported strikes on the oil refinery in February and August.

Russian forces also bombarded the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia with rockets overnight, wounding 20 people, including four children, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday as he urged European leaders



In this photo, rescue workers put out a fire of a building destroyed by a Russian strike in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine.

to make the continent safe by building an ambitious air defense umbrella.

There has been no let-up in Russian strikes on civilian areas of Ukraine and its army’s push on the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line.

A settlement to end the war appears to be no closer despite months of U.S.-led peace efforts. U.S. President

Donald Trump’s ultimatums and deadlines for Putin to engage with proposals to stop the fighting have passed without obvious consequences.

Just over the past two weeks, Zelenskyy said on Telegram, Russia has launched more than 3,500 drones, more than 2,500 powerful glide bombs and almost 200 missiles at targets inside Ukraine.

Tensions Flare as Chinese, Philippine Ships Collide



A Chinese Coast Guard vessel (L) blocks a chartered supply boat on a mission to deliver provisions to a grounded Philippine Navy vessel at Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea.

BEIJING (AP) — China’s coast guard accused a Philippine ship of deliberately ramming one of its vessels on Tuesday near Scarborough Shoal, a disputed territory that both countries claim in the South China Sea. The Philippines denied it, saying China’s forces used powerful water cannons that damaged its ship and injured a crew member.

A Chinese coast guard statement said more than 10 Philippine government ships coming from various directions entered the waters around the shoal, which is called Huangyan island in Chinese. It said it deployed water cannons against the vessels.

The encounter came six days after China announced it was designating part of Scarborough Shoal as a national nature reserve. The Philippine government, which calls the shoal Bajo de Masinloc, filed a diplomatic protest.

China and the Philippines have

clashed repeatedly around outcroppings in the South China Sea, which China claims almost in its entirety. The two countries are among several that have competing claims to territory in the waters, which are of strategic importance and home to valuable fishing grounds.

The Philippine coast guard said two Chinese coast guard ships hit a Filipino fisheries vessel, the BRP Datu Gumbay Piang, with powerful water cannons for nearly 30 minutes “resulting in significant damage,” including in the captain’s cabin and the bridge. A glass window was shattered and injured a personnel while the deluge of water caused a short circuit that affected electrical outlets and five outdoor air-conditioning units, it said.

The Philippine coast guard and fisheries ships were deployed to the shoal on Tuesday to provide fuel, water, ice and other aid to more than 35 fishing boats in the area.

UN: Conflicts, Disasters, Funding Cuts Causing Acute Hunger



A United Nations refugee transit centre at Renk, on the border between Sudan and South Sudan.

BANGKOK (AP) — A string of natural disasters and global conflicts, combined with drastic cuts to international aid means that some of the world’s neediest people are suffering from serious food shortages, and will face further reductions in assistance soon, a United Nations official said Tuesday.

Carl Skau, deputy executive director and chief operating officer of the World Food Program, said that with needs rising and funding dropping, the agency is pushing every efficiency it can find, promoting greater self-reliance in the communities it helps, and looking for new sources of donations to help fill the growing gap.

“We are managing globally a perfect storm... with food security needs going up dramatically,” Skau media during a visit to Bangkok, where he was to meet with Thai officials to press for assistance, following a trip to India.

“We’ve seen a three-fold increase only in the past five years, and this year has been really tough also with conflict increasing, extreme climate events and on top of that we now have a funding crunch where the WFP is losing some 40% of our funding.”

In the region, he said recent flooding in Pakistan and a massive earthquake and drought in neighboring Afghanistan have exacerbated already difficult situations in both countries, leaving millions in need.

“In Afghanistan two years ago we were assisting 10 million people, to-

day we are at around 1.5 (million) and we don’t have the resources to preposition food in areas that won’t be accessible during the winter,” Skau said.

Already in Afghanistan, there has been a surge in malnutrition recorded, particularly among young children, over the last few months, he said.

“We know that through this winter, children will die and it’s not only about children dying. I mean when children are severely, acutely malnourished, there are damages to their brains and to their organs that will remain with them for their life,” Skau said.

Meantime, conflicts in Myanmar, Sudan and Gaza have made it extremely difficult to reach people in need, and the latter two are already facing famine conditions. A 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Myanmar in March has led to even greater needs there, and new challenges in reaching people with humanitarian assistance.

The civil war in Myanmar has also meant that even more Rohingya refugees have fled to Cox’s Bazar in neighboring Bangladesh, and there are no immediate prospects for them to safely return home, Skau said.

The WFP currently provides refugees there with a \$12 monthly voucher for food that has been enough for them to survive, but with funding running out for that by the end of November, it may have to either reduce the amount or the number of people it supports.

News in Brief

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Union (EU) does not expect to reach an agreement on its new UN-mandated climate target in time for a key deadline this month, and has instead drafted plans to submit a temporary goal, which could change later, an EU negotiating document seen by Reuters showed.

EU countries are struggling to reach a deal on their new climate target for 2040, which has derailed plans for the bloc to submit a 2035 target to the United Nations (UN) by a deadline this month for all countries to do so. The EU had planned to derive its 2035 climate target from the 2040 goal.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - More than half of U.S. healthcare workers are actively looking to leave their current jobs, according to a new survey, underscoring mounting pressure on an already strained system. The Harris Poll, commissioned by education services company Strategic Education, surveyed 1,504 frontline healthcare employees and 304 employers between June 26 and July 21 this year and found widespread burnout, dissatisfaction and a high attrition risk. The findings are illuminating as hospitals grapple with pervasive labor shortages and mounting costs since the pandemic. The study found 55% of workers intended to search for, interview for, or switch jobs in 2026, while 84% said they felt underappreciated at their current employer. Only one in five believed their employer was invested in their long-term career growth.

NUUK, Greenland (AP) — Denmark is leading a military exercise with hundreds of troops from several European NATO members in Greenland, a maneuver that coincides with months of tensions over the Trump administration’s desire for U.S. jurisdiction over the vast Arctic territory. The Arctic Light 2025 exercise, which follows maneuvers with identical or similar titles in previous years, involves more than 550 service members from Denmark and NATO allies France, Germany, Sweden and Norway, according to the Danish military.

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Donald Trump signed an order Monday sending the National Guard into Memphis to combat crime, offering another major test of the limits of presidential power by using military force in American cities. With Republican Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee visiting the Oval Office, Trump said troops would be deployed and join a special task force in the city comprised of officials from various federal agencies, including the FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the US Marshal’s service.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Roughly two out of three Americans believe that the harsh rhetoric used in talking about politics is encouraging violence, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted in the days following the killing of conservative political activist Charlie Kirk. The three-day poll, which closed on Sunday, revealed a nation unnerved by partisan divisions and worried over a spike in political violence that has also included the June slayings of a Democratic Minnesota lawmaker and her husband.

Some 63% of respondents to the Reuters/Ipsos poll said the way Americans talk about political issues did “a lot” to encourage violence. Some 31% said the country’s approach to political discourse was giving “a little” boost to violence and the rest saw no impact or didn’t answer the question.