"All the News That's Fit to Print"

# The New York Times

**National Edition**
Upper Midwest: Sunshine, then clouds. Afternoon showers west. Cooler than average. High in the 60s to middle 70s. Turning rainy tonight. Weather map appears on Page A26.

VOL. CLXXI ... No. 59,433 © 2022 The New York Times Company TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022 Printed in Chicago $3.00

IVOR PRICKETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The deployment of American-made M777 howitzers may help Ukraine achieve partial artillery superiority against Russian forces.

## President Says He'd Use Force to Defend Taiwan From a Chinese Attack

### *Surprise Declaration Sets the Stage for Heightened Tensions With Beijing*

By ZOLAN KANNO-YOUNGS and PETER BAKER

TOKYO — President Biden signaled on Monday that he would use military force to defend Taiwan if it were ever attacked by China, dispensing with the "strategic ambiguity" traditionally favored by American presidents and risking Beijing's anger at a time of rising tensions in the region.

At a news conference during a visit to Japan, Mr. Biden suggested that he would be willing to go further on behalf of Taiwan than he has in helping Ukraine, where he has provided tens of billions of dollars in weapons as well as intelligence assistance to help defeat Russian invaders but has refused to send American troops.

"You didn't want to get involved in the Ukraine conflict militarily for obvious reasons," a reporter said to Mr. Biden. "Are you willing to get involved militarily to defend Taiwan if it comes to that?"

"Yes," Mr. Biden answered flatly.

"You are?" the reporter followed up.

"That's the commitment we made," he said.

The president's declaration, offered without caveat or clarification, set the stage for fresh tensions between the United States and China, which insists that Taiwan is a part of its territory and cannot exist as a sovereign nation.

It also surprised some members of Mr. Biden's own administration watching in the room, who did not expect him to promise such unvarnished resolve. The United States has historically warned China against using force against Taiwan while generally remaining vague about how far it would go to aid the island in such a circumstance.

The White House quickly tried to deny that the president meant what he seemed to be saying. "As the president said, our policy has not changed," the White House said in a statement hurriedly sent to reporters. "He reiterated our One China Policy and our commitment to peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. He also reiterated our commitment under the Taiwan Relations Act to provide Taiwan with the military means to defend itself."

Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III sounded the same themes when asked by reporters back in Washington. "I think the president was clear on the fact that the policy has not changed," he said.

But Mr. Biden's comments went beyond simply reiterating that the United States would provide Taiwan with arms, because the question was posed as a contrast to what he had done with Ukraine.

POOL; BILL CLARK/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan met with President Biden in Tokyo on Monday.

In fact, he repeated the notion that he was committed to doing more for Taiwan than he had for Ukraine. "The idea that it can be taken by force, just taken by force, is just not appropriate," he said of Taiwan. "It would dislocate the entire region and be another action similar to what happened in Ukraine. And so it's a burden that is even stronger."

Neither Mr. Biden nor anyone in his administration elaborated on what specifically would be entailed by getting "militarily involved" and the president did not respond to questions at a later event asking for more detail. But he left the clear impression that he meant that American forces would be deployed for Taiwan in some fashion.

"President Biden seems to have staked out a new position some-

*Continued on Page A8*

**OFF SCRIPT** In a familiar pattern, the president spoke his mind and then his aides scrambled to spin it away. White House Memo. PAGE A8

## *Russia Official Calls Out War In a Fiery Exit*

By ANTON TROIANOVSKI

Boris Bondarev says President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia could have spent the last two decades "developing the country" but instead turned it "into some kind of total horror, a threat to the world."

Mr. Bondarev would know: He spent his career promoting Mr. Putin's foreign policy.

A midlevel diplomat at Russia's United Nations mission in Geneva, Mr. Bondarev on Monday became the most prominent Russian official to resign and publicly criticize the war in Ukraine since the invasion on Feb. 24.

"For 20 years of my diplomatic career I have seen different turns of our foreign policy but never have I been so ashamed of my country as on Feb. 24 of this year," Mr. Bondarev said in an email to colleagues.

While his blistering message was unlikely to reach most Russians given the state's domination of the news media, his resignation showed that discontent lurks in Russian officialdom despite the facade of national unity that the Kremlin has worked to create.

"Those who conceived this war want only one thing — to remain in power forever, live in pompous tasteless palaces, sail on yachts comparable in tonnage and cost to the entire Russian Navy, enjoying unlimited power and complete impunity," Mr. Bondarev said in his email. "To achieve that they are willing to sacrifice as many lives as it takes."

The resignation came on the same day that President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine told the world's political and business leaders that they needed to go much further to punish Moscow for invading his country

*Continued on Page A8*

## Ukraine Adds Powerful Tool: U.S. Howitzer

By ANDREW E. KRAMER and MARIA VARENIKOVA

POKROVSK, Ukraine — Camouflaged in a heap of branches cut from nearby trees, the weapon that Ukraine hopes will make a critical difference in its war with Russia is all but invisible from more than a few feet away.

