

French ex-president Sarkozy given five-year jail term over Libya funds

Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy was sentenced to five years in prison for criminal conspiracy in a trial over charges that he took millions from Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi to finance his presidential campaign in 2007.

Judges cleared the rightwing politician, who was president from 2007 to 2012, of several more serious charges but convicted on a conspiracy charge. It is the first time that a former French president has been sentenced to serve a term behind bars. They ordered the prison term to start before all appeals were exhausted.

Sarkozy said he would appeal against the “scandalous” verdict, adding: “If they want me to sleep in prison, I will sleep in prison, my head held high.”

Xi pledges emission cuts of up to 10% in next decade and takes aim at US

China's President Xi Jinping set out conservative targets for emissions cuts from the world's second-largest economy while taking a veiled swipe at US inaction on climate change under Donald Trump.

China would cut emissions by up to 10 per cent over the next decade, while doubling wind and solar capacity, Xi said, adding: “While some countries are acting against it, the international community should stay focused on the right direction.”

China's goals are the single most important component of the Paris accord objective of limiting global temperatures to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.

One expert said Xi's target was “both underwhelming and transformative” as it “anchors” China to a path “where cleantech defines leadership”.

Fed grandees unite in call for court to block Trump's bid to oust Cook



Every living former Federal Reserve chief urged the Supreme Court to deny Donald Trump's bid to remove Lisa Cook from office. Ex-Fed chairs including Janet Yellen, above, warned the move would “erode public confidence in the Fed's independence”.

Washington offers \$20bn lifeline to help Milei fight 'speculators'

US Treasury secretary Scott Bessent said Washington was in talks to provide a \$20bn swap line to Argentina and was prepared to buy its dollar debt, vowing support for libertarian President Javier Milei in defeating “speculators”.

Bessent said the White House would be “resolute in our support for allies of the US”, as it sought to calm a market crisis engulfing Milei, the only Trump ally leading a major Latin American economy.

Milei is battling the worst crisis of his presidency ahead of midterm elections next month, when the public will deliver its verdict on economic policies that pulled the country back from the brink of hyperinflation but have weighed on growth.

CHARLES CLOVER — LONDON
KATHRIN HILLE — TAIPEI

Russia is helping to train and equip Chinese airborne forces in assault tactics and hybrid warfare, according to leaked documents that point to a deepening Sino-Russian military partnership.

A cache of papers describes the transfer of enough Russian hardware to equip a People's Liberation Army airborne battalion, along with command and control systems and training to take place both in Russia and China.

The arrangements, taken from Russian servers, provide a rare glimpse of the inner workings of an ever-closer

weeks ago by the hacker group Black Moon and include contracts, meeting protocols and equipment manifests dating from 2023 to late 2024. The Center for Defence Reforms in Kyiv and the Royal United Services Institute (Rusi) in London have since vetted the papers.

Oleksandr Danylyuk, an associate fellow at Rusi, said the training mirrored operations Russia used during its lightning seizure of Crimea in 2014. He speculated that one of the objectives of the training might be preparing for future operations against Taiwan.

Rusi's Jack Watling said: “We have seen pretty extensive and growing collaboration between the PLA and the

China had been sending officers to Russian military academies since the 1990s and Russia was long China's main supplier of arms until Beijing became increasingly capable of making its own.

But over the past decade, the two militaries have deepened their co-operation, including a command system with codes and signals that both Chinese and Russian forces can read, exchange intelligence frequently and regularly hold consultations.

Military analysts said the leaked documents reflected the PLA's keenness to test and operate an array of equipment as it tried to develop what it calls an “intelligentised” force.

Joshua Arostegui, chair of the China

‘pursuing a fairly systemic approach to expand their options’

Russia is using for command and control of complex military operations, such as airborne operations.

Given Taiwan's complex topography with few beaches suitable for amphibious landing, military officials expect air assault to play an important role if China ever attacks the country.

Analysts said the hardware equipment listed in the documents amounted to gear suitable for equipping one mechanised battalion.

One Taiwanese military official said the Russian equipment could be for one of the two Airborne Corps battalions that do not have mechanised forces.

