

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Macron calls for a Chinese role in ending the war in Ukraine

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It's late night in London and we're recording an emergency episode of Americaast with the news that Donald Trump has pleaded not guilty to 34 charges. We're going to be talking about what this means for Trump, for the Democrats and Republicans, and how it shifts the state of play for the 2024 election. You can hear all of the analysis on Americaast, just search for it wherever you get your BBC podcasts.

Abnormal transactions. Some kind of cyber attack on a bank.

Tens of millions of dollars. Something I don't think anybody has seen before.

It's a cybercriminal group.

From the BBC World Service. The Lazarus Heist is back for season two.

It was really like in the movies.

Find out more at the end of this podcast.

This is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service.

I'm Janet Jalil and at 13 hours GMT on Wednesday the 5th of April. These are our main stories.

France's president says China could play a major role in ending the war in Ukraine.

Ukraine's president Zelensky has been welcomed with military honors in Poland.

The 92-year-old billionaire Rupert Murdoch calls off his engagement.

Also in this podcast, not just Queen Consort anymore, but Queen Camilla.

That's how the wife of King Charles III will now be known.

When the Chinese leader Xi Jinping visited Moscow last month, it raised fears that Beijing might give military aid to Russia in its war against Ukraine.

But it also raised hopes that given the close personal ties between Mr Xi and the Russian leader Vladimir Putin, that China could make a positive intervention to help bring peace to Ukraine.

Now the French president Emmanuel Macron, at the start of his own state visit to China, has said Beijing could wield its influence to help end the war.

The war led by Russia and Ukraine has profoundly affected the international order that we have known since 1945. And this war, which I have repeatedly described as imperialist and colonial, has violated many of the principles of the United Nations Charter, which we two permanent members of the Security Council must resolutely defend.

So China, precisely because of its close relationship with Russia, which has been reaffirmed in recent days, can play a major role.

Mr Macron is being accompanied by the head of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to signify European unity. So can the French leader, who failed in his diplomatic efforts to stop Vladimir Putin launching all-out war on Ukraine, succeed in persuading Beijing to stop siding with Russia and instead put pressure on it to end the war in Ukraine?

It's a question I put to our Asia Pacific editor, Michael Risto.

Well, in some respects, he's pushing an open door because over recent weeks,

China has indeed positioned itself as an honest broker, a big country able to negotiate some kind of peace deal with the war in Ukraine. Beijing issued a 12-point plan a couple of weeks ago and also last month, President Xi Jinping of China visited Moscow. He held talks with President Putin of Russia. There's also talk that Xi Jinping will have a telephone conversation

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with President Zelensky of Ukraine. So there's a lot of diplomatic activity by China, but that's really not the most important question. The most important question is whether or not China is an honest broker in this. And lots of people in the West, lots of leaders in the West believe it just simply isn't. It's already essentially leaning towards Russia. It's failed to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It's bought oil, other natural resources from Russia in the last year. It's even increased what it's bought from there. It hasn't really done anything to condemn what Russia has done. So many people are saying, look, can it really negotiate a peace deal while she's leaning to one side?

And Mr Macron's also got a big focus on trade during this visit.

Yes, he also was speaking in that first few comments he made when he arrived in Beijing, he was also talking about business. He used an interesting word, actually, he said, we shouldn't, Europe shouldn't disassociate itself from China. And in many respects, that's an obvious thing to say because China and the EU do hundreds of billions of dollars worth of trade every year. But I think it's also a nod to China's relationship with the United States. There's lots of talk about that relationship being decoupled. I think what President Macron is saying that Europe shouldn't do the same. Michael Bristow. At the same time as Ukraine is being discussed in Beijing, its leader, Vladimir Zelensky, has arrived in Poland just a day after Finland became the 31st country to join NATO, a decision prompted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Mr Zelensky was welcomed with military honors at the Presidential Palace in Warsaw.

Poland, a NATO member itself, has been one of Ukraine's closest and most important allies, taking in hundreds of thousands of refugees and sending large amounts of military support, including hundreds of tanks, as well as becoming the first country to send fighter jets to Ukraine. The two countries' presidents held a news conference in Warsaw. Our correspondent there, Adam Easton, was listening. Well, he mentioned the fighter jets. The Polish president, Andrzej Duda, said that Poland has now sent eight, that's double the amount of MiG jets, MiG-29 jets,

which the Ukrainian military already uses, so it doesn't need additional training for that. And he said that a further six were being repaired and they would be sent in the future. So Poland's really much, very much in the sort of vanguard of trying to ramp up the quality and quantity of military support to Ukraine. He also said that we support Ukraine and we will continue to support Ukraine, and that Poland will urge its NATO allies to give even more military support to the Ukrainian military at the NATO summit in Vilnius in July. President Zelenski, for his part, thanked Poland for being what he called a true friend of the ages. He said we cannot forget and we're above all grateful to ordinary Poles, those who opened their homes to put up Ukrainian refugees in their own homes. Hundreds of thousands of Polish families did that and some continue to do so. And he said we bow low to you for that humane response to our crisis. He also said that Poland should be involved in the future reconstruction of Ukraine after the war has ended, and that is something that President Zelenski will be speaking further when he meets the Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki in a few minutes. There's expected to be some sort of agreement concluded about Polish companies being involved in that reconstruction.

