

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Russia fires on Ukrainian vessels in Black Sea as tensions escalate

MOSCOW — Ukraine's president demanded today that Russia immediately release Ukrainian sailors and vessels seized in a standoff around Crimea that sharply escalated tensions between the two countries and drew international concern.

The two neighbors have been locked in a tense tug-of-war since Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, but the incident late Sunday, in which Russian coast guard ships fired on Ukrainian navy vessels near the Kerch Strait, directly pitted the two militaries against each other, placing them on the verge of an open conflict.

The Ukrainian navy said six of its seamen were wounded when Russian coast guards opened fire on three Ukrainian ships near the Kerch Strait and then seized them. Russia said that three Ukrainian sailors were lightly injured and given medical assistance.

Ukraine's president, Petro Poroshenko, chaired an emergency meeting of his Cabinet early today and asked parliament to introduce martial law for two months in response to what he described as Russian aggression.

"We consider it as an act of aggression against our state and a very serious threat," the president said. "Unfortunately, there are no 'red lines' for the Russian Federation."

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin told reporters that Kiev believes that what happened near the Kerch Strait was no accident but "deliberately planned hostilities."

An emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council was also called for today. The European Union and NATO called for restraint from both sides.

GM to slash up to 14,000 jobs in North America

DETROIT — General Motors will lay off up to 14,000 factory and white-collar workers in North America and put five plants up for possible closure as it restructures to cut costs and focus more on autonomous and electric vehicles.

The reduction includes 8,100 white-collar workers, some of whom will take buyouts and

others who will be laid off. Some U.S. factory workers could transfer to truck or SUV factories that are increasing production.

Most of the affected factories build cars that won't be sold in the U.S. after next year, including the Chevrolet Volt rechargeable gas-electric hybrid. They could close or they could get different vehicles to build. Their futures will be part of contract talks with the United Auto Workers union next year.

The salaried reductions amount to 15 percent of GM's North American white-collar workforce of 54,000. At the factories, 3,000 workers could lose jobs in Canada and another 3,600 in the U.S.

GM, the largest automaker in the U.S., which sells the Chevrolet, Buick, Cadillac and GMC brands, said the moves will save \$6 billion in cash by the end of next year, including \$4.5 billion in recurring annual cost reductions and a \$1.5 billion reduction in capital spending.

Those cuts are in addition to \$6.5 billion that the company has announced by the end of this year.

GM doesn't foresee an economic downturn and is making the cuts "to get in front of it while the company is strong and while the economy is strong," CEO Mary Barra told reporters.

Barra said GM is still hiring people with expertise in software and electric and autonomous vehicles. Many of those who will lose jobs are now working on conventional cars with internal combustion engines.

Barra said tariffs on imported aluminum and steel have hit the company, but she stopped short of saying they had anything to do with the restructuring.

Agents fire tear gas at Mexican border to stop migrants

TIJUANA, Mexico — Mexico looked set to shore up security near its border with the United States today, as police lined up outside a shelter in the city of Tijuana and told Central American migrants they couldn't walk toward the border area.

Mexico's National Migration Institute said that 98 migrants were being deported after they tried to breach the U.S. border, and U.S. agents fired tear gas Sunday into Mexico to stop them. Mexico's Interior Department said about 500 migrants were involved in the attempt to rush the

border, while U.S. authorities put the number at 1,000.

Mexican officials said the migrants had taken part in "violent" chaos, which originally began as a peaceful march to appeal for the U.S. to speed processing of asylum claims for Central American migrants marooned in Tijuana.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan said on a call with reporters that 69 migrants who tried to cross the border illegally were arrested on the California side.

He said the Border Patrol's use of force policy allows agents to use tear gas and other non-lethal methods, but the incident would be reviewed and the situation was resolved without serious injury.

"As the events unfolded, quick, decisive and effective action prevented an extremely dangerous situation," he said.

In rare criticism of the migrants, Mexico's National Human Rights Commission said it "reiterates that members of the caravans that cross our country should respect Mexican laws and not engage in actions that affect the communities they pass through."

"It is important to note that the fact the Mexican government protects their rights," the commission said, "does not imply a free pass to break the law."

Slick roads and snow delay flights, road travel in Midwest states

CHICAGO — A wintry storm brought blizzard-like conditions to parts of the Midwest early today, grounding hundreds of flights and causing slick roads for commuters as they returned to work after the Thanksgiving weekend.

The Chicago area was slammed with up to a foot of wet snow, and whiteout conditions stalled commuter traffic on the roads. The National Weather Service said 7.5 inches of snow fell at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and 4.9 inches fell at Midway International Airport.

The Chicago Department of Aviation says 809 flights were canceled at O'Hare between midnight and around 10 a.m. today, after 700 flights at the airport were canceled Sunday. At Midway International Airport, where 123 flights were canceled on Sunday, another 69 flights had been canceled as of midnight.

The storm also dumped wet snow on parts of

Michigan's Lower Peninsula, creating treacherous driving conditions. Police responded to dozens of crashes this morning in the Lansing area. Authorities warned that roads were icy and covered with snow and encouraged people to stay off the roads unless travel was essential.

Farther south, Gov. Jeff Colyer declared a state of emergency in Kansas on Sunday after 2 to 14 inches of snow fell in parts of the state. The state Department of Transportation reported several road closures today, mostly in the extreme northeast, but said a stretch of Interstate 70 that had been closed on Sunday was reopened.

The National Weather Service said that 3 to 9 inches fell across northern Missouri on Sunday. The Missouri State Highway Patrol reported multiple fender-benders but by mid-morning today the Department of Transportation said all roads were opened. Flights were mostly on time today at Kansas City International Airport, one day after the storm caused widespread delays.

Ex-Trump campaign adviser Papadopoulos to report to prison

WASHINGTON — Former Trump campaign foreign policy adviser George Papadopoulos was scheduled to report to prison today after a federal judge rejected his last-minute bid to delay his two-week sentence.

Papadopoulos was sentenced in September for lying to the FBI in the Russia investigation. He had sought a postponement of his prison term until an appeals court had ruled in a separate case challenging the constitutionality of special counsel Robert Mueller's appointment.

But in a 13-page opinion Sunday, U.S. District Court Judge Randolph Moss said Papadopoulos had waited too long to contest his sentence. Moss noted that Papadopoulos had agreed not to appeal in most circumstances as part of his plea agreement, and the judge said the challenge to Mueller's appointment was unlikely to be successful in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Four federal judges have upheld Mueller's appointment as proper.

In recent months, Papadopoulos has spent many nights posting on Twitter, as has his wife, venting anger about the FBI and insisting he was framed by the government.

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