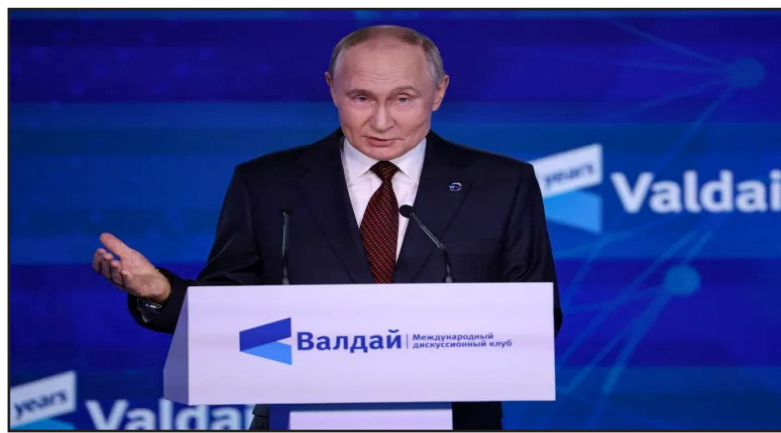




# Moscow Calls Out Trump Team for Waffling on Ukraine



Russia's President Vladimir Putin delivers a speech at the Valdai Discussion Club meeting in Sochi, Russia.

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's UN envoy Vassily Nebenzia has criticized what he described as "vague signals" regarding the Ukraine conflict from the incoming administration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump.

In an interview with Russia 24 TV on Friday, Nebenzia said Moscow currently finds nothing of interest in communications about the crisis.

"Deal is U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's favorite word; everyone knows that. How this is consistent with Russia's interests is still unclear," Nebenzia remarked.

He added that the signals from the incoming U.S. administration offer nothing appealing. "These are some unformed vague signals of readiness for something," he said.

Nebenzia recalled Putin's call to fully end the conflict rather than freeze it. "We often hear the word 'freezing the conflict.' On December 19, Russian President Vladimir Putin last said clearly and precisely on what terms we are ready to talk about

not freezing but ending this conflict, provided that our legitimate security interests are respected. But so far, nothing in the signals of the new U.S. administration indicates that this is something that will be of interest to us," he stressed.

Trump has promised on several occasions that he could achieve a negotiated settlement of the Ukraine conflict in just one day. Trump has also criticized the U.S. approach to the conflict and described Ukraine's Vladimir Zelensky as a "salesman" whose visits to Washington result in multibillion-dollar aid packages.

On December 22, Trump announced that he would wait for a meeting with Putin to resolve the conflict. He also insisted that the conflict would not have occurred had he been in office.

In December, Putin said during a press conference that he was ready to meet and talk with Trump. Earlier, the Russian president outlined conditions for a peaceful resolution, including an immediate ceasefire and readiness for negotiations, if Ukraini-

an forces withdraw from all Russian territory, including those that joined the country following referendums.

Putin also called on Kyiv to renounce NATO ambitions, demilitarize, and adopt a neutral, non-aligned, and nuclear-weapon-free status. The Russian envoy also noted ongoing talks from the Ukrainian side about potential "arrangements." However, he questioned the feasibility of such efforts.

"The question is, when Zelensky finally, let's say, gets around to wanting to sit down at the negotiating table, on which line of military contact will this take place? The further he goes, the worse the conditions will be for him," Nebenzia said.

On Friday, the Ukrainian Air Force said one person has been killed and four others were injured when Russian drones targeted the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, military and civilian officials said, as Russia launched barrages across the country.

The Ukrainian Air Force said its air defenses shot down 60 out of 93 Russian drones launched at Ukraine since the early hours of Friday.

Moscow's forces have escalated aerial attacks across Ukraine in recent days, including a New Year's Day drone attack targeting central Kyiv that killed two people.

In the latest barrage, a truck driver was killed by drone debris, according to Mykola Kalashnyk, acting governor for the Kyiv region.

He said the debris also damaged several houses, injuring four people, including a 16-year-old boy.

The Ukrainian Air Force said that 26 other drones were "lost", in reference to Ukraine's use of electronic warfare to redirect Russian drones.

## South Korean Authorities Halt Bid to Arrest Yoon After Hours-Long Standoff



The investigators entered the presidential residence through heavy security barricades but their attempts to proceed were reportedly hindered by a military unit inside the compound.

SEOUL (AFP) - South Korean investigators have suspended efforts to enforce an arrest warrant for embattled President Yoon Suk Yeol on Friday, hours into a standoff in which authorities tried to detain the leader following his short-lived martial law declaration.

