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Source: Estado Mayor Defensa via X (former Twitter)

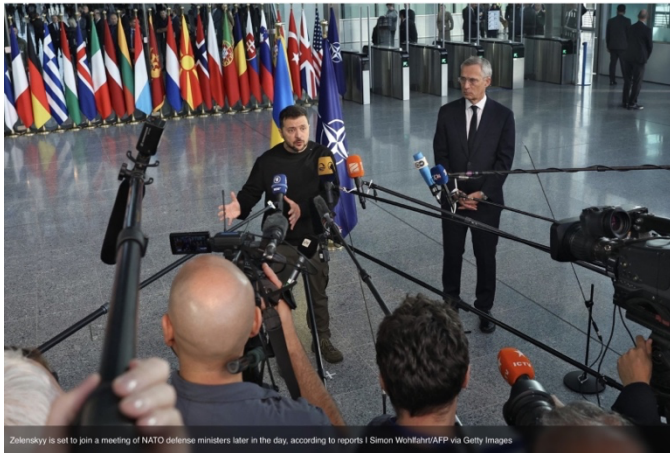
LIVEX: EU's first live Exercise in Spain

By Sarah Cernikova

On Monday, the 16th of October the first independent EU military exercise started, as a part of the 2023 edition of the EU Crisis Management Military Exercise, MILEX 23, under the wider initiative, The Strategic Compass. In this exercise, 2,800 military personnel from nine European countries including Spain, France, and Portugal participated in the exercise. The main goal is to further enhance the EU's military readiness to respond to external conflicts and crises. Developing the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity is a key component of the exercise.

To emphasize the importance of this EU's first live military exercise Joseph Borell will personally visit the exercise with the European Union Military Committee. This will mark the first time the Committee meets outside Brussels on the 19th of October, to emphasize the importance of developing EU Rapid Deployment Capacity.

This major military exercise led by the European Union is focused on air-sea-amphibious capacities and capabilities in operational equipment and technical aspects. It is planned to take place annually and be financed through the European Peace Facility budget. However, not all EU member states have a unified stance. Discussions regarding the technical design of next year's exercise are scheduled for the end of 2023.



Zelensky's surprise visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels

By Sarah Cernikova

On Wednesday, October 11th president of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky surprisingly visited NATO headquarters in Brussels and held a meeting with Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and joined a meeting of NATO defense ministers. The visit came just days later after Hamas attacked Israel and the attention of the West turned in another direction. This new reality raised concerns in Ukraine about the possible diverting of resources from Ukraine.

President Zelensky came to Brussels to gain more support from NATO partners, which will help Ukraine to survive the upcoming winter. President Zelensky's primary objective for the visit was to secure long-range missiles or advanced weaponry. However, not all NATO members, including Germany, share this goal. Particularly due to concerns about the potential impact on Russian territory.

At the beginning of the two-day summit, Austin announced another \$200 million assistance package for Ukraine, which includes air defense and rocket ammunition. This was followed by additional military aid announcements from Germany, Denmark, and Belgium, including fighter aircraft F-16.

USA Highlights

By Ondrej Pragr

Israeli Occupation in Gaza - Biden's Perspective

President Joe Biden's recent declaration that the Israeli occupation of Gaza was a grave mistake has ignited a global conversation. During a recent interview, Biden openly expressed his view, marking a notable departure from the traditional U.S. stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. His statement signals a potential shift in U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East. It has sparked diverse reactions, with Israeli and Palestinian authorities, along with the international community, sharing their opinions. Many view this declaration as an effort to promote peace and fairness in the region, while others have criticized it as undermining long-standing alliances.

Republicans in the House Show Support for Ukraine

In a surprising display of bipartisan unity, some Republican members of the House have joined forces with their Democratic counterparts to pass a resolution offering increased military aid to Ukraine. This remarkable collaboration serves as a stark contrast to the ongoing partisan disputes in Congress. The resolution is a testament to the shared commitment of U.S. lawmakers to bolster Ukraine's defense capabilities amid ongoing tensions with Russia. This move reflects a broader consensus that maintaining the sovereignty and security of Ukraine is a priority, transcending political divides, and it sends a strong message to the international community regarding America's commitment to upholding global stability.

