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## Ukraine fears for nuclear reactor after mystery objects appear on roof

Satellite images picked up the packages after Zelensky warned Moscow was planning to blow up the plant and blame it on Kyiv

James Kilner

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Five large objects have been photographed on the roof of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, increasing fears that Russia may be preparing to blow it up.

Satellite images of Europe's largest nuclear power plant, taken by San Francisco-based Planet Labs on July 5, showed that packages had been placed on the roof of reactor number 4.

However, there are none on the top of the unit in an image taken earlier the same morning.

None of the objects can be identified but this week, Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian president, warned that Russia was planning on blowing up the plant and then blaming it on Ukraine.

"Our intelligence says that the Russian military has placed objects resembling explosives on the roof of several power units of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant," he said on Tuesday.

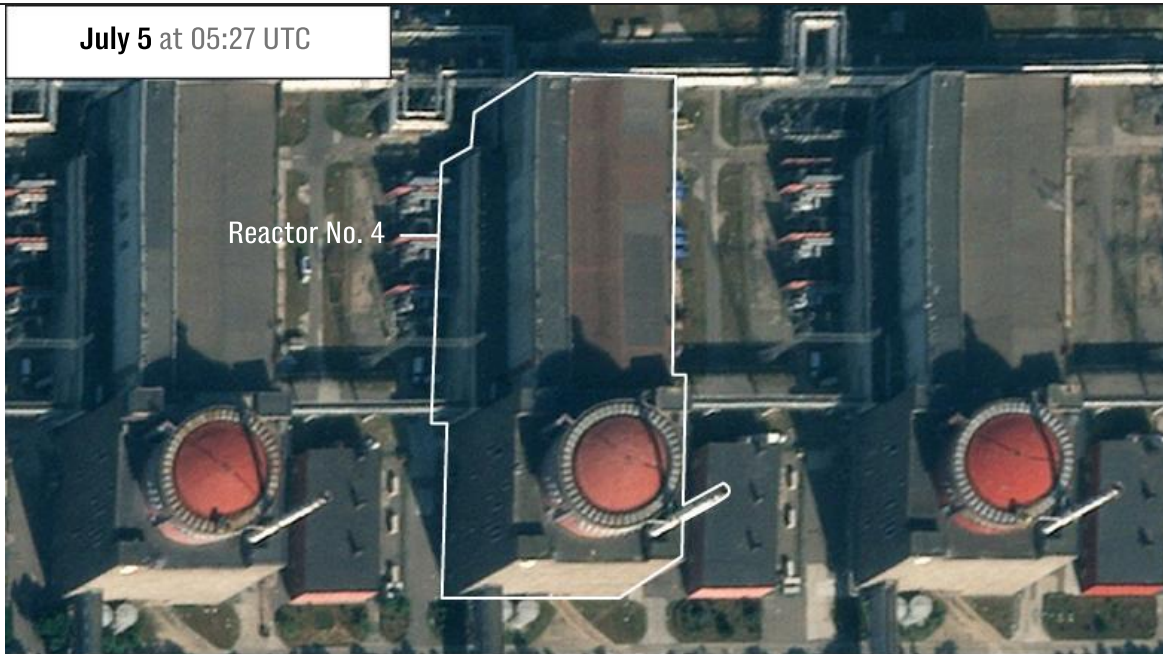
It's unclear why a few hours after Mr Zelensky's comments, photographs showed a clear roof on reactor number 4, but hours later the objects had reappeared.

Russian forces have controlled the nuclear power plant since the first few days of the war. It is located on the southern bank of the Dnipro River which now forms the front line.

