Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

6/29/22 Wednesday

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.

African Union Urges Calm in Border Dispute After Sudanese Forces Bombard Ethiopian Positions

The risk of a new war in eastern Africa continues to rise after an old border dispute between Sudan and Ethiopia was rekindled last week.

In a statement on Wednesday, African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat urged the Sudanese and Ethiopian sides to "refrain from any military action, whatever its origin, and call[ed] for dialogue between the two brotherly countries to solve any dispute."

The call came after Sudanese media reported on Tuesday that the country's armed forces had launched a "large-scale attack" on Ethiopian troops in Al-Fashaqa, a fertile region of Sudan on the border with Ethiopia. Sudanese artillery bombarded Ethiopian positions, and while Addis Ababa has claimed no troops were killed, the Khartoum-based Sudan Tribune reported that "the Sudanese army captured dozens of Ethiopian troops."

Al-Fashaga residents and officials who spoke with Middle East Eye on Tuesday seemed to confirm Addis' position, with one person telling the publication "it's between us and the Amhara militias that are backed by the Ethiopian military."

However, others in the area told MEE that the Ethiopians had seized the seven Sudanese troops in Sudanese territory before taking them to Ethiopia to be killed.

Last week, seven Sudanese troops were captured and killed after crossing the border into Ethiopia, with the Sudanese Army claiming they were prisoners of war and had been executed. "[T]his treacherous situation will not pass without a response," the Sudanese Army said, vowing it would "respond to this cowardly behavior."

However, the government of Ethiopian President Abiy Ahmed has claimed there were no Ethiopian Defense Force (EDF) troops in the area where the Sudanese troops entered, and that they must have been killed by local militia forces.

On Tuesday, EDF Public Relations Director Col. Getnet Adane suggestedthe two countries form a joint committee to investigate the incident. Sudan's National Commission for Human Rights condemned the killings on Wednesday and appealed to its counterpart in Ethiopia to carry out a joint probe.

In Sudan, both the right-wing National Umma Party and left-wing Sudanese Congress Party have called for unity behind what they termed a "war for Sudanese dignity." However, the Resistance Committee leading the left-wing democratic movement has accused Gen. Abdel Fattal Al-Burhan, the de facto military leader, of using the incident to draw attention away from the deep political crisis endangering his government.

"Burhan wants to mix the papers and draw attention away from the big 30 June rallies we are organizing as revolutionary forces to bring his regime down," a Resistance Committee leader told Middle East Eye. "After he used violence and killed a lot of people he is now using this maneuver to contain the mobilization of the rally."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

The Fashaqa region is part of Sudan's precious Qadarif breadbasket region, which receives some of the most rain in the arid country. However, Ethiopian farmers have worked the valley under a 2008 agreement that gave Sudan continued administrative control over the area. That deal began to fall apart in late 2020 after Ethiopia became embroiled in war following the insurrection by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

Amid the conflict between Abiy's government and the TPLF, more than 73,000 Ethiopians have fled as refugees into Sudan, creating a new humanitarian crisis on top of the political crisis that has been unfolding in that country since December 2018, when demonstrations began that eventually forced longtime military ruler Omar al-Bashir from power. Last October, the Sudanese military again seized power, ousting a civilian interim ruler and provoking new mass demonstrations demanding democracy and civilian rule.

Tensions have also brewed between Ethiopia and Sudan over the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), a large hydroelectric plant on the Blue Nile just upstream from the border with Sudan. The river's annual flooding provides water to Sudan and Egypt, leading those two nations to claim the dam as a threat; however, Addis Ababa has countered that the dam, which will be Africa's largest once completed, will provide a huge amount of electricity to benefit the entire 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.

Poland's Top Court Rules 'LGBT-Free' Zones Illegal in Four Municipalities

Four municipal "zones free of LGBT ideology" must be abolished, a top Polish court ruled on Tuesday.

The Supreme Administrative Court (NSA), Poland's court of last resort for administrative issues, rejected appeals by four municipalities that challenged a lower court's ruling overturning the LGBT-free zones. The challenges to the ruling had been brought by the public prosecutor's office, the ultra-conservative think-tank Ordo Iuris, and nine of the municipalities involved; the court threw out four of those appeals.

