

John Bolton Blasts Biden for Ukraine's Failing Counteroffensive

Former US National Security Advisor John Bolton has blasted US President Biden over Ukraine's stalling counteroffensive in an op-ed for *The Wall Street Journal*. While Ukraine has received tens of billions of dollars worth of weapons from the US, a scale of aid not seen since the post-World War II Marshal Plan, the notoriously hawkish Bolton said Biden wasn't doing enough and blamed the president's "hesitancy" for Ukraine's inability to break through Russia's defenses. "Ukraine's offensive failures and Russia's defensive successes share a common cause: the slow, faltering, nonstrategic supply of military assistance by the West," Bolton wrote. Bolton said the administration was too concerned about the risk of escalation. "The serial debates over whether to supply this or that weapons system, the perpetual fear that Russia will escalate to war against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and occasional Kremlin nuclear saber-rattling have instilled a paralyzing caution in Western capitals," he wrote. Bolton described Biden's fueling of the proxy war in Ukraine as "timid" and "haphazard" and blamed the president for the growing public opposition to the policy.

Niger Junta Refuses Negotiations

A delegation of Nigerian Islamic scholars travelled to Niamey for meetings with the leaders of the military junta who took power last month. The group says the coup leaders expressed an openness to diplomacy. However, this account has been sharply contradicted by a media spokesperson representing the junta who claimed negotiations with regional countries are impossible unless Niger's new leadership is recognized. These statements come after a meeting of defense chiefs from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was postponed indefinitely. The meeting was called to review the "best options" for a military intervention which ECOWAS has previously threatened may be necessary if the overthrown President Mohamed Bazoum is not reinstated. ECOWAS activated and ordered the deployment of a "standby" force to "restore constitutional order in the Republic of Niger." Current ECOWAS chairman and Nigerian President Bola Tinubu approved the Islamic scholars' mission to Niamey, in a sign that the bloc may also be holding out for a negotiated settlement. The scholars' account viscerally differs from statements made over the weekend by Insa Garba Saidou, a local activist who – though not as an official member of the junta – works as a liaison between Niger's military rulers and claims he maintains direct communication with them. Saidou told the Associated Press that there will be no dialogue with regional countries unless Tiani is recognized.

Pakistan Suspends Import of Russian Crude Oil

Pakistan has suspended its import of crude oil from Russia after the refining process yielded more furnace oil than petrol. Various sources claimed that Pakistan Refinery had refused to process more Russian oil, as it yielded less petrol with 20% more furnace oil than Arabian crude oil. They added that the benefits of importing Russian crude oil were limited, with a larger quantity of export of furnace oil at a lower price. Some sources also claimed that Russian oil had yielded less kerosene and jet fuel for ships, which was not beneficial for the country. Two crude oil ships from Russia had arrived at the Karachi Port on June 11 and 26, after which no Russian oil ship came to Pakistan.

The issue of importing oil from Russia has gained great political and diplomatic importance over the past year. With Iman Khan's supporting arguing his visit to Russia was the reason for his overthrow.