Soon, a single round shoots out with a boom and a howling, metallic shriek as it sails toward Russian positions.

It is the American-made M777 howitzer. It shoots farther, moves faster and is hidden more easily, and it's what the Ukrainian military has been waiting for.

Three months into the war in Ukraine, the first M777s — the most lethal weapons the West has provided so far — are now deployed in combat in Ukraine's east. Their arrival has buoyed Ukraine's hopes of achieving artillery superiority at least in some frontline areas, a key step toward military victories in a war now fought mostly on flat, open steppe at long ranges.

The American howitzers are chunky machines of steel and titanium swathed in hydraulic hoses and perched on four braces that fold up and down. They have already fired hundreds of rounds since arriving around May 8, destroying armored vehicles and killing Russian soldiers, Ukrainian commanders say.

"This weapon brings us closer to victory," Col. Roman Kachur, commander of the 55th Artillery Brigade, whose unit was the first unit to deploy the weapon, said in an interview. Mixing confidence with an implicit plea for more weapons, he added: "With every modern weapon, every precise weapon, we get closer to victory."

*Continued on Page A7*

## *Invade Haiti, Wall Street Urged, And American Military Obliged*

*This article is by* ***Selam Gebrekidan, Matt Apuzzo, Catherine Porter*** *and* ***Constant Méheut.***

**THE RANSOM**
*A Long Occupation*

In the drowsy hours of a December afternoon, eight American Marines strolled into the headquarters of Haiti's national bank and walked out with $500,000 in gold, packed in wooden boxes.

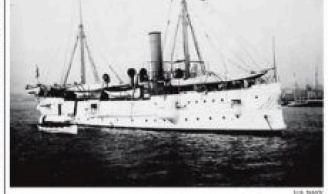
They drove the loot by wagon to the shore, past American soldiers in civilian clothes who kept watch along the route. Once at the water, they loaded the boxes and sped to an awaiting gunboat.

The gold was in the vault of a Wall Street bank within days.

The operation took place in 1914 — a precursor to the full-scale invasion of Haiti. American forces took over the country the following summer and ruled it with brute force for 19 years, one of the longest military occupations in American history. Even after the soldiers left in 1934, Haiti remained under the control of American financial officers who pulled the country's purse strings for another 13 years.

Invading Haiti was necessary, the United States said. The country was so poor and unstable, the explanation went, that if the United States didn't take over, some other power would — in America's backyard, no less. Secretary of State Robert Lansing also portrayed the occupation as a civilizing mission to end the "anarchy, savagery and oppression" in Haiti, convinced that, as he once wrote, "the African race are de-

*Continued on Page A10*



U.S. NAVY

In 1914, U.S. troops took $500,000 in gold from Haiti's national bank, and shipped it to Wall Street aboard the U.S.S. Machias.

## *Baby Formula Shortage Reveals Long-Overlooked Safety Lapses*

*This article is by* ***Amanda Morris, Christina Jewett*** *and* ***Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs.***

Riley San Miguel said her son, Kru, was barely a month old when he started crying all the time, not wanting to eat. When he developed a fever, he was quickly admitted to an intensive care unit. His spinal fluid was infected with bacteria, and it was spreading to his brain. The doctors believed it had probably come from his infant formula.

"Initially, doctors were worried Kru wasn't going to make it," said Ms. San Miguel, 23, who lives in Sonora, Texas. The baby underwent the first of several operations on his brain to control escalating seizures and swelling, and when he could no longer breathe on his own, they put him on a ventilator for 21 days. Eventually, most of the right side of his brain had to be removed.

Her son, she learned, had been exposed to Cronobacter sakazakii, a deadly bacterium that is often linked to babies who consume powdered formula and can cause serious brain damage, developmental disabilities and death. Health officials analyzed two open cans of formula from Ms. San Miguel's home; one tested negative and the other did not have enough product left to test.

Kru fell ill in August 2019, more than two years before similar infections in four babies — two of them fatal — triggered a voluntary recall at an Abbott Nutrition plant in Sturgis, Mich., that manufactured formula consumed by the latest sickened babies.

The recall helped lead the way to a nationwide shortage of infant formula that has left parents struggling to feed their children; the Biden administration has responded by working with Abbott to restart production and flying in additional supplies from Europe.

*Continued on Page A19*

## Buffalo's Black Children Are Afraid: 'It Could Just Happen to Me'

By LOLA FADULU

BUFFALO — Ruyvette Townsend leaned against a student's desk early last week, trying not to cry.