The zones arose in 2019 following a declaration in support of LGBTQ rights by Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski that infuriated conservative leaders in the country's Catholic community, although analysts have noted the timing of the reaction coincided with the release of a damning documentary on sexual abuse by the church. The Law and Justice Party (PiS), the party of Polish President Andrzej Duda, is very close to the Catholic Church and would likely have been hurt in the polls.

Duda later attacked LGBTQ rights, calling it an ideology "even more destructive" than communism. The PiS was founded by Lech Kaczyński, a former vice-chairman of the Solidarnosc trade union that led the 1980s movement to destroy Polish socialism, and their anti-communist allies in the Catholic Church rallied Poles against socialism by demanding the government allow them to discriminate against LGBTQ people and to end abortion-on-demand.

At their height, the LGBT-free zones encompassed nearly one-third of Poland, concentrated in the southeast. They have banned essentially all displays of LGBT identity, including rainbow

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Pride flags, in a manner similar to the “Don’t Say Gay” law passed in the US state of Florida earlier this year, but much more expansive. However, the tide began to turn against them after the European Commission threatened to withhold funding from municipalities that passed such restrictions, saying they violate EU non-discrimination laws on grounds of sexual orientation. Poland's Human Rights Ombudsman began challenging the laws, and the lower courts upheld their finding that they were illegal, although several provinces have already voluntarily rescinded their laws.

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.

What Did Turkey, Sweden and Finland Agree to in ‘Trilateral Memorandum’?

Following an agreement with Turkey at the NATO summit in Madrid on Tuesday, the alliance formally extended a membership invitation to Sweden and Finland, marking its ninth such expansion since forming in 1949.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan dropped his opposition to Sweden and Finland joining NATO following the signing of a trilateral memorandum with the two nations on Tuesday, which was witnessed by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.

The two nations had applied to join NATO in May, following the start of Russia’s special operation in Ukraine in February, which aimed to prevent Ukraine from joining the alliance and posing an existential danger to Russia.

Here’s what the three nations agreed to:

Finland and Sweden agreed to fully support Turkey “against threats to its national security,” and condemned the Kurdish YPG/PYD militia and Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), as well as the Gülenist movementgroup called FETO by the Turkish government. The two nations also agreed to end all their support for the YPG/PYD and PKK.

Finland and Sweden will categorize the PKK as a terrorist organization and commit to preventing PKK activities and blocking support for them.

Sweden and Finland agreed to end their embargo on selling weapons to Turkey, which was put in place following Ankara’s invasion of Kurdish-held areas of eastern Syria in late 2019.

The three nations agreed to cooperate on law enforcement and intelligence issues, including Turkey’s requests to extradite Kurdish suspects from Finland and Sweden. Finland and Sweden committed to interdicting PKK financing, recruitment, and “disinformation” activities in their own countries.

Finland and Sweden agreed to support Turkey’s involvement in the EU’s Common Security and Defense Policy and PESCO.

Turkey agreed to drop its opposition to Finland and Sweden becoming members of NATO.

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.

Emmett Till’s Relatives Want Police to Serve Ignored 1955 Warrant for Black Teen’s Kidnapping

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Carolyn Bryant Donham was never charged for her alleged role in connection with the abduction, torture and murder of Emmett Till, a Black teenage boy who in 1955 she accused of whistling at her outside a Money, Mississippi, store.

However, Till's surviving family members want that to change after they found an unserved arrest warrant for Donham, 88, in a government file last week.

"Serve it and charge her," Teri Watts, a cousin of Till's, told the Associated Press.

The warrant is dated for August 29, 1955 - the day after Till's death, but before his body was discovered.

Donham has previously admitted to making up a large part of the story that got Till lynched. At the time, Donham, then 21 years old, claimed that Till, 14, had "wolf whistled" at her and grabbed her in front of a grocery store owned by her husband, Roy Bryant.

"That part's not true," Donham told journalist Timothy Tyson in 2007.

Several days after their encounter, Bryant and his half-brother J.W. Milam grabbed guns and abducted Till from his great-uncle's house. After torturing and mutilating him, the two men shot Till in the head and attempted to hide his body by sinking it in the Tallahatchee River. His body was discovered three days later.