Some 80 police and investigators had entered the presidential compound in Seoul in the early morning to take Yoon into custody for questioning, the CIO said - deepening what had already been a weeks-long showdown with the defiant and embattled leader.

Investigators from the Corruption Investigation Office (CIO) approached within a couple hundred meters of Yoon's residence, but were blocked by a "human wall" of around 200 soldiers and members of the presidential security detail, CIO said Friday afternoon. There were also several altercations of "varying intensity," the office said.

Investigators called off the arrest warrant enforcement Friday afternoon citing the safety of the people on the ground, according to a statement. The warrant, which is valid until January 6, remains in effect and could be extended.

The atmosphere in the streets around the compound was heavily charged, with police flanking streets near Yoon's residence and hundreds gathering to support the leader, who plunged the nation into political cha-

os with his swiftly overturned declaration one month ago.

Yoon, who was stripped of presidential powers after lawmakers voted to impeach him last month, is wanted for questioning in multiple investigations, including accusations of leading an insurrection - a crime punishable by life imprisonment or even the death penalty.

A court earlier this week approved the warrant to detain him - the first time such action has been taken against a sitting president. In response, the presidential security team said that security measures "will be taken in accordance with due process."

Yoon, himself a former prosecutor, has refused to answer three summonses by investigators in recent weeks asking for his cooperation, according to the CIO.

After suspending efforts to detain Yoon, the CIO expressed "deep regret" at "the suspect's attitude of not following the process by law."

The CIO said "it is virtually impossible to execute a warrant" at Yoon's residence while security there remains in place. It said it will "strongly request" that the acting President Choi Sang-mok orders his security comply with the arrest warrant.

Yoon's declaration of martial law a month ago was met with widespread public backlash, with members of his own party turning on him to support the impeachment vote following his refusal to resign.

LAS VEGAS (AP) - The highly decorated Army soldier inside a Tesla Cybertruck packed with fireworks that exploded outside Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas shot himself in the head just before detonation, authorities said Thursday. The explosion caused minor injuries to seven people but virtually no damage to the hotel. Clark County Sheriff Kevin McMahon said Matthew Livelsberger, a 37-year-old Green Beret, likely planned a more damaging attack but the steel-sided vehicle absorbed much of the force from the crudely built explosive. Damage from the blast was mostly limited to the interior of the truck because the explosion "vented out and up" and didn't hit the Trump hotel doors just a few feet away, the sheriff said.

BERLIN (Reuters) - Airports across Germany have been hit by an IT outage affecting federal police systems used to check incoming passengers, Bild newspaper reported on Friday, citing the police. "Our colleagues have to do a lot of things manually that the system used to do. We're still managing to get it done at the moment," said a police spokesperson responsible for Frankfurt airport, Germany's busiest. Federal police were not immediately available for comment.

WARSAW (Reuters) - Poland launched its presidency of the Council of the European Union on Friday mired in a diplomatic row with Hungary that underscored a deepening sense of political disunity across Europe just as it confronts a raft of major global challenges. Saddled with a sluggish economy, the EU is bracing for the return of Donald Trump to the White House this month on an "America First" platform and the possible imposition of U.S. tariffs on European exports. It also faces deteriorating trade relations with China and Russia's grinding war in Ukraine, all at a time when the EU's two leading powers, France and Germany, are distracted by domestic political upheaval.

COPENHAGEN (Reuters) - Greenland's Prime Minister Mute Egede emphasized his desire to pursue independence from Denmark, its former colonial ruler, during his New Year speech, marking a significant change in the rhetoric surrounding the Arctic island's future. Egede's speech, which comes on the heels of comments by U.S. President-elect Donald Trump expressing his wish for "ownership and control" of Greenland, also expressed a desire to strengthen Greenland's cooperation with other countries. "It is about time that we ourselves take a step and shape our future, also with regard to who we will cooperate closely with, and who our trading partners will be," he said.

KYIV (Reuters) - Moldova faces a security crisis after tens of thousands of residents in the breakaway enclave of Transnistria were cut off from Russian gas supply, Prime Minister Dorin Recean said on Friday. Flows of Russian gas via Ukraine which supplied central and eastern Europe were halted at the end of 2024 as Kyiv rejected doing further business with Moscow. Recean said Moldova would cover its energy needs with domestic production and imports but noted the separatist Transnistria region had suffered a painful hit despite its ties with Moscow. "By jeopardizing the future of the protectorate it has backed for three decades in an effort to destabilize Moldova, Russia is revealing the inevitable outcome for all its allies - betrayal and isolation," Recean said in a statement. "We treat this as a security crisis aimed at enabling the return of pro-Russian forces to power in Moldova and weaponizing our territory against Ukraine, with whom we share a 1,200 km border."

