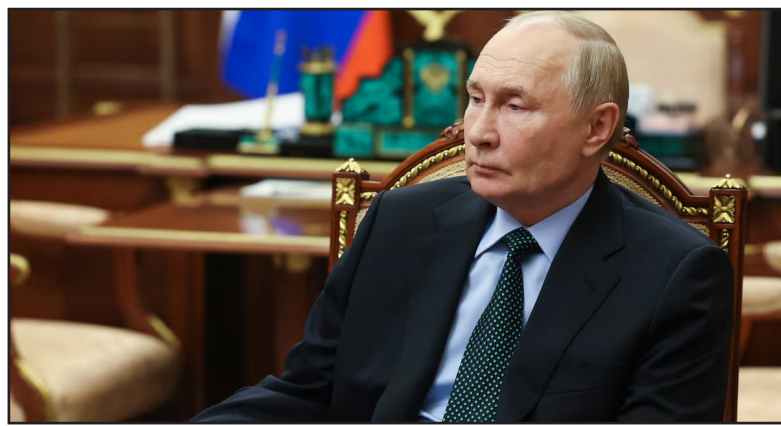


# Putin Issues Warning to Kiev, Its 'Instigators'



Russian President Vladimir Putin listens to Moscow-imposed Zaporizhzhia governor Yevgeny Balitsky.

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow will do "everything necessary" to protect Russian civilians and infrastructure, warning Kyiv that its terrorist attacks will only result in a deeper security zone along the border - and cautioning Ukraine's sponsors about possible "big decisions" in the future.

The commander-in-chief visited an auxiliary command post alongside top military commanders and Defense Ministry officials on Friday, where he was briefed on the advance of the Russian army in Donbass, including the liberation of Konstantinovka, which had been one of Kyiv's key strongholds.

Putin expressed confidence that Russia would win no matter what, after one of the commanders told him that "victory will be ours." He noted that the commanders of the Russian armed forces "must act rhythmically

and rationally, doing everything necessary to preserve the lives of our soldiers and ensure the unconditional fulfillment of combat tasks."

"The boastful statements of the leaders of the Kyiv regime about successes are essentially in our favor," Putin added, noting that "their actions and statements undoubtedly disorganize both themselves and their sponsors."

However, to prop up their "fictitious successes on the battlefield" and "bolster their legends and lies," the Kyiv may take certain actions of a "diversionary-terrorist nature," he warned.

Putin also accused Kyiv and the "so-called European pseudo-peacekeepers" of confirming Moscow's assumptions about their true intentions, arguing that their goal is "not peace, but the continuation of the war with Russia to the last Ukrainian."

The president wondered whether

Kyiv's European backers were now openly encouraging strikes on Russian civilians, after praising its "innovative" use of drone technologies in a joint Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) declaration in early June.

"Does this mean they also have in mind strikes on our civilian sites, civilian infrastructure, transport carrying civilians and children, and student dormitories?" Putin said.

Putin said Russia would respond accordingly and ordered the military to continue massed and group strikes on Ukraine's military-industrial infrastructure and facilities supporting its operation.

"The more strikes the opponent attempts to deliver against our civilian sites... the larger the safety zone we will have to create in the adjacent territory. Moreover, this territory, like the others we are discussing today, is also historically Russian land," Putin warned.

The Russian president also issued a veiled warning to Kyiv's NATO backers and "instigators of war," ordering the military to analyze their direct involvement in combat actions on the ground.

"This analysis is necessary for us to make possible big decisions in the future," Putin stated.

On Saturday, a Ukrainian drone attack struck an oil terminal in St. Petersburg, Russian officials said, as Kyiv presses on with bombardment of Russia's oil infrastructure.

Almost daily long-range attacks on Russian oil facilities have created a fuel crisis and heaped political pressure on the Kremlin as the war stretches into its fifth year.

# China Coast Guard Continues Law Enforcement Patrols East of Taiwan Island



An aerial drone photo, taken on May 12, 2024, shows vessels of the China Coast Guard conducting a patrol in the South China Sea.

BEIJING (Xinhua) - The China Coast Guard (CCG) is continuing routine law enforcement patrols in the waters east of China's Taiwan Island, a spokesperson said Saturday.

Jiang Lue, a spokesperson for the CCG, said the CCG's Xiushan ship formation took over from the Daishan ship formation on Saturday to continue the law enforcement patrols, in accordance with the law in the waters east of China's Taiwan Island.

Since June, the formation led by the Daishan vessel has carried out patrol and inspection operations,

as well as fishery protection and rescue missions in the relevant waters, ensuring normal navigation and fishing activities and safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests, as well as the lives and property, of Chinese fishermen, including Taiwan compatriots, said Jiang.