Till's mother, Mamie Till Bradley, insisted on holding her son's funeral with an open coffin, exposing to the world the brutality of his death. The images circulated in the press around the globe, arousing fury at the Jim Crow system of racial apartheid that reigned supreme in the American South.

The day after Till's kidnapping and murder, police arrested Bryant and Milam on suspicion of kidnapping, and were later charged with Till's murder. However, they were acquitted by an all-white jury.

According to the AP, the arrest warrant for Donham - which read "Mrs. Roy Bryant" - was publicized at the time as well, but the Leflore County sheriff had said he didn't want to "bother" her because she had two young children.

Leflore County Sheriff Ricky Banks told the AP that he had never heard about the warrant before, including when a former district attorney investigated the case several years ago, but would consult with law enforcement where Donham currently lives in North Carolina.

Only earlier this year did Congress pass a federal anti-lynching billmaking it a hate crime; the law is named after Till. The first federal anti-lynching bill had been introduced 122 years prior.

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.

R. Kelly Slapped With 30-Year Prison Sentence Over Sex Trafficking, Racketeering Charges

By - Evan Craighead

In September 2021, a New York District Court found R&B legend R. Kelly, real name Robert Kelly, guilty of a total of nine charges of racketeering and sex trafficking. His offenses include a

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

violation of the Mann Act, an anti-sex trafficking law in the US prohibiting the transport of anyone across state lines "for any immoral purpose."

Disgraced singer-songwriter R. Kelly was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison on Wednesday, marking the end of a six-week trial in Brooklyn that included testimony from dozens of witnesses, including those who accused the 55-year-old of both sexual and physical abuse.

The US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York was aiming for Kelly to be given at least 25 years behind bars, per a June 8 memo. The filing set forth that Kelly, now 55, should spend the rest of his life behind bars due to the fact he "avoided punishment for almost 30 years and must now be held to account."

Kelly's attorneys argued their client should only serve a decade behind bars because he "experienced a traumatic childhood involving severe, prolonged childhood sexual abuse, poverty, and violence."

During sentencing Wednesday afternoon, US District Judge Ann M. Donnelly stated to the court that "the public has to be protected from behaviors like this."

"These crimes were calculated and carefully planned and regularly executed for almost 25 years," Donnelly said, as reported by the New York Times.

The judge recounted a number of testimonies during sentencing, highlighting Kelly's pattern of sexual abuse and violence against women, girls, and boys.

Kelly's legal team plans to appeal the sentencing.

"We were prepared for it," said defense attorney Jennifer Bonjean, who represented disgraced comedian Bill Cosby in a civil case he lost earlier this month. "We are now prepared to fight this appeal."

Federal prosecutors say Kelly used his "deep network" and "larger-than-life musical persona" to gain access to teenagers and young adults--"many of whom were particularly vulnerable."

"The government has little doubt that if afforded an opportunity to offend again, the defendant would do so,"prosecutors said earlier this month. "He poses a serious danger to the public."

Lizzette Martinez, a woman featured in the documentary 'Surviving R. Kelly,' was accompanied by her attorney Gloria Allred when she took the stand to provide a witness statement.

"January 1995 eventually changed me forever," Martinez testified, detailing that she was a 17-year-old aspiring singer when she met Kelly in a mall.

Now 45, Martinez told the court that she was "left in shock, confused, and in tears" when Kelly, who promised to mentor her, began to abuse her.

"Robert, you destroyed so many people's lives," Martinez told Kelly, who did not make eye contact.

"I do not know how to put a price on all I've gone through," she said. "I am now 45, a mother and I struggle with mental health."

Rumors and even footage of Kelly's misdeeds with minors and women have been circulating since the 90s, around the same time Kelly married teenage R&B artist Aaliyah. Despite dozens of alleged victims coming forward over the decades, accountability appeared to avoid Kelly until the 2019 documentary "Surviving R. Kelly" coincided with the #MeToo movement.

The intersection of the #MuteRKelly and #MeToo movements drummed up public support for victims seeking litigation against the Grammy-award-winning singer. Kelly is still facing a number of criminal charges in Chicago, Illinois, and Minnesota.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Kelly has remained behind bars since his initial arrest in July 2019. The singer-songwriter did not take the stand during trial.

