

# VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Alexis Strobe.

The U.S. and Britain have carried out airstrikes on Yemen's military installations. The Houthis say the attacks being carried out in support of Palestinians in Gaza. But some analysts say they have other motives. Dale [Goulak...] Goulak reports for VOA from Amman.

The U.S. military says it conducted strikes in Yemen against 10 Houthi attack drones and a ground control station on Thursday, while the Navy ship USS Carney shot down a Houthi anti-ship ballistic missile earlier and then downed three Iranian drones.

There has been no sign of backing down from the Houthis, who have declared American and British interests to be legitimate targets.

Betul Dogan-Akkas, a researcher of the Arab Gulf at Durham University, also writing in Sada, says the Houthi attacks may be a strategy to not only "reposition themselves as a key regional supporter of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation" but to also "cement their political authority in Yemen, especially amidst recent negotiations with Saudi Arabia to formally end the war."

Dale Goulak, VOA News, Amman.

European Union leaders meeting in Brussels Thursday unanimously approved on a \$54 billion support package for Ukraine. VOA's Jeff Caster reports.

The agreement came just an hour into the EU summit in Brussels, with Hungary surprisingly voting to support it after vetoing virtually the same package in December and recently threatening to do so again.

European Parliament President Roberta Metsola told reporters the vote represents the EU's continuing effort to deliver on the commitment it made two years to stand with Ukraine as long as it takes.

"We made that commitment not just from a moral standpoint, but from a strategic one too, because in doing so we knew that a time would come where our world would be put to the test and that moment is now."

In a virtual address to the summit, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed his gratitude for the unanimous vote.

Jeff Caster, VOA News.

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Pentagon Chief Lloyd Austin says he's screwed up by keeping his prostate cancer diagnosis and hospitalization from the White House. AP Washington correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

Austin says the diagnosis shook him.

"It was a gut punch."

And as a self-described pretty private guy, his first instinct was to keep it private.

"I should have informed my boss. I did not. That was a mistake."

And he's apologized to the president.

Still, Austin insists he never told his staff to keep his hospitalization a secret from the White House.

The mere fact that Austin laid out the details was notable. He rarely appears in the Pentagon briefing room and mostly avoids reporters when possible. But for more than a half hour, Austin answered questions and even joked a few times. A private man who has learned a lesson.

"Taking this kind of job means losing some of the privacy that most of us expect."

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

Nearly \$4 billion in drones and military equipment have been approved for sale to India by the Biden administration meant to improve the country's maritime safety and surveillance. The approval comes at a time when Washington is courting New Delhi to increase its cooperation with the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy.

The State Department notified Congress on Thursday of the \$3.99 billion sale that will include 31 Sky Guardian drones, 170 Hellfire missiles, 310 small-diameter bombs and related support material.

Ten Oregon Republican senators who staged a long walkout won't be able to run for reelection, according to a higher court. AP correspondent Haya Panjwani reports.

The state Supreme Court said that the GOP senators who walked out to stall the legislature last year can't run for office again. They were attempting to stall bills on abortion, transgender healthcare and gun rights.

The court's decision upholds the secretary of state's call to disqualify the senators from the ballot under a 2022 measure trying to stopping boycotts like this, where a lawmaker can be barred from reelection if they have more than 10 unexcused absences.

Five of the 10 lawmakers sued over the secretary of state's decision. Senators Tim Knopp, Daniel Bonham, Suzanne Weber, Dennis Linthicum and Lynn Findley.

The boycott lasted six weeks, the longest in the state history, installed hundreds of bills.

I'm Haya Panjwani.

Officials in South [su...] Sudan say residents of a swampy area battled with cattle herders who moved in looking for water and pasture during the dry season, and at least 38 people were killed and 52 suffered gunshot wounds.

The fighting started Wednesday and tensions remained high Thursday night. An official in Warrap state says the fighting took place in Alor, which is in Lakes state [and both] and borders both Warrap and Unity states.

A Lakes state police spokesman says the young herders from Warrap migrated to the Alor area with their cattle two weeks ago and began burning brush and the temporary shelters of residents. He says the herders were looking for pasture and water for their animals.

I'm Alexis Strobe, VOA News.