



Putin warns West after Russia fires new missile

Weapon used on Ukraine could be launched at its allies' interests, he says

This article is by David L. Stern, Karen DeYoung, Ellen Francis, Mary Ilyushina and Missy Ryan

KYIV — Russian forces launched a new medium-range ballistic missile at Ukraine on Thursday, President Vladimir Putin announced, issuing a stark warning to the West amid an intensification of cross-border fire at a perilous point in the war.

Putin, in a televised speech late Thursday, said that Russia had employed a medium-range “non-nuclear hypersonic ballistic” missile dubbed “Oreshnik” to strike a military factory in Ukraine’s eastern city of Dnipro. He said the “test” of the weapon was a response to the Biden administration’s recent decision authorizing Ukraine to fire U.S.-made ATACMS missiles, with a range of up 190 miles, into Russia as part of the ongoing war.

The Pentagon said the missile, which was armed with a conventional warhead, was an experimental variant of Russia’s RS-26 Rubezh intermediate-range ballistic missile.

Russia’s employment of novel firepower — and its threat of more to come — underscores the race underway by both Moscow and Kyiv to improve their battlefield positions at a moment of heightened uncertainty ahead of President-elect Donald Trump’s return to the White House.

The stakes are particularly high for Kyiv, whose military effort has

SEE UKRAINE ON A11

As Gaetz withdraws, GOP warms to Hegseth



NATHAN HOWARD/REUTERS

Defense secretary pick Pete Hegseth, seen Thursday on Capitol Hill, said he is taking “nothing for granted” in the nomination process.

A narrow path widens as Trump selects a new AG

BY LIZ GOODWIN, JACQUELINE ALEMANY, JOSH DAWSEY AND ISAAC ARNSDORF

Former congressman Matt Gaetz withdrew from consideration Thursday to become attorney general in a new Trump administration after facing steep opposition from fellow Republicans, the first casualty of the president-elect’s unconventional Cabinet picks.

Republican senators who expressed skepticism about selection of Gaetz will now have to decide whether they defy President-elect Donald Trump again on other picks, including Pete Hegseth for secretary of defense, former congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard leading the intelligence community, and Robert F. Kennedy for the Department of Health and Human Services. Later on Thursday, Trump named Pam Bondi, the former attorney general of Florida

and one of his lawyers in his first impeachment trial, as his new pick for the role.



Pam Bondi

Transition,” Gaetz wrote on social media Thursday. “There is no time

“While the momentum was strong, it is clear that my confirmation was unfairly becoming a distraction to the critical work of the Trump/Vance

to waste on a needlessly protracted Washington scuffle, thus I’ll be withdrawing my name from consideration to serve as Attorney General. Trump’s DOJ must be in place and ready on Day 1.”

The MAGA lightning rod faced an increasingly narrow path to confirmation, even in a GOP-led Senate next year, given the number of Republican enemies he made orchestrating the ouster of Kevin McCarthy (R-California) as

SEE GAETZ ON A5

KEY SENATORS MEET WITH DEFENSE PICK

They cite lack of charges after sexual assault claim

BY ABIGAIL HAUSLOHNER AND MERYL KORNFIELD

Even as President-elect Donald Trump’s first choice for attorney general imploded Thursday amid skepticism that he could overcome allegations of sexual misconduct to win Senate confirmation, Senate Republicans signaled they remained open to confirming another Cabinet pick who also faces accusations of sexual misconduct.

Senators stressed that police had investigated a 2017 allegation that Pete Hegseth, Trump’s pick for defense secretary, had drugged and sexually assaulted a woman at a California political conference and declined to press charges. Hegseth, who paid his accuser an undisclosed sum as part of a non-disclosure agreement, has denied the woman’s allegations.

“We live in an age that everybody’s past is exposed, regardless of what their circumstances are, and people draw an opinion before they have time to actually know the whole truth,” Sen. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okahoma) told reporters Thursday.

“The good thing is, there’s actually a full report, and you guys can read it for yourself,” he said, referring to the police report. “I don’t think there’s any way in the world you can say that this is a sexual assault.”

SEE HEGSETH ON A6

Antiabortion activists: Groups plan a new wave of legal action. **A4**

New Hegseth details: Police release files on assault claim. **A6**

Labor rules under fire: Trump sizes up a lawsuit-laden NLRB. **A14**

Netanyahu accused of Gaza war crimes by ICC

Warrants for premier, former defense minister are a historic rebuke

BY KAREEM FAHIM, LOUISA LOVELUCK AND ALON ROM

The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants Thursday for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defense minister for war crimes and crimes against humanity, a historic rebuke of Israel’s battlefield conduct — one that requires dozens of nations that are party to the court’s statute to apprehend the men if they set foot in those countries.

The ICC also issued a warrant for a Hamas military leader, Mohammed Deif, who Israeli officials said was killed in an airstrike in Gaza in July. The court said it approved the order because prosecutors were not able to confirm his death. Two other warrant applications for Hamas leaders Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar were dropped after they were killed by Israel.

