

Wires 9/4/20

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Wall Street's Tech-Heavy Nasdaq Index Suffers Worst Week Since March

NEW YORK, September 5 (Sputnik) - Technology stocks led Wall Street's worst week in months with the Nasdaq Composite Index posting its largest decline for a week since March while peers S&P500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average both suffered their deepest setbacks since June.

"While many investors will likely buy every dip, with fading fiscal support, risks remain that we could see this unwind last a little longer," said Ed Moya, stocks analyst at New York brokerage OANDA.

The Nasdaq, which has been the New York Stock Exchange's darling over the past few months, forerunning the US economic recovery from the COVID-19, fell 1.3 percent on the day and 3.3 percent on the week to close at 11,313. Just earlier this week, the index, populated with tech giants such as Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix and Google, rose above 12,000 for the first time to touch a record high of 12,074.

The S&P 500, a barometer for the top 500 US stocks, fell 0.8 percent on the day and 2.3 percent on the week to close at 3,427. It hit an all-time high of 3,588 this week.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, the NYSE's broadest stock indicator, slid 0.6 percent on the day and 1.8 percent on the week.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Military Will Stick With Microsoft on JEDI Cloud Development - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The US government is sticking with Microsoft to develop its JEDI Cloud supercomputing project despite a prior legal challenge from Amazon and an earlier injunction order issued by a federal court, the Department of Defense said in a press release on Friday.

"The Department has completed its comprehensive re-evaluation of the JEDI Cloud proposals and determined that Microsoft's proposal continues to represent the best value to the government," the release said.

JEDI stands for Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure project to store and process vast amounts of classified data.

In February, a US judge issued a preliminary injunction temporarily halting the \$10 billion JEDI contract awarded to Microsoft in October 2019 in light of a pending Amazon lawsuit.

"While contract performance will not begin immediately due to the Preliminary Injunction Order issued by the Court of Federal Claims on February 13, 2020, [the Defense Department] is eager to begin delivering this capability to our men and women in uniform," the release said.

The system is projected to allow the US military to improve communications with soldiers on the battlefield and use artificial intelligence to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities. Amazon argued that the bidding process was unfair because of President Donald Trump's bias against the company and its CEO Jeff Bezos.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Government to Keep Supporting Armed Forces Newspaper 'Stars and Stripes' - Trump

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The US government will continue to fund the historic "Stars and Stripes" newspaper of the United States' armed forces, President Donald Trump announced on Friday.

"The United States of America will not be cutting funding to 'Stars and Stripes' magazine under my watch," Trump said via Twitter. "It will continue to be a wonderful source of information to our Great Military!"

"Stars and Stripes" is a newspaper published from within the Department of Defense but editorially separate from it.

The newspaper publishes four daily print editions for the military service members in Europe, Japan, South Korea and the Middle East in electronic formats.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

COVID-19 Swells Yearly Education Funding Gap in Poor Countries to \$200Bln - UN Report

UNITED NATIONS , September 4 (Sputnik) - A pre-pandemic funding shortfall of nearly \$150 billion in the world's poorest nations will likely swell to \$200 billion due to the novel coronavirus, a report by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) warned on Friday.

"Before the pandemic, UNESCO estimated the annual spending requirement to meet SDG4 at US\$504 billion, of which US\$148 billion were unavailable. Under plausible school closures and present GDP growth scenarios, COVID-19 looks set to increase this funding gap by up to a third," a press release summarizing the release said.

SDG4 refers to the education portion of UN Sustainable Development Goals, which call for the provision of quality schooling for all by 2030.

UNESCO called on international donors to honor commitments to fund global education, noting that less than half of the aid provided for primary and secondary schooling now goes to low- and middle-income nations where support is needed most, the release said.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Hands French Authorities Fugitive Wanted on Fraud Charges - Immigration Enforcement

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The US deported a Frenchman who fled to America four years ago and was later convicted in absentia by a French court on fraud charges, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency said in a press release on Friday.

"US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers removed an unlawfully present French man wanted by French law enforcement authorities for organized fraud. Stany N'Goma Mavambu, 24, was removed to France and handed over to French authorities," the release said. N'Goma entered the US in 2016 as a visitor under the visa waiver program but failed to depart under the terms of the program. On May 24, 2018, the Court of First Instance of Orleans, France, convicted N'Goma of organized fraud and sentenced him to four years in prison, the release said.

The release also said N'Goma committed "additional crimes" while hiding in the US.

Police in the Fairfax County suburb of Washington, DC, arrested N'Goma on local charges including four counts of petty larceny on June 22, 2019 and transferred him to ICE six days later. An immigration judge ordered the defendant extradited in January, the release said. The release noted that ICE deported 267,000 illegal aliens in fiscal 2019, 86 percent with criminal convictions or pending criminal charges.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

China Has Largest Program to Interfere in US Presidential Election - White House Adviser

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - White House National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien said on Friday China has the largest program of all countries seeking to interfere in the 2020 US presidential election.

"When it comes to elections, and the Intelligence Committee has made it very clear, is that first you have China, which has the most massive program to influence the United States politically, you have Iran, you have Russia," O'Brien said in a press briefing. "These are all three emissary countries that are seeking to disrupt our election."

O'Brien said that China is undertaking massive cyber activities aimed to target the United States. However, Washington is taking a strong counter-action and will eventually prevail, he added.

"We've made it very clear to the Chinese, the Russians, the Iranians and others that have not been publicly disclosed that anyone who attempts to interfere with the American elections will face extraordinary consequences," O'Brien said.

In early August, US National Counterintelligence and Security Center Director William Evanina said that, according to the US intelligence community's estimates, China wanted US President Donald Trump to lose in the upcoming presidential election in November, while Russia was allegedly working to denigrate Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden.

Evanina made the allegations without providing evidence that Kremlin-linked actors are seeking to support Trump's candidacy on social media and on Russian television. In addition, the official said that apart from China, Iran was also expected to make efforts to prevent Trump from being re-elected.

Russia has repeatedly denied being involved in the US political system, saying such acts run contrary to the principles of Moscow's foreign policy.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Trump Special Envoy Grenell Says US Not Party to Serbia-Kosovo Agreement

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - US Special Representative Richard Grenell said during a press briefing on Friday that the United States is not a party to the Serbia-Kosovo agreement signed in the Oval Office earlier in the day.

"They did not sign with the United States," Grenell told reporters, adding that Washington is not a signatory to the agreement.

Earlier in the day, US President Donald Trump announced that Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Prime Minister of Kosovo Avdullah Hoti agreed to normalize economic ties as part of a US-brokered deal.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US, European Business to Have More Access to Serbia, Kosovo Markets After Deal - Envoy

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - US and European businesses will have greater access to the Balkan market after the US brokered a non-binding deal to normalize economic ties between Serbia and Kosovo, Adviser to the US President on Serbia-Kosovo Richard Grenell told reporters on Friday.

"European business and American businesses largely have refused to go in and grow in these areas. Now, we will be able to open this up. Whether it's in energy, water, construction of roads, railways, mines – these are all industries that are going to be opened up to European and, hopefully American businesses," Grenell said.