But amid all the warm words, there's also been some controversy over Polish farmers protesting over cheap Ukrainian grain. Yeah, Polish farmers are definitely not happy. This

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is more of a problem for the Polish government rather than affecting Polish-Ukrainian relations. If you remember, Ukraine exports a lot of grain to Africa, the Middle East, and it usually did so via its Black Sea ports, which have been blockaded by Russia. So it had to turn to the land route across Poland and across Romania, its EU neighbors, to try and get that grain out to Africa and the Middle East where it's badly needed. Unfortunately, in Poland, 3 million tons of that grain, which was supposed to go to those regions of the world, has remained in Poland, and that's partly because of transport infrastructure bottlenecks and also because Polish animal feed producers have been buying it up because it's actually cheaper than Polish grain, and that's sent Polish grain prices plummeting, really upsetting the Polish farmers.

Adam Easton in Poland. Now to Jerusalem.

The sound of clashes at the Al Aqsa Mosque compound, a site holy to both Jews and Muslims. More than 350 worshipers were arrested by Israeli police who say stones were thrown at them and fireworks set off by the worshipers who barricaded themselves inside the mosque after hearing reports

that extremist Jews were planning to sacrifice a goat there for Passover. It coincides this year with the holy Muslim month of Ramadan. Bemi Abbas was one of those inside Al Aqsa.

In the yards to the eastern part of the compound, the police were firing tear gas and stun grenades. It was a scene that I can't describe. Then the police stormed in and started beating everyone and they detained people, putting young people on their fronts with their faces to the ground.

They also beat them while in detention. There were similar clashes two years ago in this contested compound which set off a 10 day war with Gaza. A correspondent in Jerusalem, Lucy Williamson, told us more about the latest violence. The Israeli police say they went into the mosque in the early hours of this morning to clear it after a group of Palestinians had barricaded themselves inside and you heard some of the sound effects there. I mean we've seen video footage of fireworks exploding towards the Israeli police officers, also other footage we've seen of the police officers beating people inside the mosque with battens, even with their weapons, arresting 350 up to 500 of them and some light injuries as well, about 14 Palestinians lightly injured in that. We've seen these sorts of scenes in Al Aqsa Mosque. The risk is that it sparks something wider here and we've already seen rockets overnight fired from Gaza towards Israel. No injuries reported there. Israeli Air Force have also responded by carrying out airstrikes against Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip. Things have quietened down here at the moment but we are at the beginning of a week where the Jewish holiday of Passover coincides with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and so security forces are very aware of the risk of any conflagration that that might happen as a result of incidents particularly around that holy site in here in East Jerusalem. A very holy site to both the Jews and Muslims and this all comes against the background of much escalated violence in Israel and the occupied West Bank. We've seen dozens of Palestinians killed and about 15 Israelis so there is already heightened violence in the region and so that's the background to this isn't it? That's it and I think when it comes to this holy site it's so carefully managed. The balance is delicately held between Muslims who

are allowed to go and pray in the Al Aqsa Mosque and on the Temple Mount Harama Sharif as they call it

and Jews who are allowed to pray at the Wailing Wall and who can visit the Temple Mount but can't

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carry out any religious activities there and during Passover there is a Jewish fringe activist routinely called for religious activities to be carried out on Temple Mount to prove a point for example taking up a lamb for ritual slaughter that's seen as something that would be very inflammatory

were it allowed to happen but security forces at the moment are saying that no animals are allowed to be brought up up there and government ministers including the national security minister Tamar Ben-Govir who in the past has been criticized for his stance over the issue of Temple Mount he has said also that while Jews should be visiting that site during this this period they should not be sacrificing animals up there. Lucy Williamson the billionaire media mogul Rupert Meroc is reported to have called off his engagement to the conservative radio host Anne Leslie Smith it would have been