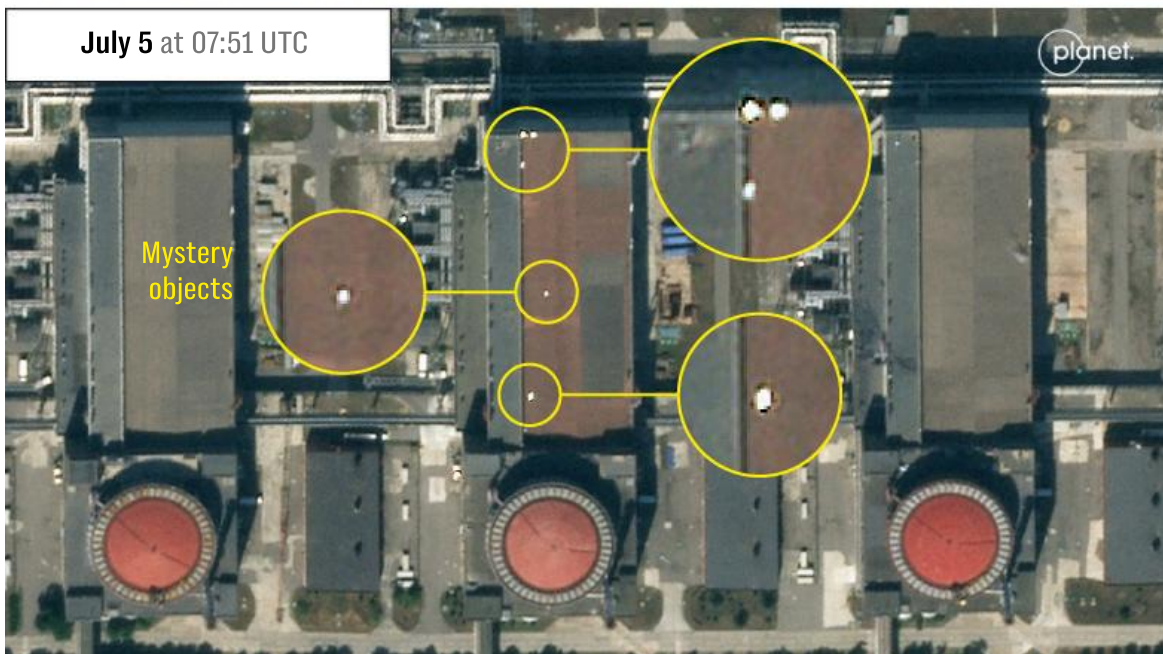
Last week it was reported that Russian forces had ordered staff to leave the plant.

## Mystery objects appear on Zaporizhzhia nuclear reactor roof

July 5 at 05:27 UTC



July 5 at 07:51 UTC



The International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN's nuclear watchdog, has been allowed to inspect parts of the plant but its access has been limited. It has now demanded improved access to the sites, and in particular to the roofs of the reactors.

“The IAEA experts have requested additional access that is necessary to confirm the absence of mines or explosives,” it said in a statement this week. “In particular, access to the rooftops of reactor units 3 and 4 is essential.”

Officials at Rosenergoatom, the Russian nuclear agency, have denied the accusations. They say that Ukrainian forces are planning an attack on the nuclear power plant.

Both sides have previously accused each other of planning so-called “false flag” atrocities for propaganda purposes. In May, they accused each other of blowing up the Kakhovka Dam and flooding downstream towns and cities.

Although the Soviet-built Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is the biggest in Europe, experts have downplayed the fallout of an explosion.

“Its six reactors have been shut down for over 10 months and are no longer making enough heat to cause a prompt radiological release,” the American Nuclear Society said this week.

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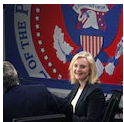
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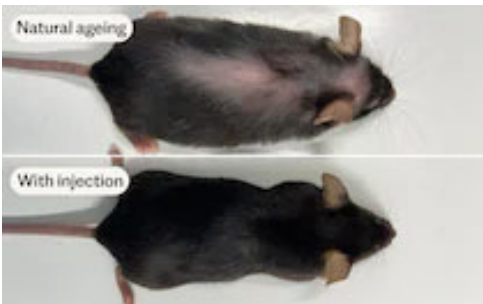
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