The special adviser added that national security advisers in Germany and France have been briefed on the strategy by US officials and that there will be a follow-up later in the day on the details of the agreement.

Earlier in the day, US President Donald Trump announced that Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Prime Minister of Kosovo Avdullah Hoti agreed to normalize economic ties as part of a US-brokered deal.

Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. The self-proclaimed republic is recognized by over 100 UN member states. Serbia, as well as Russia, China, and a number of other countries, have not recognized Kosovar independence.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Portland Police Probe Shooting of Activist Wanted in Killing of Trump Supporter - Marshals

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The US Marshals Service in a statement on Friday said local law enforcement is leading the investigation into an incident that involved federal agents killing a suspect in the murder of a Trump supporter during a recent demonstration in Portland, Oregon.

Agents with the US Marshals Service (USMS) were trying to arrest Michael Forest Reinoehl, a supporter of the Antifa left-wing movement, who was charged for allegedly fatally shooting a right-wing activist from a pro-Trump caravan.

"The Thurston County (Washington) Sheriff's Office will lead the shooting investigation," the statement said. "As a matter of policy, the USMS will not release the names of deputy marshals involved in shooting incidents, until the conclusion of all investigations surrounding the incident." The USMS said in the statement that the incident took place Thursday night when agents located Reinoehl in Olympia, Washington, and attempted to peacefully arrest him.

The USMS said, according to initial reports, that Reinoehl had produced a firearm, threatening the lives of law enforcement officers. The federal agents responded to the threat and struck Reinoehl who was pronounced dead at the scene, the statement said.

US Attorney General William Barr in a statement on Friday said the tracking down of Reinoehl is a significant accomplishment in restoring law and order in Portland and other cities.

Overnight into August 30, Aaron J. Danielson, one of the supporters of President Donald Trump, was allegedly killed by Reinoehl in downtown Portland during clashes with left-wing activists protesting against racial injustice and police brutality.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Trump Orders US Agencies to Develop Cybersecurity Rules for Satellites

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - President Donald Trump on Friday ordered US government agencies to draft rules for makers of satellites and ground control units that would require system designs that resist and are capable of recovering from cyberattacks and efforts to jam radio frequencies.

"As the space domain is contested, it is necessary for developers, manufacturers, owners, and operators of space systems to design, build, operate, and manage them so that they are resilient to cyber incidents and radio-frequency spectrum interference," the directive said.

The directive called for "risk-based, cybersecurity-informed engineering."

"Agencies are directed to work with the commercial space industry and other non-government space operators, consistent with these principles and with applicable law, to further define best practices, establish cybersecurity-informed norms, and promote improved cybersecurity behaviors throughout the Nation's industrial base for space systems," the directive said.

The directive expands on a September 2018 National Cyber Strategy document, which warned of cyber threats to existing and future space assets.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Biden Says Israel Needs Recognition But So Does 2-State Solution

WASHINGTON, Sept 4 (Sputnik) - US presidential hopeful Joe Biden said on Friday it was important for more countries to recognize Israel as a sovereign state but said it was just as important for Jerusalem to continue working toward a two-state solution with the Palestinians.

"I do, I absolutely do," Biden told reporters when asked if more nations should recognize Israel as a state. "I think that's important, but also I believe that Israel has to be prepared to work toward a genuine two-state solution."

Biden's remarks came after Kosovo signed an agreement with Israel at the White House on Friday to normalize ties and establish diplomatic relations. The Balkan state's move came after the United Arab Emirates sealed a similar diplomatic deal with Jerusalem, in talks also hosted by the Trump administration.

The two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict envisages an independent State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel, west of the Jordan River. The boundary between the two states is still subject to dispute and negotiation, with Palestinian and Arab leadership insisting on the "1967 borders", which is not accepted by Israel. There have been many diplomatic efforts to realize a two state solution, but none have lasted to date.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

China Has Largest Program to Interfere in US Presidential Election - White House Adviser

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - White House National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien said on Friday China has the largest program of all countries seeking to interfere in the 2020 US presidential election.

"When it comes to elections, and the Intelligence Committee has made it very clear, is that first you have China, which has the most massive program to influence the United States politically,

you have Iran, you have Russia," O'Brien said in a press briefing. "These are all three emissary countries that are seeking to disrupt our election."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Brokers Economic Accord Between Serbia, Kosovo in Hopes to Achieve Peace

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The leaders of Serbia and the partially-recognized republic of Kosovo have agreed to normalize economic ties as part of a non-binding US-brokered agreement that aims to achieve peace between the two Balkan nations, US President Donald Trump said during a signing ceremony at the White House on Friday. "Serbia and Kosovo have each committed to economic normalization," Trump said. "My administration proposed a new way of bridging the divide by focusing on job creation and economic growth."

Serbia President Aleksandar Vucic and Prime Minister of Kosovo Avdullah Hoti were in Washington for a two-day summit to discuss bilateral issues.

Vucic said the economic agreement signed at the White House is a huge step forward for Serbia and Kosovo, but he also mentioned, without getting into detail, that there are still many differences to resolve and many items in the agreement that were not discussed in Washington this week.

On Thursday, Vucic said that the recognition of Kosovo by Serbia would not be on the agenda for the two-day meetings. According to Serbian Labor Minister Zoran Djordjevic, the parties discussed infrastructure projects, trade, and free flow of goods, capital and people.

Hoti added that he hopes this agreement to normalize economic ties will lead to full normalization of bilateral relations and mutual recognition between both countries.

Serbia and Kosovo also made some commitments in the Middle East.

Trump said Kosovo and Israel have agreed to normalize ties and to establish diplomatic relations. Serbia committed to move its embassy to Jerusalem in July and to open a commercial office in Israeli city this month, Trump said.

Trump said he looks forward to visiting Serbia and Kosovo sometime in the not too distant future.

Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. The self-proclaimed republic is recognized by over 100 UN member states. Serbia, as well as Russia, China, and a number of other countries, have not recognized Kosovar independence.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Air Force Flies B-52 Strategic Bombers Over Ukraine - European Command

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The United States has flown six B-52 strategic bombers over Ukraine during the so-called integration training with Ukrainian fighters as part of

the aircraft's deployment to an airbase in the United Kingdom, the US European Command (EUCOM) said in a release on Friday.

"Three US Air Force B-52 Stratofortress bomber aircraft from the 5th Bomb Wing, Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, conducted vital integration training with Ukrainian fighters Friday inside Ukraine's airspace," the release said. "Friday's strategic bomber mission is part of the long-planned deployment of six B-52s to RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, England."

The European Command said the mission provided partners with valuable mid-air training and demonstrated how forward-located aircraft and crews enable collective defense capabilities. "More than 200 related missions have been conducted since the Bomber Task Force launched operations in the European theater two years ago," the release said. "These ongoing bomber missions showcase the US Air Force's ability to continually execute flying missions, sustain readiness and support Allies and partners across Europe, regardless of external challenges to include the current global COVID-19 crisis response."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Canada 'Disappointed' by US Decision to Target ICC Officials - Foreign Ministry

TORONTO, September 4 (Sputnik) - Canada is concerned by the US sanctions leveled against two International Criminal Court (ICC) officials, Global Affairs said in a statement on Friday. The Treasury Department announced on Wednesday that it is imposing sanctions on ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, and the ICC's Head of Jurisdiction, Complementary, and Cooperation Division Phakiso Mochochoko, who is accused of materially assisting Bensouda. "Canada is disappointed by the US announcement and is worried about personnel of the International Criminal Court being targeted for the important work that they do," the statement said.

