

Russian drones sent into Poland are downed

NATO scrambles jets in ‘unprecedented’ breach of airspace by Moscow

This article is by David L. Stern, Siobhán O’Grady, Aaron Wiener, Michael Birnbaum and Andrew Jeong

KYIV — NATO fighter jets shot down Russian drones that violated Poland’s airspace while Russia was attacking targets in Ukraine, NATO officials and Poland’s military said Wednesday, in a rare clash between Moscow and militaries from the U.S.-led Western alliance.

The Russian action amounts to an unprecedented violation of Polish airspace and posed “a real threat” to Polish citizens, the Polish military’s Operational Command said in a statement.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said that Polish F-16s, Dutch F-35s and Italian AWACS surveillance aircraft were involved in responding to the breach of Polish airspace, as well as a NATO air-to-air refueling tanker and a German Patriot air defense system.

Under Article 5 of the NATO treaty, an armed attack on one ally is considered an attack on all. The country under threat has to request that the common defense clause be invoked and the other 31 allies must unanimously agree to do so.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said Poland, in coordination with NATO allies, had instead requested to activate Article 4 of the treaty, in which member states will consult on whether

SEE POLAND ON A9

Charlie Kirk shot dead at Utah campus



TESS CROWLEY/DESERET NEWS/AP

Charlie Kirk, founder of Turning Point USA, interacts with the crowd Wednesday at Utah Valley University before the shooting.

Turning Point’s founder quickly became a force in GOP politics

BY NATALIE ALLISON, DREW HARWELL, MATT VISER AND CAT ZAKRZEWSKI

Charlie Kirk, the founder of Turning Point USA, leveraged an audience of millions of fervent conservative fans and fierce liberal critics to create a youth-oriented movement on the right, emerging as one of the most prominent voices in the age of Donald Trump. He specialized in debates — es-

pecially at college campuses — in which he took on liberal opponents, often creating moments that went viral and captured audiences across the political spectrum. It was during one such session Wednesday at Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah, that Kirk, 31, was shot and killed, sending shock waves through Trump’s base of supporters and beyond.

Trump confirmed Kirk’s death in a statement on social media, a sign of his importance to the presi-

dent’s political movement.

He later recorded an Oval Office address in which he called Kirk’s killing a “heinous assassination” and described him as a “martyr for truth and freedom.”

“This is a dark moment for America,” Trump said. “Charlie Kirk traveled the nation joyfully engaging everyone interested in good-faith debate. His mission was to bring young people into the political process, which he did better than anybody, ever.”

The shooting happened on the first stop of Kirk’s latest series, the American Comeback Tour, during which Kirk sat with a microphone under a tent labeled “Prove Me Wrong.”

That was a regular format for Kirk, one in which groups of young people — thousands at times — would gather to listen to him debate students on issues such as affirmative action and transgender rights.

SEE KIRK ON A14

NASA rover discovers the ‘clearest sign’ of life on Mars

BY KASHA PATEL

Rolling across the rugged, rusty red terrain on Mars, NASA’s Perseverance rover came upon some rocks with peculiar green, blue, black and white dots. After detailed image analysis, scientists have come to a potentially encouraging conclusion: If those speckled rocks were formed like they are on Earth, they might be evidence of past life on the dusty planet.

The rocks “very well could be the clearest sign of life that we’ve ever found on Mars, which is incredibly exciting,” acting NASA administrator Sean P. Duffy said in a news conference Wednesday. The findings were published in the journal Nature on Wednesday.

The rocks, or mudstones, are composed of finely packed sediment and covered in specks resembling poppy seeds and leopard spots. The colorful features, the study found, are minerals that — on Earth — have traditionally been created from microbial activity.

The research team would need

SEE MARS ON A7

Escalating Israeli attacks force impossible choice

BY KAREEM FAHIM, MIRIAM BERGER AND SIHAM SHAMALAKH

A hope sustained Lina al-Madhouh during the relentless Israeli bombing of her Gaza City neighborhood over the past few weeks, a cold comfort amid the gnawing fear of death: If her family is killed by a missile, they might not hear it.

“When we hear the sound of the bombing,” she said, “it means we are not dead.”

Israel’s military issued orders early Tuesday demanding that the entire population of Gaza City — up to a million people — flee south. It came after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the city’s residents had been “warned,” but it also came after a fierce, deadly military campaign using artillery, airstrikes and drone attacks that made it impossible for residents to stay.

Later Tuesday, it became clear that the escalation was more than an effort to pressure Hamas into making greater concessions in negotiations over a possible ceasefire and release of Israeli hostages held in Gaza, as Israeli officials have suggested. A surprise Israeli airstrike on Qatar’s capital, Doha, aimed at eliminating much of Hamas’s senior leadership, who had been meeting there to consider their next move



DAWOU ABU ALKAS/REUTERS

Israel’s military issued orders this week for people to flee Gaza City.

in the negotiations.

The strike targeted Khalil al-Hayya, a Hamas chief who had been leading the indirect negotiations with Israel, an Israeli official said. Hamas said that he survived the attack but that it killed al-Hayya’s son and the director of al-Hayya’s office, as well as three bodyguards and an officer from Qatar’s Internal Security Forces.

With the talks scuttled, Israel was left to fully focus on recapturing Gaza City, an operation that would force the displacement of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living there. The city’s residents are left with an impossible choice: to escape and try to survive elsewhere in the decimated enclave, or to risk death in their homes.

Netanyahu has said Gaza City’s takeover is necessary for the return of Israeli hostages held by Hamas and the militant group’s defeat. Most Israelis support a negotiated deal to return the hostages and end the war.

Ola Qadas, 20, said she was too busy trying to survive the attack on Gaza City to follow the news about the strike on Hamas’s leadership in Doha. “I don’t have a clue what happened or who was killed or how it will impact the interests of Gazans,” she said late Tuesday.

“All I am thinking about is how

SEE GAZA ON A11

Harris says deference to Bidens was ‘recklessness’

BY PATRICK SVITEK

Former vice president Kamala Harris writes in an upcoming book that it was “recklessness” to leave President Joe Biden to decide with first lady Jill Biden whether he should have sought reelection at age 80, a decision between the two that ultimately unraveled in last year’s White House race.

“The stakes were simply too high,” Harris said in an excerpt from the book published Wednesday by the Atlantic. “This wasn’t a choice that should have been left to an individual’s ego, an individual’s ambition. It should have been more than a personal decision.”

Harris described how she wrestled with whether to advise Biden to consider not running for a second term. She said she “perhaps” should have weighed in, but she worried it would have looked “incredibly self-serving” and disloyal for her to do as his vice president and a likely front-runner for their

SEE HARRIS ON A2

The Take: Harris, once the model of loyalty, now voices resentment. **A2**

IN THE NEWS

FBI director is sued Three former senior officials at the bureau allege they were unlawfully fired over political loyalty. **A2**

The president called for the death penalty for the man charged in a fatal stabbing in Charlotte. **A6**

An immigration raid lays bare hurdles for the administration’s manufacturing agenda. **A12**

Dared to dine out in D.C., the president played it safe at a chain steakhouse located one block away from the White House, Tim Carman writes. **B1**

Students at four universities in the District walked out of class to protest and urge their schools’ leaders to stand up to the federal crack-down in the city. **B13**

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The Washington Post
Year 148, No. 54336



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