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.

Oslo: 'Criminal Pro-Russian Group' Behind DDoS Attack on Norway's Secure Data Network
By - Evan Craighead

Russia-linked hacker group Killnet previously claimed responsibility for a distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack that targeted Lithuanian state and private websites in retaliation for the Baltic state's decision to observe European Union sanctions and halt the transit of select goods to Russia's Kaliningrad exclave.
Norwegian security authorities say a "criminal pro-Russian group" is behind a distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack that targeted Norway's secure data network and disrupted public and private websites for some 24 hours.
A DDoS attack occurs when a threat actor attempts to disrupt a website, server, or similar target through the use of botnets, a cluster of remotely-controlled computers capable of creating 'zombie networks' that overwhelm and disable the targeted device.
The Norwegian National Security Authority (NSM) is tasked with the matter and is presently "working to find out whether there is a link with state-sponsored actors,"NSM Chief Sofie Nystroem told TV2.
The attack is believed to be retaliation for Norway blocking the transit of Russian supplies–including food, medical goods, and building supplies–to an Arctic Russian coal-mining settlement.
Moscow has asserted that Oslo is exhibiting hostility by interfering in the delivery of vital supplies to the Russian Consulate General in Svalbard.
Nystroem said the attacks "give the impression that we are a piece in the current political situation in Europe."
Authorities highlighted that although similar attacks have targeted infrastructure in other countries, "none of them have produced any lasting impact."
"We are quite certain that no sensitive information was taken," the NSM chief said.
Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre told Associated Press reporters that, to his knowledge, the DDoS attack "has not caused any significant damage."
The website of the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority was among those targeted.

Norway's claim comes on the heels of a recent DDoS attack carried out against Lithuania by hacker collective Killnet.
"The main targets are state institutions, transport institutions, media websites," said deputy Defense Minister Margiris Abukevicius.
A Killnet spokesperson told Reuters that the attacks will continue as long as Lithuania blocks the transit of select goods to Russia's Kaliningrad exclave.
"We have demolished 1652 web resources," the hacker collective said. "And that's just so far."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

DDoS attacks using ransomware have become more common in the past several years, and criminals are now adopting artificial intelligence and machine learning methods that exploit certain behaviors of a target.

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.

Table Manners - Cartoon
By - Ted Rall/Evan Craighead

Former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson revealed during her congressional testimony this week that then-US President Donald Trump was livid about the lack of voter fraud uncovered during the 2020 election and, at one point, became irate and sent his lunch into the dining room wall. “There was ketchup dripping down the wall,” Hutchinson said.
On Tuesday, former Trump aide Cassidy Hutchinson told members of the House select committee probing the January 6, 2021, insurrection that an unnamed White House valet “articulated that the president was extremely angry at the attorney general’s AP interview and had thrown his lunch against the wall.”
In a December 2020 interview, then-US Attorney General William Barr told the Associated Press that there was not enough evidence to prove the claims of widespread election fraud parroted by Trump and his allies.
"So, I grabbed a towel, and started wiping the ketchup off the wall to help the valet out,” Hutchinson recounted.
When asked whether this was typical behavior from the former US president, Hutchinson disclosed that she was personally aware of “several times” in which Trump was “throwing dishes, or flipping the tablecloth to let all of the contents of the table go onto the floor to likely break or go everywhere.”

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.

Steve Bannon Requests Delay in Criminal Trial Over ‘Media Blitz’ of Jan. 6 Panel’s Hearings
By - Evan Craighead

Federal prosecutors leveled two ‘contempt of Congress’ charges against Steve Bannon after the ex-White House chief strategist failed to produce relevant documents and rejected compliance to a subpoena issued by January 6 panel probing the Capitol riot. The Washington, DC, trial is presently set to begin on July 18.
Former White House strategist Steve Bannon is seeking a delay in his upcoming criminal case due to the public spectacle and popularity of televised House select committee hearings, according to a June 29 filing in a DC court by attorneys David Schoen, Robert Costello and Evan Corcoran.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

The Trump-era strategist's defense team argued their client would not be afforded a "fair trial" unless the case was scheduled months after the hearings wrapped. The filing called for October 25 to replace the July 18 start date of this year due to the possibility of jurors' opinions being influenced by the US lawmakers tasked with probing the events that took place on January 6, 2021.