Global Affairs added that it will continue to "respect the independence of both the judges of the court and of the Prosecutor of the ICC and her office."

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had ordered a travel ban to the United States on Bensouda and some of her officials because of their efforts to investigate claims of torture and other crimes carried out by US citizens in Afghanistan. The ICC began the investigation into potential war crimes in Afghanistan at the request of Bensouda in March.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Trump Says Looking Forward to Visiting Serbia, Kosovo in Near Future

WASHINGTON, Sept 4 (Sputnik) - President Donald Trump said on Friday he looked forward to visiting Serbia and Kosovo in the near future after the two Balkan states signed a deal to normalize economic ties disrupted more than a decade ago.

"I look forward to seeing Serbia and Kosovo prosperous," Trump said after witnessing the leaders of the two countries signing a deal for economic cooperation after two days of talks hosted at the White House. "I look forward to visiting both countries in the not too distant future." Kosovo's Parliament declared independence from Serbia in 2008, some nine years after NATO conducted a 78-day airstrike campaign against Serbia to stop a bloody crackdown against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

Kosovo also signed at the White House on Friday an agreement to normalize ties and establish diplomatic relations with Israel, following the United Arab Emirates' move last month for a similar initiative with Jerusalem.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US, Australia Enhance Coordination on Long-Distance Airstrikes - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - American and Australian forces during month-long exercises enhanced coordination on rapid, long-distance airstrikes, the US Marine Corps said on Friday.

"The scenario focused on a small naval expeditionary force's ability to rapidly deploy, integrate with foreign partners, coordinate airstrikes and call for close air support on targets within contested environments," the release said.

Australian Army joint terminal attack controllers (JTACs) worked alongside Australian Army Tiger armed reconnaissance helicopters and Marine Corps RQ-21A Blackjacks to identify and surveil targets, the release said.

The staffs coordinated airstrikes from US Air Force B-1B Lancers with the 37th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron and B-2 Spirit stealth bombers with the 393rd Bomb Squadron, before passing those same aircraft to tactical units to conduct close air support, the release added.

While significant for the Marines, the incorporation of US bombers also allowed the US Air Force to advance plans to pre-position bombers forward in the Indo-Pacific region, according to the release.

The bombers participating in the exercise were joined by US Air Force F-15C Eagles from Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, USS Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group, F-35B Lightning IIs assigned to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, and F-15J aircraft from the Japan Air Self Defense Force, the release said.

The month-long exercise followed a Washington, DC meeting of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Defense Secretary Mark Esper and their Australian counterparts in late July, which emphasized the need for a continued US military presence to preserve stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Air Force Flies B-52 Strategic Bombers Over Ukraine - European Command

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The United States has flown six B-52 strategic bombers over Ukraine during so-called integration training with Ukrainian fighters - as part of the aircraft's deployment to an airbase in the United Kingdom, the US European Command (EUCOM) said in a release on Friday.

"Three US Air Force B-52 Stratofortress bomber aircraft from the 5th Bomb Wing, Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, conducted vital integration training with Ukrainian fighters Friday inside Ukraine's airspace," the release said. "Friday's strategic bomber mission is part of the long-planned deployment of six B-52s to RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, England."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Shooting in Canadian Province of Ontario Leaves 5 Dead - Police

TORONTO, September 4 (Sputnik) - A shooting at a home in the Canadian city of Oshawa left five individuals dead, Ontario's Durham Regional Police said in a statement on Friday.

"On Friday, September 4, 2020, at approximately 1:20 a.m. [5:20 a.m. GMT], officers responded to a residence on Parklane Avenue in Oshawa after numerous reports of gunshots. Members of the Tactical Support Unit arrived quickly and entered the residence to find five deceased people inside and one adult female who was alive but suffering from a gunshot wound," the statement said.

The suspect died at the scene from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, according to investigators, who believe there are no outstanding suspects.

Police said they located a 50-year-old female at the residence, who was rushed to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. All the victims were known to each other, Durham Regional Police said.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Envoy in Meeting With Antonov Urges Russia to Cooperate in Navalny Probe - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun met with Russian Ambassador Anatoly Antonov on Friday to discuss the incident with opposition figure Alexey Navalny and urged Russia to cooperate with the international community on the probe into his alleged poisoning, State Department Spokesperson Morgan Ortagus said in a statement on Friday.

"Deputy Secretary Biegun noted our grave concern about German government findings that Russian opposition leader Aleksey Navalny was poisoned by a chemical nerve agent from the 'Novichok' group. He noted further that the use of this chemical weapon by Russia would be a

clear violation of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention," Ortagus said. "The Deputy Secretary urged Russia to cooperate fully with the international community's investigation into this attack."

Navalny is undergoing treatment in Germany after suffering an acute medical condition in Russia in late August. Berlin said on Wednesday that a German military laboratory possessed undeniable proof that Navalny had been poisoned with a nerve agent from the Novichok group. The Russian Foreign Ministry said in response to the German government's claims that Berlin lacked evidence to back them up. Moscow also said it was perplexed as to why Germany first addressed the European Union, NATO and third parties, such as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, instead of contacting Russia directly.

Earlier in the day, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have not been in contact on the Navalny issue. Peskov also said that Russia was interested in putting light on the situation as much as anyone else, however, Germany has not provided any information.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

UNSC Should Address Foreign Interference in Belarus' Affairs - Russia's Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, September 4 (Sputnik) - The UN Security Council should pay attention to foreign interference in Belarus' internal affairs rather than focus on discussing the response of the country's security forces to the ongoing political protests, Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanskiy said during a Security Council meeting on Friday.

"We are participating in a very strange meeting today that has clearly nothing to do with the agenda of the Security Council. The situation in Belarus clearly represents no threat to international peace and security," Polyanskiy said. "In fact, there is only one topic that is worth discussing today since we all gathered here, and it is flagrant interference of foreign powers, first and foremost, western and southern neighbors of Belarus in the country's internal affairs with a clear aim of regime change."

The UN Security Council on Friday, at the request of Estonia, convened for an informal Arria formula meeting to discuss the situation in Belarus. Former presidential candidate Svetlana Tikhanovskaya also participated in the session and briefed the council.

Polyanskiy pointed out to the fact that when security services in France, Germany and the United States used force against demonstrators in recent protests, no one at the Security Council proposed to initiate a similar meeting with the participation of the organizers of the protests.

The diplomat also urged to halt interfering in Belarus' domestic affairs and refrain from the imposition of any political decisions or mediation, stating that attempts to internationalize could only worsen the situation and deepen diversities in the Eastern European country

"Only the Belarusians themselves should decide the fate of the country through peaceful and constructive political dialogue," Polyanskiy added.