China affairs

By Ondrej Pragr

China and Russia's Evolving Roles in Gaza Conflict

The ongoing conflict in Gaza has triggered heightened geopolitical tensions as China and Russia have recently strengthened their positions. Both nations have voiced concerns about the situation, with China calling for an immediate ceasefire and a peaceful resolution, while Russia has expressed support for a diplomatic solution. This development is notable for several reasons: it underscores the growing influence of China and Russia in the Middle East, challenges the United States' historical role in the region, and highlights the complex international dynamics surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The actions of China and Russia are likely to have far-reaching implications, further complicating the path to a peaceful resolution in Gaza.



📷 The Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, met his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, in Beijing on Monday. Photograph: Russian foreign ministry/AFP/Getty Images

China Addresses Plummeting Birthrate with Nationwide Survey

China is launching a nationwide survey to assess population changes in response to a dramatic decline in the country's birthrate. The survey comes as China grapples with a rapidly aging population and concerns over its future demographic makeup. The government's decision to conduct this survey is part of its efforts to address the demographic challenges and plan for the future. It is an acknowledgment of the need to adapt to changing demographics and ensure long-term social and economic stability. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to encourage childbirth and family growth, but it also reflects a broader global trend of countries grappling with the consequences of declining birthrates and aging populations.



This photograph, posted by Zelensky on X, depicts a playground in Avdiivka, illustrating the aftermath of Russian air attacks.
Photograph: Oleg Palchyk /BBC News

Battle for Avdiivka and Ongoing International Support to Ukraine

By Karolina Baldrianova

Russia is currently spearheading one of the most significant offensive operations in months. The attacks occur when the Ukrainian counteroffensive progresses slowly, and the world's attention is now fixated on Israel's operations in Gaza. The Russian operation involves convoys of tanks, armoured vehicles, and thousands of soldiers, strategically focusing on the eastern Ukrainian city of Avdiivka in the Donbas region. Avdiivka has endured relentless artillery fire and airstrikes, leading many to fear it may face a fate similar to that of Bakhmut. Despite the ongoing battles, the Ukrainian military now reports that this attack seems to be losing momentum, with Ukrainian defences successfully minimizing the damage and inflicting significant losses on the Russian forces.

On the international stage, support for Ukraine remains strong. Germany recently unveiled a substantial military aid package for Ukraine, which includes Patriot and IRIS-T air defence systems, Gepard anti-aircraft tanks, and Leopard battle tanks, with a total value of 1 billion euros. Additionally, Belgium is set to become the first country to allocate frozen Russian assets to Ukraine, establishing a fund worth around 1.7 billion euros supporting Ukraine's security and reconstruction efforts. Belgium plans to generate the money using tax revenue from the profits of seized Russian central bank assets.

Russia's plan to build a nuclear plant in Burkina Faso

By Petra Nemcova

The junta government in Burkina Faso signed a deal last Friday with Russia regarding a new nuclear plant, which is planned to be built by 2030. This should provide the country with more energy and give the people further access to electricity. Burkina Faso aims at enhancing ties with Russia following the coup from last year. This agreement was signed during Russian Energy Week in Moscow between the energy minister of Burkina Faso, Simon-Pierre Boussim and Nikolay Spassky, the deputy director general of Rosatom. This meeting and the signature are a follow-up to last year's demand of Burkina Faso's president during the Russia-Africa summit.

Meeting between OIC and G5 Sahel states

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held a virtual meeting last Thursday, October 12th, regarding the Project of Promoting the concept of Family Bank in the G5 Sahel Member States. During this speech, important institutions such as the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture or the Chambers of Commerce in individual Sahel countries have been highlighted. Calls for further efforts to implement such a project have been made. This concept is new since a similar meeting was held on August 15th, 2022 and evaluation regarding progress has been made.

