



I feel strongly indignant at the statements made by senior Israeli government officials that appear to categorically reject the very notion of Palestinian state-building. For our country, the question is not whether to recognize a Palestinian state, but when. The continued unilateral actions by the government of Israel can never be accepted.

Shigeru Ishiba
Japan PM

Russia ‘real bear’, not ‘paper tiger’

Russia vows to press offensive, rejects Trump’s idea that Ukraine can retake land

AGENCIES

The Kremlin yesterday said it would press on with its military offensive in Ukraine and rejected US President Donald Trump’s claim that Kyiv’s army could retake territory it had seized.

Moscow also pushed back on Trump’s characterisation of Russia as a “paper tiger”, a day after the US president dismissed Russia’s army and said he could see Ukraine winning back every inch of land captured by Russia’s forces.

Trump’s remarks, delivered after a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the United Nations, were a major pivot in his stance on the three-and-a-half-year conflict, which he had at one point boasted he could end within hours.

But the Republican has for weeks voiced mounting frustration with Putin for refusing to halt his offensive.

“We are continuing our special military operation to ensure our interests and achieve the goals” set by Putin, said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, using Moscow’s term for its assault on Ukraine.



“We are doing this for both the present and the future of our country. For many generations to come. Therefore, we have no alternative,” he added in a radio interview.

Russia launched its all-out offensive on Ukraine in February 2022, when its forces tried to capture the capital Kyiv and Putin publicly called for Zelensky to be toppled.

The conflict has since killed tens of thousands of people, devastated much of eastern and

southern Ukraine and forced millions to flee their homes.

Moscow’s army controls around one-fifth of Ukraine’s territory.

Trump had on Tuesday dismissed Russia’s military prowess and mocked its inability to quickly beat Ukraine.

In a post on Truth Social, he said Ukraine may “be able to take back their Country in its original form and, who knows, maybe even go further than that”.

In his post, Trump said he had changed his view on the war

“after getting to know and fully understand the Ukraine/Russia Military and Economic situation and, after seeing the Economic trouble it is causing Russia.”

“Putin and Russia are in BIG Economic trouble, and this is the time for Ukraine to act,” Trump said.

He added that Russia was “fighting aimlessly” after more than three years of war and was now a “paper tiger” instead of a serious nuclear force.

Russia rejected that notion. “The idea that Ukraine can recapture something is, from our point of view, mistaken,” Peskov told reporters, including AFP.

Russia also bristled at the accusation it was weak.

“The phrase ‘paper tiger’ was used in relation to our economy,” Peskov said.

“Russia is more associated with a bear. And paper bears don’t exist. Russia is a real bear,” he added.

Zelensky has hailed Trump’s apparent change of position as a “big shift”, though it is unclear if the US leader will follow through with concrete steps, such as more sanctions on Russia.

Iran will never seek nuke weapons

President tells UN

AFP, United Nations

Iran’s president yesterday repeated that his country is not seeking nuclear weapons, after military strikes by Israel and the United States earlier this year, and impending sanctions triggered by European powers.

“I hereby declare once more before this assembly that Iran has never sought and will never seek to build a nuclear bomb,” President Masoud Pezeshkian told the General Assembly.

“The one disturbing peace and stability in the region is Israel, but Iran is the one that gets punished,” he said.

Iran has long contended that it is not seeking nuclear weapons. But Israel, the United States and European countries have long been skeptical due to the country’s advanced nuclear work, believing it could quickly pursue a bomb if it so decided.

Britain, France and Germany have moved to reimpose UN sanctions that had been suspended under a 2015 nuclear deal that was negotiated by the United States and then torn up by US President Donald Trump.

The sanctions are set to go into effect on Saturday. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met Tuesday with his European counterparts, leading to no clear headway other than an agreement to keep talking.

Pezeshkian accused the Europeans of bad faith, deal. “They falsely presented themselves as parties of good standing to the agreement, and they disparaged Iran’s sincere efforts as insufficient.”

5 killed in Ladakh autonomy protests

AFP, Srinagar

Five people were killed in India yesterday as police clashed with hundreds of protesters demanding greater autonomy in the Himalayan territory of Ladakh, leaving “dozens” injured, police said.