On August 9, the Belarus opposition organized protests after disputing the presidential election results in which incumbent President Alexander Lukashenko was re-elected for a sixth term by winning 80 percent of the vote. The opposition insists that its candidate, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, won the election.

According to the Belarusian Interior Ministry, three people have died, and several hundred others have sustained injuries during the ongoing unrest.

Lukashenko has repeatedly accused Western nations of directly interfering in the country's internal affairs. Russia has also voiced concerns about foreign interference in Belarus' sovereign affairs.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Trump Says Kosovo, Israel Agreed to Normalize Ties, Establish Diplomatic Relations

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - Kosovo and Israel have agreed to normalize ties and establish diplomatic relations, US President Donald Trump said on Friday.

"Kosovo and Israel have agreed to normalization of ties and the establishment of diplomatic relations," Trump said at a signing ceremony between officials of the two sides to normalize ties. Trump noted that the agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has been "incredible in what it's represented what it's meant" and other countries in the Middle East are now telling the United States they want to conclude such agreements with Israel.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Trump Says Serbia Committed to Move Embassy to Jerusalem in July

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump said on Friday that Serbia has committed to move its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem in July.

"Serbia has committed to opening a commercial office in Jerusalem this month and to move its embassy to Jerusalem in July," Trump said.

Serbia President Aleksandar Vucic and Prime Minister of the partially-recognized republic of Kosovo Avdullah Hoti were in Washington for a two-day summit to discuss bilateral issues.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Sanctions 4 Venezuelans Including Former Judge - Treasury

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The United States has designated a former Venezuelan judge, a governor and two other individuals in its latest round of sanctions against the South American nation, the US Department of the Treasury said in a press release on Friday.

"Today, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated four key figures that have facilitated the illegitimate [Venezuelan President Nicolas] Maduro regime's efforts to undermine the independence and democratic order of Venezuela," the release said. "Their actions are part of a broader election interference scheme to prevent free and fair parliamentary elections from taking place in December 2020 by restructuring the National Electoral Council and controlling the state's wealth and assets for regime purposes through the Solicitor General."

The sanctions target former magistrate of the Supreme Court of Justice and now the Principal Rector and President of the National Electoral Council Indira Maira Alfonzo Izaguirre, former Venezuelan governor David Eugenio De Lima Salas, Solicitor General Reinaldo Enrique Munoz Pedroza and National Electoral Council official Jose Luis Gutierrez Parra.

The Treasury Department said the Supreme Court of Justice ruled last April that Munoz Pedroza is the country's Solicitor General with all functions representing Venezuela before national and international third parties concerning the country's wealth and assets.

"The National Assembly rejected this decision and Munoz Pedroza's usurpation of that office, and subsequently urged foreign courts, international arbitration tribunals, and other foreign authorities not to accept the representation of Munoz Pedroza or attorneys appointed by him as representatives of the Venezuelan government," the release said.

The Treasury Department also said the Supreme Court of Justice named in June a new National Electoral Council thereby subverting a power granted to the National Assembly under Venezuela's Constitution.

"Two of the new regime-aligned National Electoral Council officials are Indira Maira Alfonso Izaguirre and Jose Luis Gutierrez Parra. This move is part of the constellation of efforts Maduro has taken to ensure a parliamentary electoral farce on December 6, 2020," the release said. From November 2019 through January 2020, the release added, De Lima Sala was the leader of two "vote-buying" corruption schemes allegedly orchestrated on behalf of Maduro.

"The Maduro regime, with De Lima Salas's leadership, purportedly bought the votes of opposition deputies in the National Assembly in amounts of up to \$1 million dollars," the Treasury said. "These bribes were made for the purpose of undermining the January 2020 re-election of Juan Guaidó as president of the National Assembly. The cash for the bribes allegedly was supplied by El Aissami and Saab's Venezuelan Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza said earlier on Wednesday the country had sent an invitation to the United Nations and the European Union to participate as observers in the elections scheduled to be held on December 6.

The US State Department has urged its partners to reject the results of the upcoming elections in Venezuela.

Venezuela has been suffering from a severe political crisis since the beginning of last year, when Juan Guaido, then head of the opposition-controlled National Assembly, proclaimed himself an interim president of Venezuela in a bid to oust reelected Maduro from power. The

previous parliamentary elections to the National Assembly were held in Venezuela in 2015, when the opposition managed to achieve the majority for the first time in 17 years.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Envoy in Meeting With Antonov Urges Russia to Cooperate in Navalny Probe - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun met with Russian Ambassador Anatoly Antonov on Friday to discuss the incident with opposition figure Alexey Navalny and urged Russia to cooperate with the international community on the probe into his alleged poisoning, State Department Spokesperson Morgan Ortagus said on Friday.

"Deputy Secretary Biegun noted our grave concern about German government findings that Russian opposition leader Aleksey Navalny was poisoned by a chemical nerve agent from the 'Novichok' group. He noted further that the use of this chemical weapon by Russia would be a clear violation of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention," Ortagus said in a statement. "The Deputy Secretary urged Russia to cooperate fully with the international community's investigation into this attack."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Canada Federal Police Say Cannot Confirm Investigation Into Infiltration of Tax Agency

TORONTO, September 4 (Sputnik) - The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) cannot confirm whether an investigation has been launched into the alleged infiltration of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) by organized crime, a RCMP spokesperson said in statement to Sputnik on Friday.

On Tuesday, the independent media outlet Blacklock's Reporter reported citing CRA internal documents that the agency has been infiltrated by members of Canadian biker gangs.

"Generally, only in the event that an investigation results in the laying of criminal charges, would the RCMP confirm its investigation, the nature of any charges laid and the identity of the individual(s) involved," RCMP Cpl. Caroline Duval said.

The CRA told Sputnik that they would comment on the issue at a later date.

According to the report, CRA was breached multiple times and in one instance an agency employee involved in a romantic relationship with a biker gang member who used her authority pass to give the criminal syndicate personal information about their debtors and their lawyers. In another case, a CRA employee with biker gang ties obtained and shared personal information about law enforcement officers and their families with a criminal organization, according to the report.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Trump Announces Serbia, Kosovo Agreed to Economic Normalization - White House

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump has announced that after the two-days talks in Washington Serbia and Kosovo's leaders have agreed to economic normalization, White House Deputy Press Secretary Judd Deere said on Friday.

"President @realDonaldTrump has announced that Serbia and Kosovo have agreed to economic normalization," Deere said in a tweet. "Another historic agreement reached by this President to make the world a more peaceful, prosperous place."

On Thursday, the White House said Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Prime Minister of the partially-recognized republic of Kosovo Avdullah Hoti would sign some documents during their meeting in Washington on Friday. The essence of the documents in question has not been revealed.

Delegations from Serbia and Kosovo are in Washington for a two-day summit. According to Serbian Labor Minister Zoran Djordjevic, the parties are discussing infrastructure projects, trade, and free flow of goods, capital and people. Vucic stressed that the recognition of Kosovo by Serbia is not on the agenda of the negotiations.

Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed independence from Serbia on February 17, 2008. The self-proclaimed republic is recognized by over 100 UN member states. Serbia, as well as Russia, China, and a number of other countries, have not recognized Kosovar independence.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Needs to Spend \$1.8Bln to Remove Huawei, ZTE Equipment - Federal Communications Agency

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The United States will have to spend \$1.8 billion to remove and replace Huawei and ZTE equipment from its telecommunications networks, the Federal Communications Commission said on Friday.

"It could cost an estimated \$1.837 billion to remove and replace Huawei and ZTE equipment," the FCC said, citing research by the Wireline Competition Bureau and the Office of Economics and Analytics.

The action against Huawei and ZTE is part of a wide-ranging clampdown on China by the Trump administration, which has accused Beijing of spying on American interests and citizens through the use of Chinese equipment and networks. The Xi administration has refuted the charges.

In June, the FCC officially designated Huawei and ZTE as threats to national security, barring US telecommunications providers from using government subsidy money via the \$8.3 billion Universal Service Fund to purchase equipment from the two companies for their networks.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Trump Announces Serbia, Kosovo Agreed to Economic Normalization - White House

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump has announced that after the two-days talks in Washington Serbia and Kosovo's leaders have agreed to economic normalization, White House Deputy Press Secretary Judd Deere said on Friday.

"President @realDonaldTrump has announced that Serbia and Kosovo have agreed to economic normalization," Deere said in a tweet. "Another historic agreement reached by this President to make the world a more peaceful, prosperous place."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US National Police Union Endorses Trump for Second Term - President

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The US Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), the nation's largest organization representing law enforcement officers, endorsed President Donald Trump's bid for a second term in office, union president Patrick Yoes said on Friday.

"President Trump has shown time after time that he supports our law enforcement officers and understands the issues our members face every day. The FOP is proud to endorse a candidate who calls for law and order across the nation. He has the full and enthusiastic support of the FOP," Yoes said in a statement.

The FOP based its decision on a questionnaire sent to the campaigns of both Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden, with responses then distributed to the organization's 355,000 members.

Trump has responded to nationwide anti-police protests that began with the May 25 death of African-American suspect George Floyd, with unequivocal support for police, especially in cities where local officials have limited the law-enforcement response in sympathy with demonstrators.

While a majority of the protests have been peaceful, fringe anarchist groups have marred many demonstrations with attacks on police, police stations, court buildings, other targets and frequently turned their ire on businesses in downtown neighborhoods of some of the largest US cities by smashing storefront windows and looting merchandise.

The FOP is the nation's largest and oldest law-enforcement labor organization, according to the release.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

UK Ready to Impose Sanctions for Human Rights Abuses in Belarus - Senior Diplomat

UNITED NATIONS, September 4 (Sputnik) - The United Kingdom stands ready to impose sanctions against those accountable for human rights violations during the ongoing political protests in Belarus after the result of the presidential election in the country, UK's Minister for European Neighborhood and the Americas Wendy Morton said at an informal meeting of the UN Security Council on Friday.

"The UK will not sit back silently when we see political candidates and their campaign teams, peaceful protesters or journalists subject to harassment and detention by the authorities on unclear grounds," Morton said. "We are also prepared to use sanctions to hold those responsible to account, and we will be working with partners to explore all options."

Morton added that an independent investigation through the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe into the violations that followed the electoral process would also be crucial to ensuring accountability for rights abuses.

On August 9, the Belarus opposition organized protests after disputing the results of the presidential election in which incumbent President Alexander Lukashenko was re-elected for a sixth term by winning 80 percent of the vote. The opposition insists that its candidate, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, won the election.

According to the Belarusian Interior Ministry, three people have died, and several hundred others have sustained injuries during the ongoing unrest.

The European Union and the United States had earlier indicated that the imposition of sanctions against individuals involved in violence against protesters and allegedly taking part in election fraud is currently under consideration.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Sanctions 4 Venezuelans Including Former Judge - Treasury

WASHINGTON, September 3 (Sputnik) - The United States has designated an ex-former Venezuelan judge and a governor and two other individuals in its latest round of sanctions against the Latin American nation, the Treasury Department said in a press release on Friday.

"Today, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated four key figures that have facilitated the illegitimate Maduro regime's efforts to undermine the independence and democratic order of Venezuela," the release said. "Their actions are part of a broader election interference scheme to prevent free and fair parliamentary elections from taking place in December 2020 by restructuring the National Electoral Council and controlling the state's wealth and assets for regime purposes through the Solicitor General." The sanctions target former magistrate of the Supreme Court of Justice and now the Principal Rector and President of the National Electoral Council Indira Maira Alfonzo Izaguirre, former Venezuelan governor David Eugenio De Lima Salas, Solicitor General Reinaldo Enrique Munoz Pedroza, and National Electoral Council officials Jose Luis Gutierrez Parra.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

White House Has Fiscal Deal to Avoid Government Shutdown at End of Month - Pence

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The Trump administration has reached a deal with rival Democratic lawmakers in Congress to keep the government funded and avoid a shutdown while continuing to negotiate a new coronavirus relief bill, Vice President Mike Pence said on Friday.

"The agreement reached this week by the Treasury Secretary in our negotiations team to have a continuing resolution to continue to fund the government when the fiscal year runs out at the end of this month means that now we can focus just on another relief bill and we're continuing to do that in good faith," Pence said during an appearance on the CNBC network.

White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows said in an interview on Tuesday the administration hoped to strike by next week an agreement with Congress for a new coronavirus relief bill worth \$500 billion after weeks of rejecting Democrats' demands for a relief package worth more than four times as much.

Meadows added in his interview with CNBC that the White House was making "real progress" in talks with Democrats and hopes to pass a \$500 billion relief bill sometime next week.

Congress has so far passed four phases of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act that have approved roughly \$3 trillion to be disbursed as loans and grants to businesses, paycheck protection for workers and personal aid to qualifying US citizens.

Both Republicans and Democrats have blamed each other for the drag over the fifth installment of the act.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Tikhanovskaya Calls on UN to Send Monitoring Mission to Belarus

UNITED NATIONS, September 4 (Sputnik) - Former Belarusian presidential candidate Svetlana Tikhanovskaya called on the United Nations on Friday to deploy a monitoring mission to Belarus to observe the ongoing protests in the country.

"We urge the United Nations to send the immediate international monitoring mission to Belarus to document the situation on the ground," Tikhanovskaya said during an informal meeting of the UN Security Council.

Belarus is currently facing mass opposition protests that broke out following the presidential election that saw Lukashenko reelected for a sixth term. While electoral authorities maintain that Lukashenko collected over 80 percent of the vote, the opposition insists that his key contender, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, won the election. Opposition figures also accuse the security forces of having resorted to excessive violence during the protests.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Tikhanovskaya Asks UN Human Rights Council to Hold Special Session on Situation in Belarus

UNITED NATIONS, September 4 (Sputnik) - Former presidential candidate in Belarus Svetlana Tikhanovskaya on Friday called on the UN Human Rights Council on Friday to convene a special session to discuss human rights violations in the country.