Ms. Townsend, a staff member who tracks attendance at Leonardo da Vinci High School in Buffalo, looked at the rows of students seated in front of her: Some had their heads down, others were tense with anger, and many were shaking their heads.

"Who would drive that far to kill people?'" Ms. Townsend, 60, recalled one student asking. "'Didn't somebody see him coming?'"

Some of the students had shopped with their families at the Tops supermarket where 10 Black people were killed on May 14 in a racist mass shooting. Others had known several of the victims, and one student was there when the bodies were collected.

Some saw the live footage of the massacre and couldn't get it out of their heads.

The mass shooting was the deadliest in the United States this year, and one of the deadliest racist massacres in recent American history. Federal data shows a recent spike in hate crimes against Black Americans.

Many Black families in Buffalo are fearful.

"I think the concern is because the schools are predominantly Black around this area," said Denise Sweet, 48, a mother of two boys. "Who's to say that another sharpshooter, when it's all died down, might not start this all over again and enter school?"

School officials want Black families to trust that if any such threat

*Continued on Page A20*

# The Washington Post

Price may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington. B2 V1 V2 V3 V4

Rain 64/57 • Tomorrow: Cloudy 66/59 B8 *Democracy Dies in Darkness* TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022 • $2

## Pfizer says shot is safe for young children

### Early vaccine data shows 80 percent efficacy for those under 5 years old

By CAROLYN Y. JOHNSON and LAURIE MCGINLEY

Pfizer and its German partner, BioNTech, said Monday that an early analysis showed their three-dose coronavirus vaccine regimen triggered a strong immune response in younger children, proving 80 percent effective at preventing symptomatic infections in children 6 months to 4 years old.

The results, along with other recent developments, signal that the long and frustrating wait for a vaccine for the youngest children, the last group to lack access, could be over within weeks.

The Food and Drug Administration, in an announcement a few hours after Pfizer and BioNTech issued a news release about their results, said the agency's outside experts are scheduled to meet June 15 to discuss the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and another shot for the youngest children from the biotechnology company Moderna.

If the FDA advisory panel looks favorably on the pediatric vaccines, the agency could authorize the shots as soon as June 16 or 17. Vaccine advisers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention then would consider

SEE VIRUS ON A7

## Firms helped fund Stefanik despite furor over her ads

By TODD C. FRANKEL and DYLAN FREEDMAN

As companies pledged support and money to fight racism following George Floyd's killing in May 2020, Tom Naratil, U.S. president of the financial firm UBS, told his 20,000 workers, "Silence is not an option."

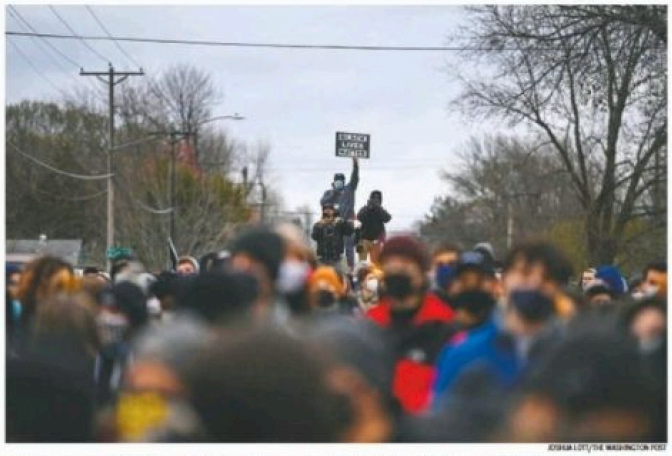
"We all have a responsibility to call out hate, to stand for what's right and to turn emotion into constructive action," Naratil said.

And UBS followed up. It donated more than $3 million to racial justice groups. It joined an industry push to combat economic disparities based on race.

But UBS Americas also donated $17,500 to the campaign and political action committees of Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York, the No. 3 House Republican, after she was widely criticized for echoing the white supremacist "great replacement" theory in campaign advertisements late last year. UBS declined to comment.

Stefanik's ads are under renewed scrutiny after a deadly

SEE CONTRIBUTIONS ON A19



JOSHUA LOTT/THE WASHINGTON POST

**People attend a vigil for Daunte Wright in Brooklyn Center, Minn., in April 2021. Wright was killed by a White police officer during a traffic stop in the suburb of Minneapolis, one of several high-profile police killings of Black men in the region.**

## After the reckoning, still waiting for results

### Two years after Floyd's death, Black Minnesotans say little has changed in their state, where inequalities run deep

By HOLLY BAILEY
IN MINNEAPOLIS

George Floyd's May 2020 death beneath Derek Chauvin's knee cast a harsh national spotlight on the Twin Cities, exposing what people of color here have long complained about — the region's troubled history with race and policing, including several high-profile police killings of Black men, and a state that has some of the nation's deepest racial disparities between Whites and Blacks, including in housing and income.

