



Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese celebrates with his partner Jodie Haydon (R), son Nathan Albanese and Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong (L) after winning the general election at the Labor Party election night event in Sydney yesterday. Donald Trump's stinging trade tariffs may have helped Australia's left-leaning prime minister snatch the resounding election victory, analysts say.

US approves \$3.5b missile sale to Saudis

AFP, Washington

The United States on Friday approved a \$3.5 billion sale of missiles to Saudi Arabia, ahead of a visit to the kingdom by President Donald Trump.

The State Department said it notified Congress of the deal that will include Saudi Arabia's purchase of 1,000 medium-range air-to-air missiles.

The AIM-120 missiles, whose principal contractor is RTX Corp, in Arizona, are a mainstay of a number of militaries around the world.

The missiles are guided by active radar after fired by pilots.

Trump will visit Saudi Arabia followed by Qatar and the United Arab Emirates on May 13 to 16 on the first foreign trip of his second term -- other than a brief trip to Rome for the funeral of Pope Francis.

The decision came amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East -- in Gaza, Yemen, Lebanon and Syria.

Since Israel launched its offensive in Gaza, it has killed more than 52,000 people, mostly children and women. It has also destroyed the tiny territory.

Trump has boasted of securing major commercial deals from oil rich Saudi Arabia, which has also been a key go-between for the US diplomacy on Russia and Ukraine.

Kremlin fumes as Kyiv says it cannot guarantee safety of foreign leaders who are attending Russia's WWII event



had approached Kyiv, warning they were travelling to Russia and had requested safety.

Zelensky said Ukraine would not be "playing games to create a pleasant atmosphere to allow for Putins's exit from isolation on 9 May," when some foreign leaders are due in Moscow for Russian World War II commemorations.

Ukraine has hit Moscow several times during the invasion, as well as targets across Russia.

Leaders of around 20 countries, including China's Xi Jinping, have accepted invitations to join this year's celebration, according to the Kremlin.

Zelensky said some countries

seek to rally support for his troops fighting in Ukraine.

In reply, the Kremlin yesterday said it wanted a definitive response from Ukraine to Putins's offer of a three-day ceasefire next week, criticising the reaction so far as ambiguous and historically wrong.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said his comments amounted to a threat, while Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, said nobody could guarantee that the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv would survive to see May 10 if Ukraine attacked Moscow during the May 9 celebrations.

"They are ensuring your safety," Zelensky said, adding that Russia "may take various steps on its part, such as arson, explosions, and so on and then blame us."

Russian officials have promised grand celebrations for the occasion, during which Putins will

attend the Victory Day parades in Moscow and in the city of St. Petersburg.

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