"Now, we, the Belarusian people, need the help of the United Nations in order to stop blatant human rights violations and cynical disregard for human dignity right in the middle of Europe," Tikhanovskaya said at an informal meeting of the UN Security Council. "We ask the United Nations to condemn the use of excessive force by the Belarusian security services against protesters, suggest a special session of the United Nations Human Rights Council to discuss the human rights situation in Belarus."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

UAE, 3 Other Nations Gain US Longbow Radar for Apache Helicopters – Lockheed Martin

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - Four US partner nations, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), won approval to purchase the Longbow Fire Control Radar (FCR) system for their fleets of AH-64-E Apache helicopters, Lockheed Martin said in a press release on Friday.

"The addition of Morocco, the Netherlands and India Army expands the Longbow customer base to include 16 foreign militaries and 14 nations," the release said.

In addition, the UAE has been approved to purchase the system as the nation upgrades its Apache fleet to the AH-64-E model, the release also said.

The Longbow FCR allows aircrews to scan large areas at long ranges for threats and targets with a low probability of being detected, the release added.

The system is produced in a joint venture between Lockheed-Martin and Northrop Grumman, according to the release.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Canada's Employment Ticks Up in August, Jobless Rate Remains Above 10% - Statistics Canada

TORONTO, September 4 (Sputnik) – The Canadian economy added 246,000 jobs in August, a rise of 1.4 percent, but the unemployment rate remained above 10 percent, the state statistics agency said in its monthly Labor Force Survey on Friday.

While the economy did add jobs for the fourth straight month, gains in August were smaller than in the previous three months, as labor market recovery from the coronavirus pandemic slowed. Additionally, the number of people employed remains 1.1 million below pre-pandemic levels observed in February.

"Employment rose by 246,000 (+1.4%) in August, compared with 419,000 (+2.4%) in July," Statistics Canada said. "The unemployment rate fell 0.7 percentage points to 10.2% in August." In comparison, according to employment figures released by the Labor Department, the US economy gained 1.4 million jobs in August, bringing the unemployment rate below 10 percent for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

Canada's unemployment rate remains the highest in the G7 group of countries, according to OECD data.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US City of Cleveland Seeks Witnesses in Officer's Shooting Death - Police

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) – Authorities in the US city of Cleveland are appealing to the public for information following the fatal shooting of an officer, the local police department said on Friday.

"On September 3, 2020 at approximately 10pm, a Cleveland Police officer was shot and killed in the line of duty in the area of W. 65th Street and Storer Avenue. Very little information is available at this time. We are asking that anyone with information call 9-1-1," Cleveland's Division of Police (CDP) said via Twitter.

The FBI's Cleveland office in a separate Twitter post identified the officer as Detective James Skernivitz, "one of CDP's finest" and said reward money would be paid for any information leading to an arrest and conviction.

Local Fox News affiliate WKBN said the 53-year-old officer was killed along with a 50-year-old man who has yet to be identified.

WKBN confirmed the officer's car was shot multiple times and said police believe that more than one person fired at the officer.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Gains 1.4Mln Jobs in Aug as Labor Recovery Slows From COVID-19 - Labor Department

WASHINGTON, Sept 4 (Sputnik) - The United States gained 1.4 million jobs in August, much less than in the previous three months, as labor market recovery from the coronavirus pandemic slowed, the government's monthly jobs data showed on Friday.

"Total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 1.4 million in August, and the unemployment rate fell to 8.4 percent," the Labor Department said in a statement.

The economy lost more than 21 million jobs for all of March and April, at the height of lockdowns forced by the COVID-19. It posted a strong rebound of 2.5 million jobs in May and 4.8 million in June, before the recovery began slowing last month with just 1.8 million new jobs.

August marked the first time since the start of the pandemic in March that the US unemployment rate fell below 10 percent.

President Donald Trump hailed the new report as "much better than expected," saying the US "Broke the 10% level faster and deeper than thought possible."

US gross domestic product, or GDP, itself shrank by a record 32.9 percent in the three months to June, as business lockdowns forced by the pandemic took a toll on growth.. That, along with the 5 percent contraction in the first quarter, has handed the country its worst recession in history.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Gains 1.4Mln Jobs in Aug as Labor Recovery Slows From COVID-19 - Labor Department

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - The United States gained 1.4 million jobs in August, much less than in the previous three months, as labor market recovery from the coronavirus pandemic slowed, the government's monthly jobs data showed on Friday.

"Total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 1.4 million in August, and the unemployment rate fell to 8.4 percent," the Labor Department said in a statement.. The economy lost more than 21 million jobs for all of March and April, at the height of lockdowns forced by the COVID-19. It posted a strong rebound of 2.5 million jobs in May and 4.8 million in June, before the recovery began slowing last month with just 1.8 million new jobs.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

RECAST - Trump Says US Could Reduce Afghanistan Troop Levels to 4,000 by Election Day - Interview

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - President Donald Trump said in an interview that he expects the United States to reduce the number of troops it has in Afghanistan to as little as 4,000 by the November 3 election as part of its ongoing withdrawal from the country.

"We'll be down in a very short period of time to 8,000, then we're going to be down to 4,000. We're negotiating right now. We've been there for 19 years, and we'll be getting out," Trump said in an interview with Axios on HBO.

When pressed about how soon the reduction would occur and how many troops would still be in Afghanistan on Election Day, Trump said, "Probably 4,000 to 5,000."

The interview was recorded on July 28 but released in full on August 3.

The US has already pulled around 3,000 soldiers out of Afghanistan this year, bringing current troop levels to about 8,600, Pentagon Chief Spokesperson Jonathan Hoffman has said. In addition, five bases previously occupied by American forces have been handed over to the Afghan government.

On February 29, the Taliban and the United States, which has supported the Afghan government, signed an agreement in Doha, stipulating a gradual withdrawal of US troops as well as the beginning of intra-Afghan negotiations and prisoner exchanges. The intra-Afghan talks are expected to pave the way for a peace process and withdrawal of foreign troops after almost two decades of war and insurgency.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Trump Says US Could Reduce Afghanistan Troop Levels to 4,000 by Election Day - Interview

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - President Donald Trump said in a newly published interview that he expects the United States to reduce the number of troops it has in Afghanistan to as little as 4,000 by the November 3 election as part of its ongoing withdrawal from the country.

"We'll be down in a very short period of time to 8,000, then we're going to be down to 4,000. We're negotiating right now. We've been there for 19 years, and we'll be getting out," Trump said in an interview with Axios on HBO released on Thursday night.

When pressed about how soon the reduction would occur and how many troops would still be in Afghanistan on Election Day, Trump said, "Probably 4,000 to 5,000."

The interview was recorded on July 28 but released in full on Thursday night.

The US has already pulled around 3,000 soldiers out of Afghanistan this year, bringing current troop levels to about 8,600, Pentagon Chief Spokesperson Jonathan Hoffman has said. In addition, five bases previously occupied by American forces have been handed over to the Afghan government.