Gas Prices Surge Amidst Infrastructure Attack

By Karolina Baldrianova

The Balticconnector gas pipeline, a vital infrastructural link between Finland and Estonia, was shut down on October 8th due to a sudden pressure drop, causing gas leakage. Subsequently, the Finnish government reported that the undersea infrastructure, encompassing both the gas pipeline and telecommunications cable, was damaged by outside activity. Initial investigation data suggests that a mechanical force caused the disruption. As this incident is seen as an attack on the country's infrastructure, Finnish intelligence has not ruled out the involvement of a state actor. NATO members have already pledged to respond if it's proven that the incident was deliberate.



— Approximate Location of the Baltic Connector Pipeline

Source: Elisabeth Braw/Center for European Policy Analysis

Natural gas prices on wholesale markets are rising, driven by concerns about cold weather and supply uncertainty. Apart from the Balticconnector incident, market volatility is also influenced by concerns over the Israel– Hamas conflict and its impact on Middle Eastern fossil fuel supplies. Furthermore, strikes by Australia's LNG unions at Chevron's facilities, which provide 6 % of the world's LNG, are further pressuring the gas prices. While European gas inventories are nearly full, indicating preparations for supply uncertainties, weather conditions remain a critical factor, as increased demand could potentially deplete these reserves before winter's end.

Cybersecurity Framework

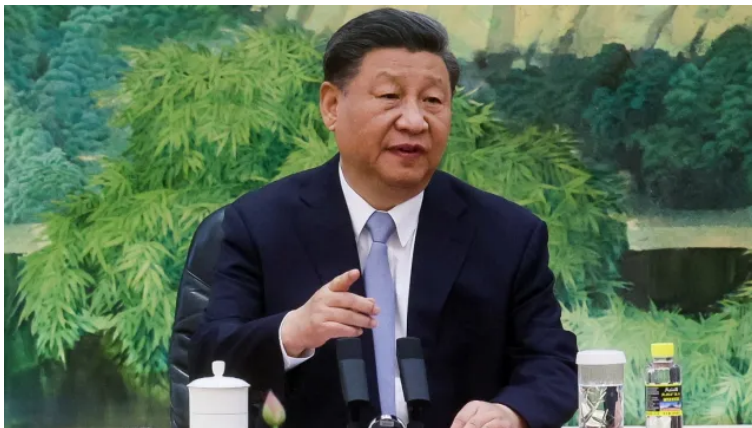
By Petra Nemcova

Last week, Japan joined the international cybersecurity framework to protect software manufacturers against cyber-attacks. Together, 13 nations such as the UK, Israel and the US are a part of it and Cyber Authorities, such as the UK National Cyber Security Center, have joined to strengthen cooperation among participants.

On the other hand, the Middle East region is being terrorized by the Israeli-Palestinian war. The question of security is ongoing, which is also linked to cybersecurity. It is known that social media and the digital world in general are increasingly a part of national/international conflicts. Israeli-Palestinian conflict is no different, as the CEO of Sentra, an Israeli cybersecurity firm, states. Many of the attacks or steps are driven by computers, meaning that protection must increase for citizens and the digital field. To help fight the conflict, cybersecurity firms must cooperate.

China will attend a summit about AI

Next month, a UK summit about Artificial Intelligence will happen, and China will attend, despite some controversies regarding alleged spying at Westminster. The Prime Minister of the UK, Rishi Sunak, faces criticism for inviting Chinese representatives. The invitation is due to China being an AI leader, and excluding such a representative would not be beneficial. China had yet to decide who would be sent.



Source: <https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/ukinvite-china-ai-summit-fear-beijing-tech-research-2482460>

Hopes for this summit are to reduce fraud probabilities and to raise productivity. The day before the UK summit, UK secretaries will announce enhancements in the AI fields, including healthcare and defence.