the 92 year old's fifth marriage as Stephanie Prentice explains his engagement to the twice married 66 year old caused quite a stir when it was announced a couple of weeks ago. So this engagement got a lot of attention as their relationship from the very start was described as a whirlwind romance it really sparked people's interest the couple were first picked together on a beach in Barbados back in January and by March they were engaged with Rupert telling his publication The New York Post I was very nervous I dreaded falling in love but I knew this would be my last it better be I'm happy and his bride to be called their meeting a gift from God. Now he proposed with what's estimated to be an 11 carat diamond ring and that was estimated to be worth 2.5 million dollars so the love story got a lot of headlines and people were very interested in all of the details. Absolutely they were very very fascinated by them and I suppose the big question now is what went wrong. Well absolutely now we do know that Anne Leslie Smith became a conservative radio host later in her career and she espoused us quite rigid evangelical views now some source have pointed to this as the cause of the rift or some sort of split saying Rupert Murdoch was uncomfortable with some of the things she was saying and describing her as outspoken

there have also been reports that Anne was uncomfortable with all the media attention she was getting throughout this engagement but as yet we wait there's been no formal statement and no explanation for this seemingly abrupt about turn. Stephanie Prentice New Zealand's former prime minister Jacinda Ardern has given an emotional farewell speech to parliament many were stunned

when she announced in January that she was stepping down to pursue a life outside politics but in her speech to MPs she said that there was much she was proud of in her career. Now I cannot determine what will define my time in this place but I do hope I've demonstrated something else entirely that you can be anxious sensitive kind and wear your heart on your sleeve you can be a mother or not you can be an ex-mormon or not you can be a nerd a crier a hugger you can be all of these things and not only can you be here you can lead just like me. Ms Ardern was the world's youngest female head of government when she was elected in 2017 and she was only the second leader

to give birth while in office. Our correspondent Phil Mercer reflects on her legacy. Well in January when Jacinda Ardern said that she was exhausted she had nothing left in the tank and that she would be resigning there was a sense of dismay among many New Zealanders however you have to remember that certainly in the last year of her position as prime minister her popularity domestically

had started to wane inflation was rising the cost of living crisis was biting into the family budgets of many Kiwis crime rates were also increasing and there were contentious water reforms as well so pulling the plug after five years as prime minister was a surprise to many New Zealanders but we really got the sense that Jacinda Ardern simply ran out of gas that she no longer had the energy or the enthusiasm for the top job and you have to remember that New Zealand

has a general election in October of this year so Jacinda Ardern deciding to quit in January giving the new man in charge Chris Hipkins a fair run to try to win that election but for now Jacinda Ardern is looking forward to new roles trying to combat violent extremism online she's also a board member of a new environmental price set up by Prince William so it's politics in the rear view mirror for Jacinda Ardern but many opportunities lie ahead. Phil Mercer still to come on this podcast how a pole dance performance in a church resulted in death threats. Life's Less Ordinary is the podcast from the BBC World Service that seeks out extraordinary stories from around the globe. I'm in a trench in Ukraine with shells flying overhead petrified. It's a window into other people's worlds. It can't be separated from the addictive nature of my personality and it's available now feeling incredibly alive when death was at its closest. Search for Life's Less Ordinary wherever you get your BBC podcasts.

In its latest attempt to banish a female presence from all fears of public life the Taliban has barred Afghan women from working for the United Nations. The UN says the Taliban informed them verbally but has not issued an official order in writing. In response the UN has told all of its Afghan employees men as well as women not to report for work for 48 hours until it's met with the Taliban to clarify what is going on. This report from our South Asia correspondent Yigita Limoye. The United Nations has said it's been verbally told that the Taliban's top leadership has ordered a ban on Afghan female staff from working in the organisation. This move means that the bar on women working for all NGOs except for those in the health sector announced in December last year now includes the UN. The body had earlier been exempted from the rule. Women

working in public health are expected to still be allowed to continue to do their jobs as long as they are in health facilities and not in offices. The UN has said the order is unacceptable and will undermine the ability of aid organisations to reach those in need. In Nangarhar province the UN says the Taliban have already started preventing women from going to work at their facilities. The UN is meeting with Taliban leaders to seek clarity on the order and until then have told all Afghan staff to not attend work. If implemented the ban would be a significant test of the future of UN operations in Afghanistan and relations between the body and the Taliban government. Yigita Limoye. A lack of rain in recent years has meant that the northeast

of Spain is seeing its worst drought on record. This has led to a series of strict measures being taken to ensure that the area's water supply is not exhausted. It's also added to concerns about the impact on food supplies in Europe. Guy Hedgeko reports from Catalonia. I'm walking along the parched banks of the Sao reservoir which for the last half century or so has supplied water to millions of Catalans but lack of rain has caused the reservoir's water level to plummet to less than a tenth of its capacity. And up ahead of me is an abandoned church, the church of Sao Romain, which used to be entirely covered by the water of this reservoir