China's defence ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

Europe. Defence

Drones expose airspace vulnerabilities

Latest incidents in Denmark show difficulty of combating intrusions that bypass radars

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Denmark's recent drone incidents have laid bare European airspace vulnerabilities and raised questions about how airports and authorities should respond to such breaches.

Danish officials have faced criticism over their failure to identify or take down the unmanned aerial vehicles spotted at six separate locations near civilian and military airports this week.

Prime Minister Mette Fredriksen did not “rule out” that Moscow was behind Tuesday's incident at Copenhagen airport, after Nato and the EU condemned Russia's “reckless” behaviour when flying drones and aircraft into the airspace of countries bordering Russia or Ukraine.

Nato aircraft did, this month, shoot down Russian drones that entered Polish airspace, while Romania scrambled jets when one drone flew in from the Black Sea and Estonia raised Nato fighter jets when Russian aircraft breached its airspace.

But the incidents in Denmark, which is not a so-called eastern flank state, involved drones of undetermined origin, with the sightings occurring at night and Moscow denying involvement.

Echoing Danish police and military intelligence, Fredriksen said late on Thursday that she did not know who was behind the five drone sightings that day at regional airports and defence installations. Ministers said it appeared to be a “professional actor”.

“It points to the challenge of protecting critical national infrastructure,” said Douglas Barrie, senior fellow for military aerospace at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. “There's a cornucopia of riches that a malevolent actor might want to go after in terms of causing mischief. It's very easy to do, and it's very difficult to counter.”

While the perpetrator was unknown, Russia was constantly testing Nato members' reactions with operations



Reported locations of drone incidents in Denmark this week



Disruption: airspace over Aalborg airport, Denmark, was closed after drones were detected this week

Bo Amstrup/Reuters

and law enforcement”, said Giuseppe Spatafora, an analyst at the EU Institute for Security Studies.

Denmark has made a number of military investments in the past few weeks including in mid- and long-range air defence as well as long-range missiles capable of striking Russia. But defence minister Troels Lund Poulsen admitted that “we cannot today present a solution that removes the threat from drones”, even though he insisted Copenhagen would buy “whatever is needed”.

from Ukraine, including at a hastily gathered meeting yesterday at which the EU agreed to build interlinked drone defences across the continent's borders and critical infrastructure.

In its defence against Russia, Ukraine has developed cheap anti-drone capabilities, including acoustic sensors, mobile patrols that use heavy machine guns and anti-aircraft cannons and cheap interceptor drones.

Even then, Poulsen admitted: “We have to have a certain honesty: even

still be drones that we have problems detecting because there is a big jump in technology.”

Another problem is the sheer range of potential targets. The confirmed incidents in Denmark have focused on airports, including those housing fighter jets and military transport aircraft, as well as over the headquarters of an army regiment.

However, there are plenty of other possibilities from energy sites to hospitals, government buildings and various pipelines and cables.

François Heisbourg, a French defence analyst, said it was hard to reproach the Danish government or conclude that it lacked the technology or the doctrine to counter drones. “The Danes are in this particular world where they are not at war, but they could be at war.”

A drone safety handbook published by the EU Aviation Safety Agency admits that “given the potential for disastrous effects following a collision” between a plane and a drone, airport operators “often have no option but to stop or restrict runway operations, leading to a severe disruption to air traffic”.

Airport radars are not able to pick up drones, so the only way to detect them is via radio signals. The problem airports face is that this safety-first bias is widely known by anyone seeking to cause disruption.

“No one, especially law enforcement or air traffic control, will take the slightest risk in not closing the airport, which might be exactly what someone wants to achieve,” said one European air safety expert. “We have had drone issues for almost as long as drones exist. The problem now is the frequency.”

“You have to recognise you're playing whack-a-mole, and that it's very difficult,” said Barrie.

Denmark and the rest of Europe are waking up to potential hybrid attacks that could be directed against hundreds if not thousands of targets.

“There is one country that is the primary enemy of Europe. And that is Russia,” said Fredriksen. “Russia is doing what it can . . . to destabilise Europe — you do that with war directly, and you do it with hybrid attacks. And it has the same purpose, namely to shake the foundations of Europe.”