"Public impact is not limited to the hearings themselves, but to the media coverage that magnified the hearings. In Washington, DC, where trial will take place – and where the acts alleged in the Indictment took place–every major media outlet treated the hearings as a top news story," wrote Bannon's attorneys.

Attorneys for Bannon also accused members of the nine-member panel of making "inflammatory remarks about the culpability of President Trump and his closest advisors, including Mr. Bannon," amid "purported 'findings' on issues that may prejudice the minds of jurors in this case."

House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), who initially claimed the GOP will conduct their own probe into the matter, argued last month that a criminal conviction of Bannon would lack legal basis, as the House select committee investigating the deadly insurrection "failed to appoint 13 Members."

In a legal brief to presiding US District Judge Carl Nichols,McCarthy and House GOP Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA) declared that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-CA) decision to shave the committee down from 13 appointees to 9 appointees "deprives the Select Committee of its competence and no criminal prosecution arising from conduct (or lack thereof) before the Select Committee can lie."

Pelosi has previously highlighted that committee proceedings did not meet McCarthy's standards in 2005, when then-House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) appointed 11 Republican lawmakers to serve on an all-GOP select committee probing the US government's shortcomings in responding to Hurricane Katrina. The panel was ultimately appointed, despite Pelosi's rejection of the "sham" group.

Pelosi notably provided McCarthy with an opportunity to select up to five members to appear on the board, but rescinded all five of his proposed appointees after the speaker rejected the submissions of Reps. Jim Jordan (R-OH) and Jim Banks (R-ID), two political allies who were rumored to have been in talks with Trump about a plot to subvert democracy and overturn the 2020 presidential election results.

Cheney: GOP Cannot Be Loyal to Trump and Loyal to the Constitution

Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY), vice chair and one of two Republicans on the January 6 committee, reiterated once more in a Wednesday speech that the 9-member panel has learned that efforts then-President Trump "oversaw and engaged in were even more chilling and threatening than we imagined."

Speaking from the Ronald Reagan Library in California, the Wyoming Republican referred to Trump as a domestic threat who, with the help of "Republican leaders and elected officials," is "attempting to unravel the foundations of our Constitutional Republic."

By pledging loyalty to Trump, those leaders and officials have "made themselves willing hostages to this dangerous and irrational man,"Cheney said.

"It is undeniable—the Republican Party cannot be both loyal to Donald Trump and loyal to the Constitution," read an excerpt from Cheney's speech, as reported by Axios.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

She also took time to praise Cassidy Hutchinson, the former White House aide who revealed that Trump lunged at his security detail after being informed that he would not be taken to the US Capitol to “protest” with his supporters.

“Her superiors—men many years older—are hiding behind executive privilege, anonymity and intimidation," Cheney said."Her bravery and patriotism were awesome to behold. Little girls all across this great nation are seeing what it really means to love this country, what it really means to be a patriot.

Hutchinson’s legal team issued a statement Wednesday emphasizing that the former White House aide “stands by all of the testimony she provided yesterday,”despite pushback from Trump supporters.

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.

Construction on World’s Largest CO2 Capture Plant Set to Begin Wednesday
By - Ian DeMartino

A recent U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimated that if climate change is not addressed soon, the Earth will heat up more than the estimated 1.5 degree Celsius increase that will cause catastrophic changes to the environment.

Swiss start-up Climeworks AG says construction of its second large-scale direct air capture plant will be completed in Iceland in 18-24 months and will be able to suck 36,000 tonnes of CO2 out of the air each year.

Construction on the plant is set to begin on Wednesday and will be the largest carbon dioxide capture plant in the world, surpassing the company’s current plant by 10 times. That plant is currently the world’s largest.

The new plant will contain roughly 80 blocks of fans and filters that will extract CO2 from the air. Another company, Carbfix, will then mix the CO2 with water and store it underground where a chemical reaction will turn it into stone.

The 36,000 tonnes of CO2 the $627 million facility will suck from the air will only offset a tiny fraction of the more than 36 billion tonnes of CO2 emissions produced annually. But the company says it represents a large leap for the technology and exponential growth of it may be necessary for the world to meet its climate goals.

