



CHARLIE KIRK speaks shortly before the shooting. His Turning Point group was on the first stop of a tour.

Russian drones cross into Poland

European leaders fear the incursion during an attack on Ukraine is an escalation.

BY CLAUDIA CIOBANU, ILLIA NOVIKOV AND RAFAL NIEDZIELSK

WOHYN, Poland — Multiple Russian drones crossed into Poland in what European officials described Wednesday as a deliberate provocation, causing NATO to send fighter jets to shoot them down. A NATO spokesman said it was the first time the alliance confronted a potential threat in its airspace.

The incursion, which occurred during a wave of strikes by the Kremlin on Ukraine, and the NATO response swiftly raised fears that the war could spill over — a fear that has been growing in Europe as Russia steps up its attacks and peace efforts go nowhere.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it did not target Poland, while Belarus, a close ally of Moscow, said it tracked some drones that "lost their course" because they were jammed.

However, several European leaders said they believed the incursion amounted to an intentional expansion of Russia's assault against Ukraine.

"Russia's war is escalating, not ending," European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas told reporters in Brussels. "What [Russian President Vladimir] Putin wants to do is to test us. What happened in Poland is a game changer," and it should result in stronger sanctions.

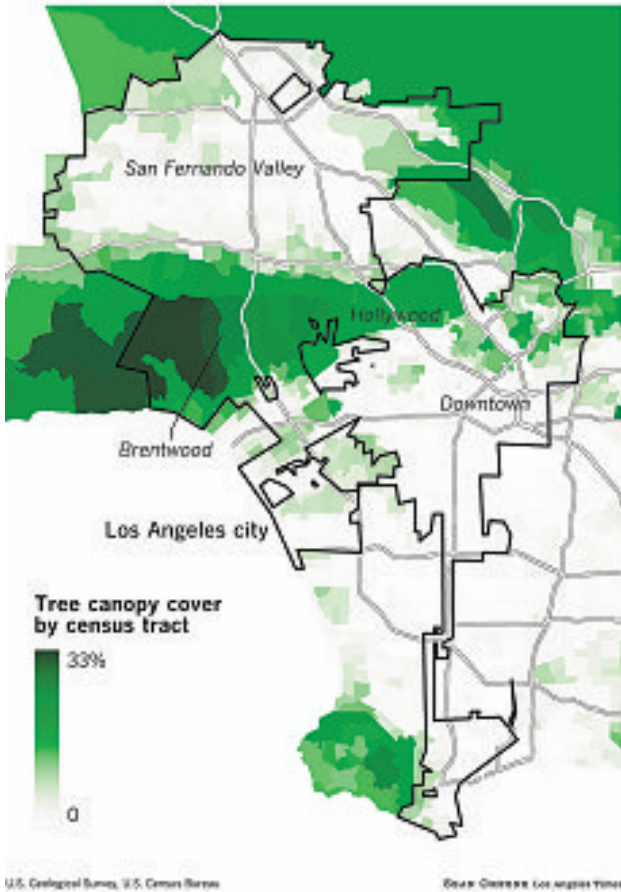
Polish airspace has been violated many times since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 but never on this scale in Poland or anywhere else in NATO territory.

Poland said some of the drones came from Belarus, where Russian and Belarusian forces are active. [See Poland, A4]

In L.A., the noise and heat pose insidious health threat

Pioneering study seeks to learn how a combination of the two affects residents' brains and well-being

A concrete jungle



BY TYRONE BEASON

Blanca Lucio likes to spend her mornings tending to her zucchinis, cucumbers, watermelons and traditional Mexican herbs at a small community garden near downtown Los Angeles. With its cool, damp air, the garden brims with what Lucio calls "magic."

The only sound comes from the green June bugs buzzing by her ears and children playing at the community center across the street. "Outside of here, you're exposed to a lot of noise and a lot of pollution," Lucio said while giving a tour of the garden, a short distance from her home in South L.A. "This space renews me and the other gardeners who grow plants here. I feel more content when I'm here."

Noise pollution and excessive heat can seem inescapable in Los Angeles. What would the city be without random bursts of fireworks and car sound systems thumping loud enough to shake you from your dreams? And the nearly 365

Mask ban for forest fire crews lifted

U.S. agency reverses a decades-long rule amid concerns about smoke and cancer.

BY SUSANNE RUST

The U.S. Forest Service has announced it is reversing a ban on federal firefighters wearing masks, and will give crews protective N95s as they battle increasingly intense fires across the nation.

For decades, the agency argued their use made firefighters vulnerable to heat exhaustion.

Other wildfire-prone nations, such as Canada,

Greece and Australia, provide their firefighters with masks to prevent lung damage and smoke-related diseases, including cancer and organ failure — and have not seen increases in heatstroke among the crews.

The policy will have little bearing on local and regional urban firefighters, such as those in Los Angeles and Los Angeles County.

"We are actually encouraged to wear them," said Jonathan Torres, engineer and spokesman for the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

"There are chemicals that are unknown to us that are part of our work," as buildings and infrastructure burn, he said. Masks provide

some protection against harmful smoke particles and chemicals released when plastics, upholstery and synthetic building materials burn.