## French Police to Face Trial for 'Suffocating' Death of Delivery Driver



French police tactics, including the use of "chokehold" restraining techniques, have come under growing criticism.

PARIS (AFP) - Three police officers will be tried in Paris for the involuntary homicide of a man who repeatedly said "I'm suffocating" during his arrest in January 2020, a source close to the case told AFP Friday.

At least two of the officers have already lodged appeals to that decision.

The death of 42-year-old Cedric Chouviat after being tackled to the ground by a policeman has drawn comparisons to the May 2020 death in the U.S. of George Floyd, video footage of which sparked global

demonstrations.

Investigating magistrates found the officers had shown "inappropriate, negligent and imprudent behavior" during Chouviat's arrest, in a document ordering the trial seen by AFP after first being revealed by investigative website Mediapart.

A fourth, female police officer present at the scene will not face trial.

Chouviat was tackled to the ground while wearing his motorbike helmet during the arrest in Paris on January 3, 2020.

He was brought to hospital in criti-

cal condition after losing consciousness but died on January 5.

Six months later, details from an investigation showed that he had said "I'm suffocating" nine times in the space of 13 seconds before losing consciousness.

The revelations turned the case into a symbol of police violence in France, increasingly under the spotlight in recent years due to a number of high-profile shootings during traffic stops and injuries during demonstrations.

The Chouviat case going to trial is "an important step for the family" of the delivery driver, their lawyer Arie Alimi said.

"It's also an important step for addressing of police violence by the judiciary," he added.

"The hearings will be the time and place for important debates about how the police and judiciary work as institutions."

Lawyers William Bourdon and Vincent Brengarth, also representing the family, nevertheless expressed regret that the involuntary homicide charge "distorts and conceals" what they called "voluntary" violence against Chouviat.

Pauline Ragot, representing two of the police officers, told AFP she had appealed the December 17 order to send her clients to trial.

## Brazil Takes Over BRICS Presidency, Focusing on Global South Cooperation

SAO PAULO (Xinhua) - Brazil has assumed the rotating presidency of the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), with an agenda focusing on strengthening Global South cooperation, the Brazilian government said in a statement.

It will also focus on reforming international governance, and creating mechanisms to facilitate trade among its members.

"The group is one of the key political and diplomatic forums for Global South countries, focusing on cooperation across various sectors," said the statement.

Its key goals include developing payment systems to simplify trade and investment between members, promoting inclusive and responsible governance of artificial intelligence (AI), and improving financing mechanisms to address climate

change.

The agenda also emphasizes collaborative projects among Global South countries, particularly in public health, and strengthening the institutional structure of BRICS.

As the host nation until the end of this year, Brazil will also organize and oversee working group meetings, bringing together representatives from member countries to discuss and implement its priorities.

## Justin Trudeau Leaves Canada in Suspense as Anxious Liberals Urge Him to Go



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is facing resignation calls from members of his own party.

OTTAWA - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is said to be reflecting on his future over the holidays after the resignation of his top cabinet minister, Chrystia Freeland, in mid-December. The bombshell move prompted a fresh wave of calls for Trudeau to step down as Liberal leader from inside and outside the caucus.

With MPs set to return to the House of Commons on Jan. 27, the Liberal grip on power appears tenuous. The NDP, which has been a steady ally of the minority government since the 2021 election, is no longer planning to support the Liberals.

Here is a look at some of the scenarios that could play out in coming weeks:

Regardless of whether Trudeau resigns as Liberal leader, the government could seek prorogation to end all House of Commons business.

If Gov. Gen. Mary Simon honors the prorogation request, all outstanding legislation effectively dies on the order paper.

Once the House reconvenes, a new throne speech would set out the government's fresh legislative agenda. In addition, legislation that was in progress before

prorogation could potentially be revived.

In 2008, then-prime minister Stephen Harper notably prorogued Parliament shortly before a non-confidence vote that could have seen his minority Conservative government defeated and replaced by an NDP-Liberal coalition supported by the Bloc Québécois.

The Conservatives, Bloc Québécois and NDP all say they are ready to bring down the Liberal government through a non-confidence vote.

Passage of a non-confidence motion in the House of Commons could trigger an immediate election campaign.

The Liberals have survived previous Conservative non-confidence motions with support from the NDP. It appears that will no longer be the case. NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh says his party will bring forward its own non-confidence motion at the earliest possible time, no matter who is Liberal leader.

The Conservatives, NDP, and Bloc Québécois will all get opposition days before March 26, when they are allowed to introduce business like non-confidence motions.