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Germany's Merz says new defence spending counters Putin's 'war against Europe'

March 20, 2025 spacewar.com reported: "German chancellor-in-waiting Friedrich Merz said Tuesday that his proposed huge spending boost for defence was needed because of Russian President Vladimir Putin's 'war of aggression against Europe'.

'It is a war against Europe and not just a war against the territorial integrity of Ukraine,' Merz told parliament ahead of a vote on plans that also include massive new funding for infrastructure.

Merz said Russia's aggression had included cyber-attacks and espionage, arson and contract killings as well as disinformation campaigns that 'attempt to divide and marginalize the European Union'.



German chancellor in waiting, Friedrich Merz

Europe today faces 'an aggressive Russia' as well as 'an unpredictable United States of America', said Merz, whose conservative CDU/CSU bloc won last month's general elections. Merz's plans envisage exempting defence spending from the country's strict debt rules when it exceeds one percent of GDP and setting up a 500-billion-euro (\$545-billion) fund for infrastructure investments over 12 years..."

Hamas calls for global siege on US, Israeli embassies, Iran reveals

March 20, 2025 jpost.com reported: "Hamas has called for 'mass demonstrations and a global siege on Israeli and American embassies around the globe,' according to Iran's state media Press TV.

The report on March 18 said this was 'in response to the Israeli regime's resuming its US-backed war of genocide against the Palestinian territory.'

Hamas has faced renewed Israeli airstrikes in the last two days. It has not been able to carry out much of a response so far and doesn't appear to have much of a rocket arsenal left.

This could explain its lack of response, or it could mean that it is concerned about provoking further Israeli action. Hamas likely finds it easier to encourage attacks on Israel and the US abroad, as it can then deny responsibility for them.

Since October 7, Hamas has sought to create a worldwide campaign against Israel, while Hamas backers have mobilized on campuses in the West and ripped down posters of hostages and attacked Jews. Iranian-backed proxies have also carried out attacks in the region..."

Taiwanese president calls for 'proactive measures' against increased Chinese threat

March 19, 2025 spacewar.com reported: "Taiwan must implement 'proactive measures' to thwart China's use of its democracy against it, said President Lai Ching-te amid increased efforts by Beijing to undermine the sovereignty of the self-government island.

During a press conference Thursday following a high-level security meeting, Lai outlined 17 major strategies to protect Taiwan against China's threats.

'We have no choice but to take even more proactive measures,' he said.

'It is time we adopt proper preventive measures, enhance our democratic resilience and national security and protect our cherished free and democratic way of life.'

Despite Taiwan having never been a part of the People's Republic of China, which was founded in 1949, Beijing sees the island of 23 million as a breakaway province and has vowed to take it back by force if necessary..."

Israel resumes Gaza strikes, says Hamas collapsed truce by refusing to free hostages

March 18, 2025 timesofisrael.com reported: “The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas collapsed early Tuesday morning after roughly two months, as the Israel Defense Forces launched dozens of strikes throughout Gaza under orders from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who cited the terror group’s ‘repeated refusal’ to release Israeli hostages.

At least 404 Palestinians were killed, including children, according to unverified figures from the Hamas-run health ministry, which doesn’t differentiate between civilians and combatants. It said another 562 were wounded.

Netanyahu’s office said the decision to resume strikes shortly after midnight ‘followed Hamas’s repeated refusal to release our hostages, as well as its rejection of all of the proposals it has received from US special envoy to the Mideast Envoy Steve Witkoff and from the mediators.’

Hamas has insisted on sticking to the original terms of the deal, which was supposed to enter its second phase at the beginning of the month. That phase envisioned Israel fully withdrawing from Gaza and agreeing to permanently end the war in exchange for the release of the remaining living hostages. While Israel signed on to the deal, Netanyahu has long insisted that Israel will not end the war until Hamas’s governing and military capabilities have been destroyed...”

Barna: America needs ‘spiritual renewal’ as fewer than half of Americans believe God exists

March 17, 2025 christianpost.com reports: “A new survey has found that more than half of Americans do not believe God exists or that He ‘affects lives,’ prompting one prominent researcher to highlight the need for ‘sweeping national repentance and spiritual renewal.’

The Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University released the second installment of its American Worldview Inventory 2025 on Wednesday.

The research found that overall, 60% of Americans do not believe God exists or that He ‘affects lives.’ Nearly half of self-identified Christians (47%) and a slightly smaller share of theologically identified born-again Christians (40%) said the same.

George Barna, director of research at Arizona Christian University, said of the findings, ‘The more time you spend thinking about what this research tells us, the more you are likely to conclude that nothing short of sweeping national repentance and spiritual renewal can save America from itself.’...”



Second Iranian ship suspected of carrying missile ingredient leaves China

March 14, 2025 voanews.com reports: “A second Iranian ship that Western news reports have named as part of a scheme to import a missile propellant ingredient from China is heading to Iran with a major cargo load, an exclusive VOA analysis has found. Ship-tracking websites show the Iranian-flagged cargo ship Jairan departed China on Monday, a month later than the expected departure cited by one of the news reports.

The Jairan was named in January and February articles by The Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal and CNN as one of two Iranian cargo ships Tehran is using to import 1,000 metric tons of sodium perchlorate from China. The three news outlets cited unnamed Western intelligence sources as saying the purported shipment could be transformed into enough ammonium perchlorate — a key solid fuel propellant component — to produce 260 midrange Iranian missiles...”

October 7 blueprint: Seized Hamas memos outline path to Israel’s destruction

March 14, 2025 ynetnews.com reports: “Captured Hamas military wing documents uncovered by the IDF in Gaza reveal the terror group’s preparations for a large-scale war with Israel, particularly an attack similar to the October 7 massacre referred to by Hamas as the ‘Al-Aqsa Flood.’ The documents outline Hamas’s vision for the ‘destruction of Israel’ and its operational plans to achieve this goal...”

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