

Daily Memo: Concerns Grow Over Ukraine, Houthis Target Abu Dhabi

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Foreigners to leave Ukraine. The United States **ordered** the families of U.S. diplomats in Kyiv to leave the country amid growing speculation about a Russian incursion. Ukraine's Foreign Ministry **called** the decision premature, but soon after the announcement, the U.K. **said** it would also pull out some of its embassy staff and their families. The European Union said it had no plans to follow suit, while NATO **announced** that it would strengthen its presence in Eastern Europe, including by deploying additional ships and military aircraft. Ukraine's foreign minister, meanwhile, was critical of **comments** from Germany's defense minister that sending military aid to Ukraine now would not lead to deescalation. Germany's naval chief resigned over the weekend after saying that Kyiv would never regain control over Crimea and that Western leaders should show respect to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Another Houthi attack. The UAE's Defense Ministry **said** on Monday that the country's air defense systems intercepted two ballistic missiles fired at Abu Dhabi by Houthi rebels in Yemen. The ministry also **said** an F-16 fighter jet destroyed the launcher from which the missiles were deployed in al-Jawf province. The attack comes a week after the Houthis launched a drone strike against the same city.

Chinese incursion. China **sent** 39 warplanes into Taiwan's air defense identification zone on Sunday, a day after the U.S. and Japan carried out massive naval drills that included two U.S. aircraft carrier groups in the Philippine Sea. The Chinese incursion was the largest of its kind this year and the second largest ever, just behind Beijing's deployment of 56 warplanes to the area in October.

Small tech. China will offer more **support** to small and medium-sized tech firms, including cuts to taxes and fees, as well as backing for research institutions and colleges, according to Chinese Premier Li Keqiang. The announcement comes as Beijing continues to rein in major tech firms.

Syria patrols. Russia and Syria carried out **joint air patrols** over the Golan Heights, Syria's southern border, the Euphrates River and northern Syria.

Friendly neighbors. Azerbaijan's ambassador to Tehran and Iran's defense minister **met** over the weekend to discuss bilateral relations. Representatives from both countries also held **talks** on construction and hydroelectric projects, as well as other energy and water issues. Azerbaijan's defense minister will visit Iran on Tuesday.

Modernization. China's top economic planner **unveiled** a five-year plan to build a modern, more efficient "distribution system." The plan aims to improve the flow of goods and resources, commercial and logistics facilities, distribution networks and transportation capacity, among other things.

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