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Biden's comments on Putin 'unacceptable and unforgivable': Kremlin

March 17, 2022 spacewar.com reported: "US President Joe Biden's reference to Russian leader Vladimir Putin as a 'war criminal' over his military operation in Ukraine is 'unacceptable and unforgivable,' the Kremlin said Wednesday.

'We believe such rhetoric to be unacceptable and unforgivable on the part of the head of a state, whose bombs have killed hundreds of thousands of people around the world,' said Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov, according to the state news agencies TASS and Ria Novosti.

Peskov was responding to a question about an earlier comment made by Biden with regard to Russia's military operation in Ukraine..."



Dmitry Peskov

Israel decimated Iranian drone fleet in February airstrike inside Iran

March 17, 2022 timesofisrael.com reported: "A UAV attack in the middle of February reportedly caused major damage to Iran's drone fleet, prompting Iran to fire missiles this week at a site in Iraq that it claims was an Israeli intelligence base.

Hundreds of drones are assessed to have been destroyed in the attack on an airbase near Kermanshah, in Western Iran, *Haaretz* reported Tuesday, without citing sources for the extent of the damage.

While Israel has acknowledged it targets the bases of Iranian forces and allied terror groups in Syria, as well as arms shipments believed to be bound for Iran-backed groups in the region — and is believed to have carried out covert actions inside Iran — an airstrike on Iranian territory would be very unusual.

Tehran officials have blamed Israel for the attack, though neither country had made any mention of the incident until this week. Israel has not commented at all on the alleged strike..."

'Iran's missiles are an existential threat to the whole region,' U.S. official says

March 17, 2022 ynetnews.com reported: "A U.S. general said on Tuesday that Iran possesses advanced missiles, and poses the biggest threat to the region.

During a Senate hearing, General Kenneth McKenzie explained that the Iranian missiles are still unable to reach Europe, but noted that in the past five to seven years Iran has invested many resources in its rocket program to increase its range and improve its accuracy.

'We have seen their capabilities in the attack on the American base in Ein al-Asad in Iraq back in January 2020, when the Iranian missiles hit with a great precision,' he said.

McKenzie claimed that Iran continues to be the biggest threat to the American interests and the security of the Middle East. 'Iranian ballistics is an existential threat to the security of every country in the region, including our closest partners.'..."

Pressure builds on China to drop its Russian ally

March 16, 2022 spacewar.com reported: "China is under intense diplomatic pressure from the US and its European allies to pull its lifeline from an isolated Russia but, three weeks after the invasion of Ukraine, Beijing has shown few signs of abandoning its friends in the Kremlin.

Washington has driven Russia to the cusp of default since Vladimir Putin's invasion of neighboring Ukraine, strangling its economy with sanctions and pulling the country from the global payments system.

Isolated, bleeding money and with its currency in freefall, Russia has grasped for the friendship of its giant southwestern ally — China. And China appears to have reciprocated, despite the risks to its both reputation and its economic interests as the US-led sanctions unwind.

A senior US official on Monday voiced 'deep concerns about China's alignment with Russia' following talks in Rome between US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and Yang Jiechi, the Chinese Communist Party's chief diplomat..."

Top US general: Iran has 3,000 ballistic missiles that can hit Tel Aviv

March 16, 2022 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: “US Central Command’s General Kenneth McKenzie warned on Tuesday that Iran’s ballistic missiles pose a great threat to the Middle East.

Speaking to US lawmakers, McKenzie said that Iran now has about 3,000 ballistic missiles, some of which are capable of hitting Tel Aviv.

‘None of them can reach Europe yet, but over the last five to seven years ... they have invested heavily in their ballistic missile program,’ he said, according to *Voice of America*.

‘Their missiles have significantly greater range and significantly enhanced accuracy,’ added McKenzie, describing the advancement of Iran’s missile program as ‘remarkable.’

He further warned that Tehran has made major progress in developing increasingly capable long-range drones, and with its efforts to develop land-attack cruise missiles, designed to hit predetermined fixed or mobile ground-based targets.

The warning comes just days after dozens of Iranian ballistic missiles hit the northern Iraqi city of Erbil near the US consulate complex, destroying some residential structures...”

Zelensky says Russian demands becoming ‘more realistic’ as fighting nears Kyiv

March 16, 2022 timesofisrael.com reported: “Ukraine said it saw possible room for compromise in talks with Russia despite Moscow’s stepped-up bombardment Tuesday of Kyiv and new assaults on the port city of Mariupol, from where an estimated 20,000 civilians managed to flee through a humanitarian corridor.



The fast-moving developments on the diplomatic front and on the ground came as Russia’s invasion neared the three-week mark and the number of Ukrainians who have left the country amid Europe’s heaviest fighting since World War II eclipsed 3 million.

After a curfew planned to span 35-hours went into effect across Kyiv Tuesday night, there were fresh reports of explosions and fighting near the capital before dawn on Wednesday.

Delegations from Ukraine and Russia met again Tuesday via video. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said early Wednesday that Russia’s demands were becoming ‘more realistic.’

The two sides were expected to speak again Wednesday...”

Kremlin says may take ‘full control’ of big Ukraine cities

March 16, 2022 spacewar.com reported: “The Kremlin said Monday it may still opt to take control of large cities in Ukraine, as Moscow’s military advances steadily towards several major urban hubs in its pro-Western neighbor.

‘Putin gave orders to hold back on any immediate assault on large cities because the civilian losses would be large,’ Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

He added however that the defence ministry ‘does not rule out the possibility of putting large cities, which are already almost fully encircled, under its full control’.

Exceptions would be made for areas ‘used for humanitarian evacuations,’ Peskov said...”

Saudi Arabia Considers Accepting Yuan Instead of Dollars for Chinese Oil Sales

March 15, 2022 wsj.com reported: “Saudi Arabia is in active talks with Beijing to price some of its oil sales to China in yuan, people familiar with the matter said, a move that would dent the U.S. dollar’s dominance of the global petroleum market and mark another shift by the world’s top crude exporter toward Asia.

The talks with China over yuan-priced oil contracts have been off and on for six years but have accelerated this year as the Saudis have grown increasingly unhappy with decades-old U.S. security commitments to defend the kingdom, the people said.

The Saudis are angry over the U.S.’s lack of support for their intervention in the Yemen civil war, and over the Biden administration’s attempt to strike a deal with Iran over its nuclear program. Saudi officials have said they were shocked by the precipitous U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan last year.

China buys more than 25% of the oil that Saudi Arabia exports. If priced in yuan, those sales would boost the standing of China’s currency.” ...”