In the main city of Leh, demonstrators torched a police vehicle and the offices of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, while officers fired tear gas and used batons to disperse crowds, police said.

“Five deaths were reported after the protests,” a police officer in Leh told AFP, on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to journalists. “The number of injured is in the dozens.”

Another police officer,



Regzin Sangdup, told AFP that “several people, including some policemen, were injured.”

Authorities later imposed restrictions on gatherings, banning assemblies of more than four people.

The sparsely populated, high-altitude desert region, home to some 300,000 people, borders both China and Pakistan.

Around half of Ladakh’s residents are Muslim and about 40 percent are Buddhist.

Yesterday’s demonstrations were organised in solidarity with prominent activist Sonam Wangchuk, who has been on hunger strike for two weeks.

He is demanding either full statehood for Ladakh or constitutional protections for its tribal communities, land and fragile environment.

Macron warns against ‘survival of the fittest’ in world affairs

AFP, United Nations

French President Emmanuel Macron warned Tuesday against allowing an approach of “survival of the fittest” to take hold in international relations as he addressed the UN General Assembly.

Macron also mounted a defense of the current international order after President Donald Trump savaged the United Nations in a speech to the organisation’s General Assembly.

“That is the major risk of our time... a risk of seeing the survival of the fittest. It is the risk of seeing the selfishness of a few prevail,” he said.

“The world’s complexity is not a reason to throw in the towel on our principles and our ambitions. To a certain extent, ours is a moment of paradox. We need more than ever before to restore the spirit of cooperation that prevailed 80 years ago.”

He said that the UN’s “harsh criticism” are also those that want to change the rule of the game, because they want to exert domination.”



Typhoon slams into south China; 17 killed in Taiwan

AFP, Yangjiang

Fierce winds, pounding rain and rough seas battered southern China yesterday as powerful Typhoon Ragasa made landfall in Guangdong province after killing at least 17 in Taiwan.

Ragasa churned into Guangdong, home to tens of millions of people, and AFP journalists at the impact point in the city of Yangjiang saw flying debris and gusts ripping advertisements off of buildings.

The typhoon had swept past Hong Kong, with the densely-populated city’s weather service ranking the storm the strongest yet in the northwestern Pacific this year.

Ragasa’s passage in Taiwan killed at least 17 and injured 18 when a decades-old barrier lake burst in eastern Hualien county under the storm’s heavy rains,

according to regional officials.

The typhoon trampled parts of the northern Philippines earlier this week and killed at least eight people, including seven fishermen.

Authorities earlier said 152 people were unaccounted for, but later revised that figure down to 17, saying they had made contact with more than 100 of those previously deemed missing.

More than 7,600 people were evacuated due to Ragasa.

Authorities across mainland China ordered businesses and schools to shut down in at least 10 cities across the nation’s south, affecting millions of people.

The weather service said that at the time of landfall, the maximum wind speed near the centre of the storm was 145 kilometres per hour (90 miles per hour).

EU chief backs calls to keep children off social media

AFP, United Nations

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen yesterday threw her support behind growing calls to ban social media use for children, promising to weigh action at Europe in coming months.

“Many member states believe the time has come for a ‘digital majority age’ for access to social media,” the European Commission head told an event on the sidelines of the UNGA.

“I must tell you as a mother of seven children, and grandmother of five, I share their view,” she said.

Von der Leyen was speaking alongside Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, whose country is at the forefront of global efforts to curb internet harms – with its social media ban on under-16s a world-first.

“We all agree that young people should reach a certain age before they smoke, drink, or have access to adult content,” she said. “The same can be said for social media.”

EU has some of the world’s strictest rules to fight harmful content online, with several investigations looking into how the biggest social media platforms protect children.

One killed in shooting at US ICE facility

AFP, Houston

One person was killed and two wounded in a shooting yesterday at a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facility in the US city of Dallas, officials said.

The suspected gunman, who opened fire on the ICE facility from an adjacent building, is dead, the Dallas police department said in a post on X.

“While we don’t know motive yet, we know that our ICE law enforcement is facing unprecedented violence against them,” Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said on X. “It must stop.”

Local television station Fox4 said the three people shot were detainees in ICE custody.

ICE deputy director Madison Sheahan told Fox News that no ICE officers were injured in the attack.

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