but in recent months the whole building has become visible above the water line because of the drought that this area is suffering. The remaining water is now being drained completely and it's pouring downstream to another reservoir to prevent it from being contaminated by silt. Meanwhile teams are hauling fish out of the water to stop them from rotting there when they die. This we also say that in Catalonia it doesn't know how to rain because sometimes it rains too much and we have floodings but sometimes it doesn't drain nothing and we have to draw. Samuel Reyes is director of the Catalan region's water agency. He says this is the worst drought on record in this part of Spain. It's been two and a half years without sustained rainfall and the outlook isn't good. We think that this year it's going to be completely different and it's going to last still maybe one more year but also I think that the Mediterranean climate it's kind of complicated to predict because it seems that tomorrow it's going to rain and then disappear or it's going to rain in March and it doesn't you know it's it's kind of difficult. I'm in Barcelona the bustling Catalan capital where the drought is also having an impact as well as in surrounding towns and cities. Now the local government has introduced restrictions on day-to-day water use here in Barcelona as well as in many other places. That includes restrictions on washing cars, watering gardens, even cleaning streets and ornamental fountains have also been switched off because of the drought. Use of water for heavy industry has been cut by 15% in the Barcelona area but it's farming which has arguably been most affected by the new restrictions

with a 40% reduction in the use of water for agriculture.

On this farm near Barcelona workers pour harvested artichokes into a bucket to be taken away. Agustín Garcia Segovia who farms this land and blames the drought firmly on climate change is worried.

The lack of water for our crops is having an impact. We haven't had this problem since 2008 and in that year it was seasonal it lasted three months or so but now it looks as if this drought is never going to end. Farmers warn that the shortage of their products caused by drought will push up food prices across Europe. In the market in Barcelona vendors are also concerned. The lack of water means that fruits and vegetables are smaller, there's less variety.

In the summer we sell lots of lettuces but without water there won't be as many and they will be a lot smaller. It's a problem. I sell meat products. The farmers who produce the animals are going to have to raise their prices because the cost of water will go up. I think there is a lot of wasted water. We are having a drought but you can be sure that the golf courses of Catalonia are still being well watered. The voices of vendors in the markets in Barcelona ending that report by Guy Hedgeko. The leader of a church in eastern France says he's received death threats after organising a pole dancing performance last week set to medieval music on the suffering of the Virgin Mary over the crucifixion of Jesus. Programs from the evening's performance were defaced with comments such as you're going to hell. Harry Bly reports. The performance of Stabat Maitre featured baroque style music, opera singers and the French pole dance champion Van Sondkrabelny. It took place at Saint Guillaume church in Strasbourg

and was a full house with all 1,000 tickets sold. A local newspaper described the performance as skillful, athletic, graceful, impertinent and some would say sexy and it said it had left the audience gasping. The church's minister Daniel Busenbacher said the evening's program was

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flirtatious but soft. But following the performance came the letters. The criticism ranged from this is not a church, it's a cabaret to calls for the minister and parishioners to be decapitated. However, the threat did not deter Mr Busenbacher nor his church from hosting more shows, with two further performances scheduled in the coming months.

Here in Britain Buckingham Palace has indicated that after King Charles' coronation next month his wife will be known as Queen Camilla. At the moment she's referred to as the Queen Consort. The change was announced at the same time as the official invitation to the coronation. Camilla will be crowned Westminster Abbey alongside the King. Our royal correspondent Nicholas Wichell reports.

A thousand years of precedent and tradition have established that the wife of a British King is known as the Queen. Yet from the moment Charles succeeded to the throne last September, Buckingham Palace has been at pains to refer to her as the Queen Consort. This, it was said, was to avoid any confusion with the Queen, Elizabeth II, Queen Regnant. It also, of course, helped to soften any remaining sensitivities about the former Camilla Parker Bowles and her long association with the then Prince of Wales. But with the publication of the invitation to the coronation on the 6th of May, it's clear that this is about to change. The invitation is to the coronation of their Majesties, King Charles III and Queen Camilla. It's an appropriate moment, officials believe, to make the change. Meanwhile it's been announced that neither the US President nor the Vice President will represent their country at the coronation.

In their stead, it will be the first Lady Jill Biden. There's no official word yet on whether Prince Harry or his wife, Megan, will travel from America to attend. And that's all from us for now, but there will be a new edition of the Global News podcast later. If you want to comment on this podcast or the topics covered, you can send us an email. The address is GlobalPodcast at bbc.co.uk. You can also find us on Twitter at Global NewsPod. This edition was mixed by Alicia Thursting, the producer was Oliver Burlow, the editor is Karen Martin. I'm Janet Jolial. Until next time, goodbye. It's late night in London and we're recording an emergency episode of America's with the news that Donald Trump has pleaded not guilty to 34 charges. We're going to be talking about what this means for Trump, for the Democrats and Republicans and how it shifts the state of play for the 2024 election. You can hear all of the analysis on America's just search for it wherever you get your BBC podcasts.