Currently, there are 18 carbon capture facilities in the world, with another set to be built by U.S. oil company Occidental, planned to launch in 2024. That plant will be capable of capturing 1 million tonnes of CO2 annually.

Unfortunately, the process to put carbon into the ground can cause some carbon emissions itself. Carbfix will use geothermal power to perform that service for the Climeworks factory. While geothermal power is much cleaner than traditional fossil fuel plants, it is not without some carbon emissions.

While climate scientists say that carbon-capturing plants are likely a necessary part of fighting climate change, they should not be seen as a silver bullet. Reducing emissions is still considered the best way to head off climate change.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

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.

Death toll rises to 51, Three Men Arrested in Texas Migrant Truck Case
By - Ian DeMartino

51 people are dead after a tractor-trailer truck was abandoned in San Antonio, Texas, with around 100 migrants inside. 46 of those were declared dead at the scene while five more died after being transported to local hospitals.

According to local reports, 39 of the victims were men and 12 were women. While authorities are still trying to determine the identities and nationalities of many of the dead, Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard stated that at least 22 of the deceased migrants were Mexican, seven were Guatemalans and two were Hondurans. Five children are among the dead.

San Antonio reached a high of 103 F on Monday; officials at the scene said the victims' bodies were hot to the touch.

Federal officials arrested Juan Francisco D'Luna-Bilbao and Juan Claudio D'Luna-Mendez after tracing the truck's registration to a home they were spotted leaving. They were both charged with illegal possession of firearms while in the United States after law enforcement found numerous weapons inside the home.

According to The New York Times, a third man was arrested, suspected of being the driver of the tractor-trailer. His name and the charges brought against him have not yet been reported.

The truck also apparently had been a "clone" of another truck owned by a South Texas trucking company. The truck in San Antonio had the same color and identification numbers as a truck owned by Betancourt Trucking and Harvesting, a company based out of Alamo, Texas.

The owners of Betancourt Trucking and Harvesting say their truck has not been near San Antonio recently. "Our [truck] is sitting right in the yard," Felipe Betancourt Jr. told local media. Authorities were able to use forensic techniques to determine that the truck did not belong to Betancourt Jr. and had falsified its identification numbers.

Authorities say that the tragedy was the worst migrant smuggling mass fatality case to occur on United States soil in recent memory.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador offered his condolences to the families of the victims and promised to help get their bodies home.

"This is bitter proof that we must continue to insist on supporting people so that they do not have to leave their villages to look for a life on the other side of the border," López Obrador said.

President Joe Biden called for a crackdown on the smuggling industry in a written statement. "This incident underscores the need to go after the multi-billion dollar criminal smuggling industry preying on migrants and leading to far too many innocent deaths," the president said.

With increasing border security and the continuation of Title 42, experts say that migrants are being forced to take increasingly dangerous routes.

"There's a direct relationship between U.S. deterrence strategies at the border and migrants dying at the border," Fernando Garcia, executive director of the El Paso-based Border Network for Human Rights told the New York Times. "The numbers will go higher."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Texas Governor Greg Abbott used the tragedy to take a shot at his political opponents, blaming Biden's "open border policy" for the deaths on Twitter.
"Nobody in Texas can seriously believe that Greg Abbott cares about immigrant families," Greg Casar, a Democratic nominee to fill a congressional seat that represents parts of San Antonio and Austin, told The Times. "Governor Abbott has been pushing immigrant families into the shadows and that results in people dying, trying to go across the river, it results in people burning to death inside of trucks like this."

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.