The CCG will continue to strengthen law enforcement patrols in waters under China's jurisdiction and resolutely safeguard national territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, the spokesperson said.

# Thousands Forced to Evacuate in Colorado as Wildfire Spreads



A plane drops a load of water on the Aspen Acres Fire near Colorado City, Colo.

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A fast-moving wildfire burning southwest of Denver has forced thousands of people to flee, as strong winds continue to drive flames across southern Colorado.

The blaze is one of about 40 large fires currently burning across the western United States.

Dubbed the Aspen Acres Fire, the conflagration exploded in size, growing by 44 square kilometers (17 square miles) overnight to reach a total of 272sq kilometers (105sq miles).

More than 160 structures have been destroyed in the fire. Experts say that months of dry weather and record-low snowfall in parts of the region - exacerbated by climate change - have created dangerous wildfire conditions.

Authorities have ordered the evacuation of about 2,200 people in Colorado City, along with residents of the nearby communities of Beulah, Rye and San Isabel.

Smoke from the fire has also disrupted travel, with Colorado emergency officials warning that visibility in parts along Interstate 25 has dropped to as little as a half a mile - or 0.8 kilometers.

As the fire continues to spread, about 50 Colorado National Guard soldiers were deployed to staff road checkpoints in Pueblo and Custer counties and help keep boats away from the Pueblo Reservoir, where crews were scooping water to battle the blaze.

Investigators have said the Aspen Acres Fire was caused by humans, but they have not yet released any

other details. The Aspen Acres Fire is only one of the blazes currently ravaging Colorado and its neighboring states.

Firefighters, for instance, have contained only about 65 percent of the Snyder Fire on the western side of the Rocky Mountains, along the border between Colorado and Utah.

In Utah itself, another blaze - the Cottonwood Fire - had grown to more than 380sq kilometers (147sq miles) by Friday, while the Babylon Fire had reached 344sq kilometers (133sq miles).

The latest fires come less than a week after three firefighters were killed, and two others were injured after they were overtaken by flames while battling two fires, part of the Snyder complex.

Wildfire smoke advisories are in effect for parts of Colorado, and concerns about wildfires are also beginning to reshape local Fourth of July celebrations.

Colorado's Division of Fire Prevention and Control said several professional firework displays have already been cancelled because of the extreme fire risk, with many counties now under fire restrictions.

The National Weather Service kept Red Flag Warnings in place across much of the state on Friday, saying that hot, dry conditions, low humidity and gusty winds would continue to create critical fire conditions.

While forecasters said moister weather over the weekend should help lessen the risks, they also warned that heavier rain could increase the possibility of flash flooding in recently burned areas.

# ICE Arrests 10,000 in Five Days, a Sharp Surge in Trump's Deportation Push

WASHINGTON (AP) - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested 10,000 people over a five-day period at the end of June, marking a major push by the agency tasked with carrying out the Trump administration's mass deportations agenda.

The arrest numbers, obtained from a person familiar with the information who spoke anonymously to discuss data that has not been publicly released, come after the agency shifted its approach from high-profile arrest sweeps in major American cities to quieter ways to reach President Donald Trump's deportation goals.

The figures indicate that while the administration is no longer cracking down on individual cities, the arrests continue and are surging.

The total number of arrests during the five-day period starting Friday and ending Tuesday translates into roughly 2,000 arrests per day. It was not clear where the arrests had

taken place. The spike in arrests was first reported by The New York Times.

"The arrests news also comes as the number of people entered into ICE detention facilities climbed in June to roughly 39,000 after hovering around 30,000 per month since February, according to information obtained by The Associated Press.

ICE doesn't publicly release arrest data, making exact comparisons with previous periods difficult. But according to data provided to UC Berkeley's Deportation Data Project and analyzed by The Associated Press, 2,000 arrests per day would mark a sharp increase over previous periods.

December had the most ICE arrests since the beginning of the Trump administration, and that month only averaged 1,283 arrests per day nationwide.

In January, at a time when the administra-

tion flooded the streets of Minneapolis and surrounding regions with hundreds of immigration enforcement officers, arrests averaged about 1,212 per day across the country.

But Minneapolis proved to be a turning point in the Trump administration's mass deportations agenda after two American citizens were killed by immigration officers while protesting the crackdown in Minneapolis.

Border Czar Tom Homan started drawing down the number of officers in Minnesota as the agency stepped back from the flashy surge operations that had been common during the tenure of then-Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

Operations under Noem headed by former Border Patrol Chief Gregory Bovino were marked by frequent clashes between immigration enforcement officers and protesters, in footage that was often splashed across the Department's social media channels.