This week, the forest agency announced it has stockpiled roughly 80,000 N95 masks and will include them as part of the equipment it provides for large fires.

The decision came after a series of New York Times reports that detailed the Forest Service's decades-long refusal to require, or even offer, masks to its crews, despite recommendations from state and federal health agencies, and a growing body of evidence

Charlie Kirk, conservative activist, fatally shot in Utah

The commentator was taking questions from the audience when a bullet struck his neck.

BY RUBEN VIVES, RICHARD WINTON, HAILEY BRANSON-POTTS AND JENNY JARVIE

Conservative commentator Charlie Kirk was shot and killed during an event at Utah Valley University on Wednesday, a shocking act of political violence that brought widespread condemnation.

Hours later, authorities said they captured a person of interest in the shooting. But he was released without charges, and the manhunt continued. The gunman is believed to have killed Kirk from at least 200 feet away using some type of sniper rifle, law enforcement sources told The Times. Officials have not announced a possible motive.

Videos shared on social media show Kirk sitting under a white canopy, speaking to hundreds of people through a microphone,

when a loud pop is heard; he suddenly falls back, blood gushing from his neck.

Before he was shot, he was asked about mass shootings.

"Do you know how many mass shooters there have been in America over the last 10 years?" an audience member asks.

"Counting or not counting gang violence?" Kirk responds.

Almost immediately, Kirk is shot in the neck. One video shows blood pouring from the wound. As the crowd realizes what has taken place, people are heard screaming and running away.

A source familiar with the investigation told The Times that a bullet struck Kirk's carotid artery.

The killing was captured from several angles on graphic videos, which were widely shared across the internet. It comes a year after a would-be assassin wounded President Trump during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania and in an era of increasing political divisions.

Kirk, a conservative political activist, was in Utah [See Kirk, A14]



ALLISON Hemingway-Witty reacts after the shooting. Kirk's wife and children were reportedly present.

ANALYSIS

Trump ally boosted president and GOP using youth, moxie

BY ANA CEBALLOS, MICHAEL WILNER, STEPHEN BATTAGLIO AND SEEMA MEHTA

WASHINGTON — It was the height of the Obama era when Charlie Kirk, an 18-year-old college student, founded an organization designed to push back against the overwhelming liberal bent of college campuses. The instinct of the untested political activist would change the nation, spurring a young movement that would shatter conventional conservatism and fuel the rise of Donald Trump.

Between Kirk's founding of Turning Point USA in 2012 and his death on Wednesday by an assassin's bullet, voters between the ages of 18 and 29 experienced a shift in support viewed in political circles as an earthquake. When Mitt Romney was the Republican nominee that

year, 37% of voters in this age category supported the GOP ticket. Last year, 46% supported Trump.

Kirk's legacy helped activate a young evangelical community once relegated to the sidelines of political discourse — and created a permission structure for a movement centered on Christianity and family values to support a brusque, divorced businessman for president as a model of traditional manhood.

Those themes were staples in his podcast, "The Charlie Kirk Show," on which he often used the Bible as a means to promote conservative causes.

In an episode posted on Sunday, he featured a conversation with conservative media personality Steve Deace at a church in Arizona, the headquarters of his organization. Their conversation was emblematic of [See Analysis, A14]

Growing taste for food halls that offer dine-in service

BY KARLA MARIE SANFORD

Shira Yevin was on her way to grab lunch from the Studio City Trader Joe's when she caught sight of a new restaurant on the block called Local Kitchens.

"I was like, 'That sounds good, sounds healthy,'" she said. "'Let me see what it is.'"

Excited at the prospect of not eating preprepared grocery store food, she was initially deflated when she saw that the restaurant served Vietnamese food, a cuisine she doesn't normally eat. Then she noticed that the



EMIL RAVELO For The Times

NEIGHBORLY is a multi-menu fast-casual restaurant and a superette that sells specialty pantry items.

restaurant also served some of her favorite Mediterranean dishes.

After she placed her order, she started reading the colorful signs on the walls, one of which mentioned an Oklahoma onion burger.

"I'm like, 'Oh, a burger? What is this place?'" Yevin wondered.

Local Kitchens is a fast-casual restaurant with five distinct menus from five different chefs. The catch is that there aren't five kitchens operating separately. Rather, the five partnering chefs — a mix of restaurateurs, cookbook authors and chef-influencers [See Fast-casual, A10]

Tell-aplenty in Harris' new book

Former vice president is eager to settle some old scores, columnist Mark Barabak writes. PERSPECTIVES, A2

Audits of FireAid find no misuse

Charity for Palisades, Eaton victims releases reports amid concerns. CALIFORNIA, B1

Weather

Early clouds, then sun. L.A. Basin: 80/63. B6

El Segundo toy hub expands

The industry opens an office complex featuring 65 showrooms to cater to wholesale customers. BUSINESS, A9

From anonymous to a star at USC

How Jordan went on a journey to earn spot on a big stage. SPORTS, B10



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