

Trump indicted in classified documents case in historic first for a former president

Donald Trump has been indicted on charges of mishandling classified documents at his Florida estate, a remarkable development that makes him the first former president in U.S. history to face criminal charges by the federal government that he once oversaw.

The Justice Department was expected to make public a seven-count indictment ahead of a historic court appearance next week in the midst of a 2024 presidential campaign punctuated by criminal prosecutions in multiple states, AP reported.

The indictment was filed under seal and contains seven charges, including willful retention of national defense information, corruptly concealing documents, conspiracy to obstruct justice, and making false statements, according to a person familiar with the case who asked for anonymity to discuss confidential information. The document could be made public on Friday,

Bloomberg reported. The indictment carries unmistakably grave legal consequences, including the possibility of prison if Trump's convicted.

But it also has enormous political implications, potentially upending a Republican presidential primary that Trump had been dominating and testing anew the willingness of GOP voters and party leaders to stick with a now twice-indicted candidate who could face still more charges. And it sets the stage for a sensational trial centered on claims that a man once entrusted to safeguard the nation's most closely guarded secrets willfully, and illegally, hoarded sensitive national security information.

The Justice Department did not immediately confirm the indictment publicly. But two people familiar with the situation who were not authorized to discuss it publicly said that the indictment included seven criminal



AP

counts. One of those people said Trump's lawyers were contacted by prosecutors shortly before he announced Thursday on his Truth Social platform that he had been indicted. Within minutes of his announcement, Trump, who said he was due in court Tuesday afternoon in Miami, began fundraising off it for his presidential campaign. He declared his innocence in a video and re-

peated his familiar refrain that the investigation is a "witch hunt."

The case adds to deepening legal jeopardy for Trump, who has already been indicted in New York and faces additional investigations in Washington and Atlanta that also could lead to criminal charges.

The indictment in Miami federal court will almost certainly upend the race

to be the Republican nominee for president in the 2024 election and means that Trump could be facing prison time or disqualification from holding public office depending on the charges if he is convicted.

The Trump campaign called the indictment an "act of open legal 'warfare.'" The White House declined to comment, as did the Justice Department.

Int'l help rolls in to fight persistent Canadian wildfires

Allies around the world have promised to increase their help to Canada in its fight against hundreds of blazes that have swept through the country in its worst-ever start to wildfire season.

Forest fires that have gathered strength over the last month have forced tens of thousands of people from their homes and sent a smoky haze billowing over a large swath of the United States, Reuters reported. The fires have impacted mining operations in Canada and disrupted flights in the United States. On Thursday the Toronto District School Board, Canada's largest, rescheduled or moved indoors all outside activities, including field trips and local school events.

Although wildfires are common in Canada, it is unusual for blazes to be burning simultaneously in the east and west, stretching firefighting resources, forcing the government to send in the military to help, and fueling concerns about the worsening consequences of climate change.

NY schools, restaurants shut

Smoke from raging wildfires in Canada was spreading further into southern and western areas, giving New York and the nearby

northeastern coast a brief respite as pollution levels dipped slightly.

An orange haze has blanketed the metropolis for two days, independent.co.uk reported.

Pollution still remained at an "unhealthy" level in New York, Washington DC and Philadelphia but has been downgraded from the "code purple" seen on Wednesday and Thursday. Wildfire smoke is now set to reach states as far as Georgia and Louisiana down south, while also drifting westward to Oklahoma, Nebraska, Kansas and Illinois.

At least 13 states have issued air quality alerts, impacting an estimated 115 million people.

Schools moved to remote classes in New York on Friday, while baseball games were postponed and several restaurants shut as smoke billowed from Canada's devastating wildfires.

There are more than 400 wildfires raging there and have led to mass evacuations in Quebec Province.

Canadian officials warned this could be the country's worst wildfire season on record, with over 6.7 million acres already scorched.

France says nuclear power 'non-negotiable'

French nuclear power is "an absolute red line" and non-negotiable, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said Thursday, following Franco-German disagreements over the role of nuclear energy in Europe.