Radiation on Mars Likely Destroyed All Evidence of Life on the Surface. Now, NASA Needs to Dig
By - Ian DeMartino

NASA has sent five rovers to Mars: Sojourner, 1997; Spirit and Opportunity, 2004; Curiosity, 2012; and Perseverance, 2021. Unfortunately, none of them can dig more than a few inches under the surface of the Red Planet.
If we want to find evidence of life on Mars, we are going to have to dig deep, six feet deep to be exact, according to NASA.
Thanks to an experiment performed by NASA at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt Maryland, scientists now believe that any amino acids near the surface of Mars would break down much faster than previously thought.
Amino acids are fundamental to life. Organic terrestrial life uses amino acids to create proteins that are then used to make enzymes that regulate chemical reactions and structures. Amino acids can exist without life, so finding them on Mars would not prove life existed on the planet, but it would be a strong piece of evidence.
However, amino acids on Mars would be subjected to cosmic radiation from the Sun, destroying them and any trace that they ever existed. Earth's magnetic field and thick atmosphere protect amino acids, and all of life, from the cosmic radiation output by the Sun. But Mars does not currently have a magnetic field and its atmosphere is thin and unstable compared to ours.
However, scientists do not believe that was always the case. Most scientists believe that Mars once had a thick atmosphere and a magnetic field. That, along with evidence that the planet once had water on its surface, leads them to believe the Red Planet may have been habitable long ago.
The Mars rovers currently searching for life on the planet are only capable of digging a few inches below the surface. NASA scientists now believe it would only take 20 million years, a short time geologically speaking, for the Sun's harmful rays to penetrate the surface and erase any evidence that amino acids existed there.
In fact, they estimate that any amino acids near the surface earlier than 100 million years ago have likely been completely destroyed by the Sun's cosmic rays. 100 million years may seem like a long time, but scientists believe it has been billions of years since Mars resembled a habitable planet.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

If scientists can dig significantly deeper, they may be able to find some amino acids. Two meters, or a little more than six feet, is how far they believe we will have to dig to find amino acids on Mars if they exist at all.

Previously, scientists thought evidence of amino acids would survive much longer, but this new experiment took amino acids and mixed them in a test tube with soil meant to mimic Martian soil. They then blasted it with radiation equivalent to that of 80 million years of exposure on Mars. Previous experiments only blasted the amino acids, without the soil simulation, and that may have resulted in an inaccurate estimate of their viability.

“It turns out that the addition of silicates and particularly silicates with perchlorates greatly increases the destruction rates of amino acids,” said the paper’s lead author and physicist Alexander Pavlov.

Amino acids have been found off-planet before. Scientists observed them in the asteroid Rygu and in the atmosphere of Comet 67P. Amino acids were also found in a meteorite believed to come from Mars, and scientists believe, though they aren’t certain, that those amino acids came from Mars and not from contamination on Earth.

If NASA hopes to find amino acids on Mars, they need to send something that can dig deeper than their current rovers.

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.

Once Friends, Howard Stern Now Wants to Face Trump for the Presidency
By - Ian DeMartino

Considered by many to be the inventor of “shock jock” radio, Howard Stern and Donald Trump were once friends, with the real estate mogul being a frequent guest on Stern’s show in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Radio shock jock host Howard Stern said he is considering a run for president on his SiriusXM show Monday.

The controversial host of “The Howard Stern Show” said that he will have a narrowly focused agenda, wanting to eliminate the Electoral College and expand the Supreme Court by appointing five new justices.

“The problem with most presidents is they have too big of an agenda,” Stern explained. “The only agenda I would have is to make the country fair again.”

Stern also took aim at the three Supreme Court Justices appointed by former President Trump. “It’s very hard to have a Supreme Court that’s openly lied,” he said. His solution, as many others have proposed, is to expand the court. “I’m not afraid to do it. As soon as I become president, you’re gonna get five new Supreme Court justices that are going to overturn all this bulls***”

Laying out the other major piece of his hyper-focused agenda, Stern said he would fix the voting system.

“I am going to do the very simple thing that’ll set the country straight: one vote, one person. No more Electoral College.”Stern also rhetorically asked, “How long can we keep electing people

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

who lost the election?" referring to Trump's victory in 2016 in which he lost the popular vote but won the Electoral College.

The radio host, who also starred in the 1997 biographical comedy "Private Parts," said he was only interested in running against Trump, not other Republican candidates. "I know I'll beat his ass," Stern said of Trump.

This is not the first time that Stern has hinted that he may jump into the 2024 Presidential race to face Trump. In November 2021, Stern laid out his plan: "I would just sit there at the debate and play that f****** clip of him trying to fix the election over and over again. There is no way I'd lose," Stern said, referring to the infamous phone call between Trump and Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. In that call, Trump pressured Raffensperger to "find" enough votes to overturn the 2020 election.