The charges against Netanyahu and the former defense minister, Yoav Gallant, stem from Israel’s military operations in the Gaza Strip. The 13-month war has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians, internally displaced about 2 million people and destroyed much of the enclave’s health-care system and infrastructure. A statement from the court said it found “reasonable

grounds to believe” that Netanyahu and Gallant bear responsibility for crimes there, including the use of starvation as a method of warfare, as well as “murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts.”

Deif was charged with crimes against humanity in connection with the Hamas-led attack on Israeli communities on Oct. 7, 2023, including murder, torture, rape and the abduction of hostages. Palestinian militants killed about 1,200 people in Israel that day and dragged 250 others back to Gaza.

Legal scholars described the court’s decision as significant: It obliges 124 countries, including many in Europe, to arrest the sitting prime minister of a key U.S. ally if he enters their territory. Neither Israel nor the United States is a signatory to the court’s statute. At the same time, experts said the inclusion of Deif, despite reports of his death, was an important step toward justice for victims of the Oct. 7 attacks.

In a statement after the warrants were announced, Karim Khan, the court’s chief prosecutor, implored signatories to “live up to their commitment” to the statute “by respecting and complying with these judicial orders.”

“I have underlined that the law is there for all, that its role is to vindicate the rights of all persons,” he said.

Netanyahu, in a lengthy statement, said Israel “utterly rejects the false and absurd charges” and called the court a “biased and

SEE ISRAEL ON A10

Fighting fit?: Strength of Lebanon’s army key to a cease-fire deal. **A9**



MARVIN JOSEPH/THE WASHINGTON POST

African immigrants gather after Friday prayers outside their Southwest Philadelphia mosque.

In City of Brotherly Love, tensions over ‘Africatown’

Though welcoming, Southwest Philly isn’t sure it’s ready to be renamed

BY TIM CRAIG AND STEVEN RICH

PHILADELPHIA — Sheriff Haeda Raa left Liberia to escape a violent tribal initiation ritual, reaching Central America by plane and, finally, the U.S. border with Mexico by bus and on foot late last year.

U.S. immigration officials held him for five days. He didn’t know where he’d go if he was released. He had no family or friends to turn to for guidance. But he did get a word of advice from a fellow detainee.

“Go to Philadelphia,” Raa, 48, recalled his saying. “We have a community there.”

A year later, Raa has settled into Southwest Philadelphia, a sprawling neighborhood of row-houses and shops that has become an epicenter of the nation’s surging population of African immigrants.

While New York City remains the top destination, several thousand have also settled in Philadelphia, where an effort is underway to rebrand one pocket of the city as “Africatown.” Looking to New York’s Little Italy or Chinatown in Los Angeles, community organizers here want to make a 50-square-block area into a showcase for African food and culture — offering a home away

SEE PHILADELPHIA ON A8

Tap water chemical is finally identified

Toxicity testing urged for byproduct of common disinfection process

BY CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON AND JOEL ACHENBACH

A mysterious byproduct of a chemical used to disinfect the tap water of about one-third of Americans has finally been identified, and the international research team behind the discovery is advocating rapid assessment of its potential toxicity.

The research, reported Thursday in the journal Science, does not claim that tap water containing the byproduct is unsafe to drink or that the finding represents any kind of emergency. All water, including bottled water, contains contaminants.

But the discovery of a new and previously unknown chemical, called chloronitramide anion, could have implications for municipal water systems that use a class of chlorine-based disinfectants called chloramines. For decades these disinfectants, derived from the mixture of chlorine and ammonia, have been added to many municipal water supplies

SEE WATER ON A7

PVC piping: Plastic substitute for lead may carry health risks. **A7**

IN THE NEWS

Salt Typhoon breach The Chinese espionage campaign is the “worst telecom hack in our nation’s history” and highlights the need for regulations, Sen. Mark R. Warner said. **A18**

Georgetown leader resigns John J. DeGioia announced he will step down as president after 23 years, citing health concerns. **B1**

THE NATION **Jussie Smollett** had his 2021 felony conviction overturned by the Illinois Supreme Court. **A2** **The federal judiciary** released its first-ever report on misconduct in the workplace. **A6**

THE WORLD **Brazilian** police alleged ex-leader Jair Bolsonaro plotted a coup after his 2022 defeat. **A10** **The U.S. prosecution** of Gautam Adani targets a close ally of India’s prime minister. **A11**

THE ECONOMY **Emails released** in a lawsuit by OpenAI co-founder Elon Musk reveal the deep roots of tensions in the company. **A12** **What the internet** and Chrome could look like if the Justice Department succeeds in forcing a sale of Google’s browser. **A13**

THE REGION **D.C. Mayor** Muriel E. Bowser cut the ribbon at a development that will bring hundreds of housing units to Barry Farm. **B1** **If successful**, Republicans’ efforts to legislate trans bathrooms use could extend to District schools and agencies. **B1**

STYLE **Russian authorities** put journalist Alsu Kurmasheva behind bars, but they couldn’t outsmart her. **C1**

WEEKEND **Santa on water skis** and an ugly-sweater concert by the NSO are among this holiday season’s must-see events.

BUSINESS NEWS.....	A12
COMICS.....	C5
OBITUARIES.....	B4
OPINION PAGES.....	A15
TELEVISION.....	C4
WORLD NEWS.....	A9

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