Nuclear-reliant Paris has already irked Berlin by insisting on giving nuclear energy a starring role in European plans to produce more green technology in Europe, AFP reported.

"Nuclear power is an absolute red line for France, and France will not relinquish any of the competitive advantages linked to nuclear energy", Le Maire insisted as

he closed the annual conference of the French Electricity Union. France's 56 ageing reactors normally provide some 70 percent of France's electricity needs.

"French nuclear power is non-negotiable and will never be negotiable. We will have to live with it, and we are convinced that it is not only in France's interest, but also in the interest of the European continent", he added. Earlier, at the same meeting, German state secretary for economic affairs and climate action Stefan Wenzel acknowledged that France and Germany "often have different approaches

in energy policy, especially concerning nuclear energy". Germany "respects diverging choices for other fossil fuel energy sources by other member states as France that may similarly contribute to achieve climate neutrality," he added. However, "what we cannot accept is when nuclear energy is defined as renewable, or low carbon hydrogen is equated with green hydrogen". In April, Germany switched off its last three nuclear reactors, exiting atomic power even as it seeks to wean itself off fossil fuels and manage an energy crisis caused by the war in Ukraine.

Hawks' trap laid ...

Unfortunately, the US has yet to make the necessary move, and the diplomatic exchange between the two nations regarding nuclear talks remains ongoing.

However, Iranian officials have reported that cooperation between the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency has entered a new phase, characterized by constructive collaboration.

Recent developments are indicative of a shift in the dynamic between Iran and the IAEA, with constructive collaboration supplanting political posturing. This new atmosphere was highlighted at a recent meeting of the agency's Board of Governors, which was no-

tably different from previous gatherings. Despite this positive trend, there are concerns that certain American lawmakers are attempting to undermine cooperation between Tehran and the agency by suggesting anti-Iranian resolutions.

It is imperative that the European troika, with their considerable experience in dealing with Iran, do not succumb to such non-constructive pressure. Iranian officials have stated that the repeated suggestion of triggering the snapback mechanism represents a miscalculation, capable of rapidly causing things to spiral out of control and driving both sides further apart.

The proposed snapback mechanism appears to

be motivated, at least in part, by the imminent lifting of certain nuclear and non-nuclear restrictions imposed on Iran under the JCPOA.

These restrictions are slated to end in October 2023 and include lifting limitations on ballistic missile production research and development, ending sanctions on previously suspended Iranian economic sectors, eliminating sanctions on certain individuals and institutions tied to Iran's nuclear program, and requiring the European Union to remove remaining sanctions related to Iran's nuclear program. The execution of the snapback plan, which could result in the reinstatement of all previously lifted UN sanctions against Iran, threatens to prevent the potential relaxation of restrictions outlined in the

nuclear deal. Given the current situation, there appears to be little justification for Tehran to continue collaborating with the IAEA or engaging in negotiations aimed at resolving disputes. Responsibility for any subsequent events will likely fall on the United States and the European trio. The Iranian Foreign Ministry previously underscored this point, noting that Western parties have received a clear message regarding Iran's response to a possible snapback of UN sanctions.

For this reason, it is imperative that the European troika remain vigilant and aware of the potential influence of US hawks or Israeli pressure, as well as the negative consequences that could result from implementing the non-productive snapback mechanism.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Russia to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus'



REUTERS - Russia will start deploying tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus after the facilities are ready on July 7-8, President Vladimir Putin told his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko on Friday in a meeting in Sochi.

"So, everything is according to plan, everything is stable," Putin said, according to a readout from the Kremlin.

Palestinian president to visit China next week



AFP - Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas will make a state visit to China next week, Beijing said Friday.

"At the invitation of President Xi Jinping, president of the state of Palestine Mahmud Abbas will pay a state visit to China from June 13 to 16," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said.

"He is the first Arab head of state received by China this year, fully embodying the high level of China-Palestine good relations, which have traditionally been friendly," ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a regular briefing later.

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