# German Riot Police Clash With Protesters Hoping to Block Far-Right AfD Conference



Policemen touch demonstrators sitting on a street near the Gothaer Square in Erfurt to block a way to the Messe Erfurt fairground in Erfurt, eastern Germany on July 4, 2026.

ERFURT, Germany (Reuters) - Thousands protested against Germany's far-right AfD and blocked roads to its annual conference in the eastern city of Erfurt on Saturday, where the party re-elected the two leaders who have overseen its rise as a national force.

Protesters from unions, civil society groups and left-wing parties gathered as large numbers of police, including reinforcements from across Germany, were deployed ahead of the AfD's

two-day conference. AfD stands for Alternative for Germany.

Watched by police, protesters sat in rows to block highways and roads leading to the convention Centre where the meeting is being held. Police estimated around 15,000 people joined demonstrations in and around the eastern city.

The AfD launched the event by re-electing party chiefs Alice Weidel and Tino Chrupalla, under whose leadership the AfD has surged to the

top of national opinion polls ahead of Chancellor Friedrich Merz's conservatives.

The opening speeches mocked and lambasted the protesters as anti-democratic. They revelled in the AfD's rise that could see the party taking power in regional elections this year for the first time, while painting their mainstream rivals as tired, out of touch and leading Germany into decline.

"For this remains our last chance to save our country," Weidel said. "More and more people in this country want to support us in the fight against Germany's decline, in the fight for our fatherland and for our identity."

Underscoring the party's hard line on immigration, a song called "Send them back" played on the AfD's social media stream minutes before the convention opened. Inside the convention Centre, vintage-style cards were on sale with slogans such as "YOU will be deported."

Bjoern Hoecke, seen as one of the party's most radical and controversial leaders, offered a mix of nostalgia and invective, even pointing to the state of Germany's motorway toilets as an example of national malaise.



LONDON (Reuters) - Britain's outgoing prime minister Keir Starmer warned his probable successor Andy Burnham in an interview released Saturday that he cannot ignore international turmoil and just concentrate on the country's domestic problems. In his first interview since announcing his resignation on June 22, Starmer said his successor as leader of the ruling Labour party could not spend less time on turbulent international affairs. So far, former Manchester mayor Burnham is the only candidate to take over the center-left party. He could be in office by mid-July.

BAMAKO (Reuters) - Insurgents in Mali staged attacks in five locations early on Saturday, including a northern town where government and Russian fighters are based and a town south of the capital Bamako, the latest threat to the landlocked Sahel nation's embattled leaders. The assault targeted army positions in cities and towns including Anefis, Aguelhoc and Gao in northern Mali, Sevare in central Mali and Kenioroba in the south, the Malian armed forces said in a statement. Soldiers repelled the attacks and the situation was "totally under control", the statement said, adding that 20 "terrorists" had been killed in Sevare and six in Gao. One pro-government fighter was killed in Gao and four others were injured, it said. A spokesperson for a Tuareg-led rebel group, the Azawad Liberation Front (FLA), said it was involved in Saturday's attacks.

BERLIN (Reuters) - Germany plans to lift 2027 borrowing to more than €203 billion (\$232 billion), according to the budget draft seen by Reuters, a sharper rise than previously signaled, as Berlin ramps up investment and defense to shield its sluggish economy from war-related energy shocks and years of underinvestment. Borrowing is up from the €196.5 billion signaled in April and far above the €50.5 billion in 2024 under the previous government, before Germany threw off decades of fiscal conservatism last year to revive its moribund economy. The budget draft assumes the Middle East conflict will ease during the summer but warns if the Strait of Hormuz or oil production capacities remain disrupted longer, there would be "far-reaching consequences" for the German economy.

BRUSSELS (POLITICO) - reported Belgium's federal government is facing mounting criticism after health authorities linked last week's record-breaking heat wave to over 1,200 excess deaths, prompting opposition parties to accuse ministers of failing to protect the country's most vulnerable citizens. Socialist Party leader Paul Magnette led the criticism Thursday evening after the health ministry confirmed 1,222 excess deaths between June 18 and June 29.

LISBON (Reuters) - Portugal has asked the EU, Spain and Morocco to have extra firefighting aircraft ready in case wildfires worsen during the current heatwave, Prime Minister Luis Montenegro said. He said the unusual move was prompted not by a shortage of national resources, but by what he described as an "exceptional situation" in the coming days, with the "entire country facing a very high risk of wildfires." "We believe it is better to receive support from our EU allies and closest neighbors than to divert resources from other parts of the country where they are currently deployed," he told a news conference, explaining why Lisbon had activated EU Civil Protection Mechanism and bilateral agreements with Spain and Morocco.