And in the days after Floyd's murder, White politicians publicly grappled with how a state known for its progressive politics and economic opportunity could become the ugly epicenter of an American reckoning on race and justice.

At a news conference after Floyd's death, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz (D) spoke emotionally of how a state long ranked as one of the best places to live in terms of jobs and education did not deliver for people of color, and he joined other elected officials in vowing to fix those disparities.

"We ranked second in a survey of the 50 states, second in happiness behind Hawaii. But if you take a deeper look and peel it back . . . all of those statistics are true if you are White. If you're not, we ranked near the bottom," he said. "Those two things can't operate at the same place. You cannot continue to say you're a great place to live if your neighbor, because of the color of their skin, doesn't have that same opportunity."

Walz ascribed those disparities to "small hidden racisms" for which the "ultimate end . . . is the ability to believe you can murder a Black man in public."

But two years later, many Black

SEE MINNESOTA ON A4

**Police reform stalls:** Biden focuses on hiring more officers. **A5**

**Painful reminder:** Buffalo shooting stirs up memories for S.C. church. **A6**

## At trial, life for Russian soldier

### SWIFT VERDICT BY JUDGES IN KYIV

### War crimes case could be first of many, official says

By BRYAN PIETSCH, ANNABELLE TIMSIT, MICHAEL BIRNBAUM AND SAMMY WESTFALL

Ukrainian judges on Monday found a 21-year-old Russian soldier guilty of war crimes and sentenced him to life in prison, a swift conclusion that prosecutors said could invigorate many more such investigations.

A court in Kyiv handed down the verdict after the sergeant from a Russian tank unit, Vadim Shishimarin, pleaded guilty last week to killing Oleksandr Shelipov, 62, in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region in the opening days of Russia's invasion.

Shishimarin said he was following orders. But a panel of three judges found him guilty of premeditated murder and violating "the rules and customs of war" under Ukraine's criminal code.

The case is one of 13,000 investigations into possible war crimes, Ukrainian Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova told The Washington Post — and the first to reach a verdict. War crimes prosecutions are rare in the middle of an ongoing conflict, and Venediktova framed it as in part an effort to send a message that Ukraine intends to

SEE UKRAINE ON A16

**Historical vestiges:** Ukrainians target Russian street names. **A10**

**The pope:** His refusal to rebuke Putin has spurred debate. **A15**

## Biden takes aggressive stance toward China

### In Japan, he says U.S. would defend Taiwan in event of attack by Beijing

By SEUNG MIN KIM, MICHELLE YE HEE LEE AND CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR.

TOKYO — President Biden on Monday signaled a more confrontational approach to China on multiple fronts, issuing a sharp warning against any potential attack on Taiwan at the same time his administration is embroiled in wide-ranging efforts to beat back aggression by another superpower, Russia.

Speaking to reporters during his first trip to Asia as president, Biden said the United States would defend Taiwan militarily if it came under attack by China — despite the U.S. policy of remaining vague on the subject — and that deterring Beijing from aggression in Taiwan and elsewhere was among the reasons it was critical to punish Russian President Vladimir Putin for his "barbarism in Ukraine."

Asked if the United States would defend Taiwan militarily if it is attacked by China, Biden said, "Yes, that's the commitment we made."

He added: "We agree with the 'One China' policy . . . but the idea that it can be taken by force, just taken by force, is just not appropriate. It would dislocate

SEE BIDEN ON A21

EUGENE HOSHIKO/POOL/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

**President Biden reviews an honor guard Monday during a welcome ceremony at the Akasaka Palace state guest house in Tokyo.**

## A trail of atrocities makes its way to Mali

### Russian mercenaries join the fight in West Africa, and civilian killings are soaring

By DANIELLE PAQUETTE, JOYCE SOHYUN LEE AND JON SWAINE

The man knew what to expect from Islamist fighters. They had appeared at his door for years, demanding money or livestock — the taxes he paid to survive. Then one morning in March, the threat in his rural community suddenly had a confusing new face: White men in military fatigues, yelling in a language he did not recognize.

"They were shooting people. People in their homes," he said. "Everywhere, bodies were dropping to the ground."

At least 300 people are believed to have been killed in the man's town of Moura, in central Mali, though he and other witnesses suggest the toll could be far higher. Similar accounts have emerged across the West African nation since hundreds of Russian mercenaries joined the Malian army this winter in the fight to reclaim territory from groups loyal to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

The hired guns of the Wagner Group — a covert arm of the Kremlin, according to the United States and Western allies — have been repeatedly accused of war crimes, leaving a trail of atrocities across the Middle East and Africa. Profits flow back to Moscow, according to Western intelligence officials and security researchers, helping prop up Vladimir Putin's government at a time of growing economic isolation

SEE MALI ON A20