

# EURASIA DIGEST

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## **Russia Tested Burevestnik Nuclear-Powered Missile**

President Vladimir Putin [said](#), on 26 October, that Russia had successfully carried out a test of its nuclear-powered intercontinental cruise missile Burevestnik. The missile flew 14,000 kilometers over the course of about 15 hours. Putin said that "it is truly a unique weapon, one that no other country in the world possesses". Meanwhile, the Kremlin [rejected](#) claims that Russia had resumed nuclear testing after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the Pentagon to restart nuclear weapons tests for the first time since 1992. Post-Soviet Russia has never conducted a nuclear explosive test. The Soviet Union's last test took place in 1990. President Vladimir Putin also signed a law, on 27 October, terminating an already defunct plutonium disposal agreement with the United States that aimed to prevent both sides from building more nuclear weapons.

## **Russia Said Trump's Ukraine Peace Plan 'Radically' Shifted Since Alaska Summit**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov [said](#), on 27 October, that U.S. President Donald Trump's position on achieving lasting peace in Ukraine has "radically" changed under European influence since his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska. Lavrov accused European "hawks" and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of exerting "huge, unbelievable pressure" on Washington to block any U.S.-Russia cooperation, repeating the Kremlin's claim that Kyiv's European allies are obstructing peace efforts. Meanwhile, President Vladimir Putin's economic cooperation

envoy met White House envoy Steve Witkoff in the US. The visit took place against the backdrop of heightened tensions following President Trump's decision to sanction Russian oil companies Rosneft and Lukoil, as well as to cancel a planned summit with Putin after failing to secure progress on a ceasefire in Ukraine.

## **Putin Said U.S. Sanctions 'Serious' But Won't Significantly Hit Russian Economy**

Russian President Vladimir Putin [said](#), on 23 October, that the latest U.S. sanctions targeting two major oil firms – Lukoil and Rosneft - were "serious," but not strong enough to significantly affect the economy. He added that the sanctions were an "unfriendly act" that "does not strengthen Russia-U.S. relations, which have only just begun to recover."

## **Russia Moved To Year-Round Military Draft Amid Wartime Manpower Needs**

Russia's lower-house State Duma [passed](#) a bill, on 28 October, that would move the military toward a year-round conscription model starting next year amid the Kremlin's efforts to expand manpower for its war in Ukraine. Under the legislation, draft boards will be able to conduct medical exams, psychological screening and other enlistment steps any time from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 each year.

## **Russian Central Bank Cut Key Rate To 16.5% As Economy Slowed**

The Russian Central Bank, on 24 October, [announced](#) that it was cutting the key interest rate to 16.5 per cent, down half a percentage point from 17 per cent. The quarter-point reduction marks the fourth

consecutive rate cut since June, when the bank began easing policy from a wartime peak of 21 per cent. The Bank expects inflation to stay at 6.5-7 per cent by the end of 2025, before easing to 4-5 per cent in 2026.

### **EU Unveiled Sweeping Sanctions Targeting Russian Energy, Banks And Crypto**

The European Union, on 23 October, imposed its 19<sup>th</sup> package of sanctions on Russia over the invasion of Ukraine, targeting Moscow's key energy revenues, financial networks and technology supply chains. The economic restrictions also extend to Belarus, Chinese companies and crypto platforms. The package includes a ban on Russian liquefied natural gas imports from Jan. 1, 2027, with short-term deals banned within six months, and expanded restrictions on the oil giants Rosneft and Gazprom Neft. EU is exploring a 140-billion-euro (US\$ 162 billion) loan for Ukraine using frozen Russian central bank assets. EU energy ministers have also agreed to phase out their remaining gas imports from Russia by the end of 2027.

### **European Space Firms Team-up To Deal With New Competitors**

A deal to forge Europe's answer to Elon Musk's Starlink was reached on 23 October as the continent's top space firms agreed to combine their satellite manufacturing and services businesses. Marking the most ambitious tie-up of European aerospace assets since the creation of missiles maker MBDA in 2001, Airbus, Thales and Leonardo (LDOF.MI) will create a Toulouse-based venture to

begin operations in 2027. French Finance Minister Roland Lescure said the preliminary deal would "strengthen European sovereignty in a context of intense global competition". Europe's top satellite makers have long competed to build complex spacecraft in geostationary orbit but have been hit by the arrival of cheap, tiny satellites in low Earth orbit, notably the Starlink network built by Musk's SpaceX.

### **European Union Sought To End Dependency On China For Rare Earths**

European Commission Ursula von der Leyen said, on 25 October, that the European Union is working on a strategy to reduce its dependency on Chinese critical raw materials. The renewed strategy comes in a response to China's decision in October to implement tighter restrictions on rare earths exports. Von der Leyen said that in the short term, the EU would focus on finding solutions with its Chinese counterparts, but that it would also ramp up its efforts to coordinate with other countries like Ukraine and Australia, Canada, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Chile and Greenland to secure access to alternative sources of the minerals.

### **New Strategic EU-India Agenda: EU Council Approved Conclusions**

The EU Council, on 20 October, approved conclusions on a new strategic EU-India agenda, in which it welcomes the strong impetus in relations between the European Union and India. The conclusions endorse the Joint Communication on a "New Strategic EU-India Agenda" by the High Representative and the European Commission, and its objective of

deepening EU-India ties, including prosperity and sustainability, technology and innovation, security and defence, and connectivity and global issues.

### **India-Central Asian States To Work With Afghanistan To Tackle Security Challenges**

India and the Central Asian states [agreed](#), on 17 October, to work closely with Afghanistan to address security challenges and to foster connectivity and economic development. The decision was made at a meeting of national security advisers and senior security officials of India and the five Central Asian states held in Bishkek. This was the third meeting of NSAs and senior security officials of India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

### **US-Central Asia Summit To Take Place On 6 November**

A leaders' [summit](#) between Central Asia and the United States is scheduled for 6 November in Washington, D.C. The meeting would bring the heads of state of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to Washington for only the second leaders' level C5+1 meeting, after the first took place on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2023. Since 2015, the C5+1 format, linking the five Central Asian states with the United States, has steadily become Washington's primary channel for strategic diplomacy in the region. There are reports that rare earths will be a central focus of Trump's engagement with the Central Asian leaders.

### **Herat Tribal Peace Paves Way for Central Asian Connectivity Projects**

In Herat province, a long-standing [conflict](#) between the Timuri and Achakzai tribal communities has officially ended. This reconciliation has practical implications for Central Asia. The proposed Turgundi, Herat-Kandahar-Spin Boldak railway, a critical trans-Afghan infrastructure project, passes through Timuri and Achakzai territories. Until recently, their rivalry posed a major risk from land disputes to construction security. Now, with both communities demonstrating their readiness to cooperate, political and transactional risks are receding.

### **Uzbek Parliament Ratified Border Agreement with Kyrgyzstan And Tajikistan**

On October 28, the Legislative Chamber of Uzbekistan's parliament, the Oliy Majlis, [ratified](#) a law approving a trilateral agreement on the junction point of the state borders of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The agreement formally establishes the precise location of the tri-border junction and the delineation of border lines in the area. The deal is expected to bolster good-neighbourly relations, reinforce trust and strategic partnerships, and contribute to the international stature of the Central Asian region. The agreement also lays a legal foundation for expanding cross-border cooperation, enhancing trade, and launching joint infrastructure initiatives in neighbouring regions. These efforts are expected to create jobs and raise living standards.