On February 29, the Taliban and the United States, which has supported the Afghan government, signed an agreement in Doha, stipulating a gradual withdrawal of US troops as well as the beginning of intra-Afghan negotiations and prisoner exchanges. The intra-Afghan talks are expected to pave the way for a peace process and withdrawal of foreign troops after almost two decades of war and insurgency.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

RPT - Serbia, Kosovo Leaders Discussing Trade, Projects During White House Talks - Minister

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovo Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti are discussing infrastructure projects, trade and free flow of goods and capital during talks that just kicked off at the White House, Serbian Labor and Employment Minister Zoran Djordjevic told Sputnik.

"This time, specific projects will actually be the subject of discussion, and infrastructure projects, as well as trade and free flow of capital, goods and people, will certainly be a priority," Djordjevic said on Thursday.

Djordjevic added that the meeting at the White House will be a step forward in resolving political issues if agreements on the economy are reached.

"I think that the economy is more important at the moment and achieving results in this area increases the chances of a future agreement on unresolved political issues for which President Vucic has the support of the government of the Republic of Serbia," Djordjevic said.

The Serbian minister explained the series of meetings in Washington, planned at the initiative of the Trump administration regarding continuing dialogue with the interim Kosovo authorities, represents a continuation of attempts to find a solution to the perennial problems that would be acceptable to both sides and applicable in the daily life of the people in Kosovo and Metohia. Djordjevic emphasized that Serbia will not discuss during the White House meeting the issue of territories because such discussions require the participation of the United Nations, Russia and the European Union.

"A priority will be given to economic issues, that is, the economy and its practical application in the reality of current relations and I do not believe that there is something broader on the agenda, even territorial or status issues," Djordjevic said.

However, Djordjevic said he does not exclude such a possibility if the political and other conditions are met by the international community, including the opinion of the UN Security Council permanent member states as well as EU member states.

"Of course, in all this the opinion of the Russian Federation and President Putin, as well as the position of our Chinese friends, is inevitable," Djordjevic said.

Commenting on the possibility that US president may be present during the talks, Djordjevic said, "The question of the presence of US President Donald Trump at these negotiations is unknown, but I don't exclude it, depending on the degree of agreement reached and the quality of the agreements reached."

Djordjevic said the meeting represents a step forward and such meetings will likely be held in the future as well.

"I don't think these meetings are so important that they represent the last and decisive word that Serbia and the interim Kosovar organizations should say to each other. I think this is a process that will continue, but in any case, it is a step forward and leads to a solution in the future," he said.

US policymakers said they hope the White House-hosted summit will focus on building new economic ties between the two adversaries while avoiding the many contentious unresolved political issues between them.

Earlier in the week, a senior Trump administration official said the US president wants to foster conditions for economic growth and increased opportunities for young people that will generate a new sense of prosperity and willingness to move ahead from the sterile conflicts of the past. Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, nearly a decade after a US-led military campaign against the then SR Yugoslavia - comprised of Serbia and Montenegro – was undertaken after Belgrade tried to quell an Albanian separatist uprising led by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) terrorist organization.

Kosovo has since experienced ethnic cleansing of its non-Albanian population - including Serbs, Macedonians and others - and has become a one of the key international organized crime hubs. Moreover, the Kosovo Albanians have aided the overall Albanian territorial designs on neighboring Macedonia and Montenegro for the creation of "Greater Albania."

Serbia considers Kosovo and Metohia to be its territory - a fact recognized by United Nations Resolution 1244 - and refuses to recognize Kosovo's statehood.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Biden Lead Shrinks in Florida as Trump Gains Edge Among Hispanic Voters - Poll

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden is losing his grip on the battleground state of Florida as President Donald Trump pulls ahead among Hispanic voters ahead of the US election in November, a Quinnipiac Poll revealed.

The poll published on Thursday found that 48 percent of likely voters in Florida support Biden while 45 percent support Trump.

Biden's lead shrunk compared to the previous poll in late July that showed him with a 51-38 percent lead over Trump among likely voters in Florida.

Moreover, the poll showed that Trump took a 45-43 percent lead among likely Hispanic voters in the state. The previous poll in July showed Biden leading Trump among likely Hispanic voters in Florida, 50-33 percent.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Portland Woman Charged With Aiming Laser at Police Officers' Eyes - US Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - A woman from Portland, Oregon, has been charged with targeting the eyes of police officers with a high powered laser, the US Department of Justice announced in a news release.

"Eva Warner, also known as Joshua Warner, 25, of Beaverton, Oregon, has been charged by criminal complaint with civil disorder, a felony, after targeting the eyes of multiple law enforcement officers with a high-powered laser during an August 8, 2020 riot in North Portland," the release said on Thursday.

According to court documents, in the late evening on August 8, 2020, a riot was declared at the Portland Police Association office on North Lombard Street in Portland after individuals broke windows and set fire to the office. The crowd also used vehicles and dumpsters to illegally block nearby vehicle traffic.

"Oregon State Police officers notified the Portland Police Bureau's Rapid Response Team that Warner had directed a high-powered, green laser into the eyes of numerous law enforcement officers attempting to disperse the riot. Warner resisted arrest, prompting officers to use force," the release said.

Officers found a black, pen-style laser pointer on Warner's person. Warner was taken into custody and later released. On September 2, 2020, she was arrested by the US Marshals Service in a southeast Portland apartment. If convicted, she faces up to five years in federal prison.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Trump Issues Plea to Iran Not to Execute Popular Wrestling Star Navid Afkarai

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - Iran should spare the life of young wrestling star Navid Afkarai and not execute him for participating in an anti-government demonstration, US President Donald Trump said in a public appeal to Tehran.

"Hearing that Iran is looking to execute a great and popular wrestling star, 27-year-old Navid Afkarai, whose sole act was an anti-government demonstration on the streets," Trump via Twitter on Thursday. "To the leaders of Iran, I would greatly appreciate if you would spare this young man's life, and not execute him. Thank you!"

Trump further noted that Afkarai and the other demonstrators were only reacting to deteriorating economic conditions in Iran.

"They were protesting the country's worsening economic situation and inflation," Trump said. Earlier on Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif described as an insanity the United States' decision to impose sanctions on International Criminal Court (ICC) senior officials who had been probing alleged US war crimes in Afghanistan.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

COVID-19 Claims Lives of 7,000 Health Workers Around World - Rights Group

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - More than 7,000 health workers have died from COVID-19 so far this year while trying to protect others with the highest losses being in Mexico, the United States and the United Kingdom, Amnesty International (AI) said in a statement. "New analysis by Amnesty International has found that at least 7,000 health workers have died around the world after contracting COVID-19," the group said on Thursday. "At least 1,320 health workers are confirmed to have died in Mexico alone, the highest known figure for any country."

AI recorded 1,077 deaths in the United States and 649 for the United Kingdom.

"For over seven thousand people to die while trying to save others is a crisis on a staggering scale. Every health worker has the right to be safe at work, and it is a scandal that so many are paying the ultimate price," AI Head of Economic and Social Justice Steve Cockburn said. Health workers are still dying at horrific rates in countries such as Mexico, Brazil and the United States, while the rapid spread of infections in South Africa and India show the need for all states to take action, AI warned.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

White House Hails 'Real Progress' in Serbia-Kosovo Talks in Washington - Security Adviser

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - White House National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien said afternoon talks between the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo at the White House were constructive.

"Very good round of discussions this afternoon with the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo," O'Brien said in a statement on Thursday. "They made real progress today."

O'Brien said the US International Development Finance Corporation, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and Export-Import Bank, which is the official export agency of the United States, took part in the afternoon meeting.

O'Brien in an earlier statement said economic talks between both countries in the morning were positive as well.

Delegations from Serbia and Kosovo are in Washington for a two-day summit at the White House.

Serbia's Labor Minister Zoran Djordjevic told Sputnik that the economic talks would include topics such as infrastructure projects and the free flow of goods, capital and people. The minister said this week's meetings represent a step forward, especially if agreements are reached, and more could be held in the future.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, nearly a decade after a US-led military campaign against the then SR Yugoslavia - comprised of Serbia and Montenegro - was undertaken after Belgrade tried to quell an Albanian separatist uprising led by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) terrorist organization.

Kosovo has since experienced ethnic cleansing of its non-Albanian population - including Serbs, Macedonians and others - and has become a one of the world's leading organized crime hubs.

Moreover, the Kosovo Albanians have aided the overall Albanian territorial designs on neighboring Macedonia and Montenegro for the creation of "Greater Albania." Serbia considers Kosovo and Metohia to be its territory - a fact recognized by United Nations Resolution 1244 - and refuses to recognize Kosovo's statehood.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Army Cyber Command Dedicates New \$366Mln Headquarters in Georgia - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - US Army Cyber Command (ARCYBER) has officially dedicated its new, more than one third of a billion dollar headquarters at Fort Gordon in the state of Georgia, the Department of Defense announced in a statement.

"Army Cyber Command (ARCYBER) dedicated its new headquarters in a ceremony at Fort Gordon, Georgia," the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS) said on Thursday.

The 336,000 square foot facility costing \$366 million brings cyberspace operations, capability development, training and education together at one location, providing a focal point for command and control of round-the-clock global operations conducted by ARCYBER's staff and subordinate units, DVIDS said.

"Welcome to the Army's premier power projection platform for Cyber, Information Operations and Electronic Warfare. This building was purpose-built ...to better enable the integration of Cyber, Signal, Electronic Warfare, Intelligence and Information Operations," ARCYBER commander Lieutenant General Stephen Fogarty said.

Cyberspace operations are a critical component in modernization and readiness, and the synergy the new complex creates with ARCYBER's partners in the Intelligence, Signal and Electronic Warfare communities, and the Cyber Center of Excellence's trainers and doctrine developers, will help to build US information dominance, Secretary of the Army James McPherson said.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Mayor of New York State's Rochester Suspends Police Officers Over Black Man's Death

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik) - Mayor of the US city of Rochester Lovely Warren announced that she suspended police officers suspected of being involved in the death of a Black man while in custody in March.

"I am suspending the officers in question today against the advice of [the city] council, and I urge the Attorney General to complete her investigation. I understand that the [police] union may sue the city for this, they shall feel free to do so," Warren said during a briefing on Thursday.

On Wednesday, the Rochester Police Department released a disturbing video of body camera footage showing police officers apprehend Daniel Prude who was running naked through the streets at night. Media reported, according to Prude's family, that he died of asphyxiation on March 30 after several police officers pulled a hood over him and pinned him to the ground for two minutes.

Warren said she ordered the police chief to provide her with videos from any in-custody death or use of force incident within 24 hours.

"I have addressed with the police chief how deeply and personally and professionally disappointed I am for him failing to fully and accurately inform me about what occurred with Mr. Prude," she said.

Warren added that she requested immediate briefings regarding both the criminal and internal aspects of the investigation and ordered to prepare a plan within 30 days "to further address our police department's response to mental health cause."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Stock Indexes Plunge Up to 5% Over Stall in COVID-19 Recovery

NEW YORK, September 4 (Sputnik) - US stocks plunged with key indexes falling as much as 5 percent to reverse a recent trend of record highs, amid worries that economic recovery from the COVID-19 was stalling.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite was the hardest hit index on the New York Stock Exchange, falling almost 600 points, or 5 percent, to close at just under 11,460. It hit a record high of 12,074 points on Thursday.

The S&P 500, a barometer for the top 500 US stocks, was next in line, settling down nearly 3.5 percent, or 124.05, at 3,457. It hit an all-time high of 3,588.11 a day earlier.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, the broadest stock index on the NYSE, lost 2.8 percent, or 811 points, to finish at 28,289. It was the largest one-day drop on the Dow since June.

The sell-off came as data showed the US trade deficit expanded by more than \$10 billion for July. A reading for a US non-manufacturing index slowed to 56.9 last month, from 58.1 in July.

On the labor front, US weekly jobless claims came in at 881,000 versus the previous week's 1.01 million, but failed to calm investors fearing a stalling in economic recovery.

"Wall Street's rally is running out of steam amid worries the labor market recovery has stalled," said Ed Moya, analyst at New York's online brokerage OANDA. "The headline beat for weekly jobless claims needs to be taken with a grain of salt."

Notwithstanding Thursday's slump, the Nasdaq remains up nearly 28 percent on the year while S&P 500 continues to show an annual gain of almost 7 percent.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, September 4 (Sputnik)

SERBIA-KOSOVO SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON

* Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovo Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti are discussing infrastructure projects, trade and free flow of goods and capital during the talks that kicked off at the White House, Serbian Labor and Employment Minister Zoran Djordjevic told Sputnik on Thursday.

* Serbia will not discuss during the White House meeting the issue of territories as it requires the participation of the United Nations, Russia and the European Union, Djordjevic said.

* The meeting at the White House will be a step forward in resolving political issues if agreements on the economy are reached, Djordjevic said.

* The leaders of Serbia and Kosovo are making progress on economic issues on the first day of their two-day summit at the White House, US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien said.

US SANCTIONS

* The United States has designated three individuals and 11 entities in Iran, China and the United Arab Emirates as part of new sanctions targeting Iran's petrochemical sector, the US Treasury Department said in a press release on Thursday.

* Congressional Democrats sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin urging him to impose right away additional sanctions against Russia over the country's alleged plans to interfere in the upcoming US election.

ALEXEI NAVALNY CASE

* If the health of Russian opposition blogger Alexey Navalny worsens during his treatment in Germany, Russia will not be able to rule out that it was a German-staged provocation, Vyacheslav Volodin, the head of the Russian parliament's lower house, said on Thursday.

* The statement by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko about data on the poisoning of Navalny being falsified is not true, the German government's press office told Sputnik.

* The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) views the alleged poisoning of Navalny with a nerve agent as a matter of grave concern, OPCW Director-General Fernando Arias said.

* The European Union urges Russia to cooperate with the OPCW in the Navalny case to ensure an impartial international investigation, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

BELARUS DEVELOPMENTS

* Russia and Belarus will soon discuss the terms of energy supplies for 2021 and subsequent years, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on Thursday.

* Russia calls on Poland to refrain from attempts to undermine the sovereignty of Belarus and stick to international law, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

* The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) said in a statement that it is deeply concerned by reports of sexual and gender-based violence against women in Belarus amid the ongoing post-presidential election protests.