Stern's co-host Robin Quivers agreed at the time, saying, "If Trump decides to run again, you have to run against him. That's my plan, that's what is going to happen. We can't leave it to the Democrats."

It is not clear from the discussion how Stern plans to get on the ballot. He could run for the Democratic nomination if Biden, who has repeatedly said he will run in 2024, decides against running for reelection. Alternatively, he could attempt to primary Biden, though primarying a sitting president is rare and difficult. The last significant attempt was in 1992 when Pat Buchanan tried to primary George H. W. Bush, though he failed to secure even a single state.

Stern could also go the third party or independent route and take on both Biden and Trump at the same time. In 1994, he was nominated by the Libertarian Party in the New York gubernatorial election but dropped out after the state Supreme Court ruled that he would need to reveal his finances.

Stern and Trump were once friendly, with the then-real estate mogul appearing on "The Howard Stern Show" multiple times. That changed after the 2016 election, as their political views grew further apart after Stern said Trump changed politically. Stern said at the time that he was a big supporter of Hillary Clinton and abortion rights.

There's no word yet on whether President Stern would host a daily call-in show from the West Wing.

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.

HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra Condemns Supreme Court, Unveils Abortion Plan

By - Mary Manley

Xavier Becerra, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), unveiled a plan on Tuesday in which he hinted at taking legal action against states that attempt to ban abortion pills, including a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved pill called mifepristone.

HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra answered questions at a Tuesday press conference following the overturning of Roe v. Wade, the landmark Supreme Court decision that protected the constitutional right to abortion.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

"Friday's Supreme Court decision was despicable. But it was not unpredictable. HHS has been preparing for this for some time," he began.
"FDA has found medication abortion treatments like mifepristone safe and effective," said Becerra, who preempted his answer to press questions by saying that he would answer well enough while "stay[ing] in the legal confines."
"Those medications that may be classified as medication abortion that the FDA has approved as safe and effective are therefore available for prescription," explained Becerra, before adding that he can't say what precisely "that means" because the HHS is trying to stay within the "confines of the law."
"Even though it's a law that I personally believe jeopardizes the health of women, we will stay within the confines of the law," said Becerra.
As for the legal conditions under which the abortion pill can be prescribed, Becerra's cautious response to reporters and Americans was to "stay tuned."
Becerra did provide some hope on the issue of abortion care for pro-choice advocates and women's health care providers like Planned Parenthood, which says exclusion from state family planning programs violates federal law. He explained that if a state is using federal funding for healthcare programs, they must respect laws at the federal level even when those services provide abortion care.
Becerra added that the White House isn't interested in "going rogue" and providing Americans with abortion services.
"We're not interested in going rogue and doing things just because we want to make sure what we tell Americans is accurate—because we hear, we know, a lot Americans are hearing a lot of inaccurate information," Becerra replied after ABC's Mary Bruce asked him why the White House's proposals weren't more prepared for the fall of Roe v. Wade if they had been expecting it.
"And so to every American who's impacted: My apologies that, as I said, we can't tell you there's a silver bullet. But what I am saying to you is that the more we dig, we will do everything we can with what we find to make sure we're protecting women's reproductive health care services. It takes a little time because we want to do it right, and we want to do it according to the law."
On Friday, Attorney General Merrick Garland announced that "states may not ban" abortion pills that are approved by the FDA. However, he failed to explain how the FDA could ensure access to abortion pills such as mifepristone.

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.

Every Branch of the Military is Failing to Meet 2022 Recruitment Goals
By - Mary Manley

Officials for the United States military report that they are struggling to meet their recruiting goals set for fiscal year 2022. The news of the shrinking numbers comes as no surprise considering that the military has been loosening its restrictions to get more eligible persons to join.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

On Thursday, the United States Army relaxed their tattoo policy in hopes of meeting their recruitment goals. With this new policy, soldiers and recruits are able to get tattoos on their hands, the back of their necks, and behind their ears, depending on the size and number of tattoos. That policy change follows a similar one from 2015 when the Army started allowing recruits to get tattoos on their legs and arms.

And on Friday, the U.S. Army announced that recruits do not need to have their high school diploma or their General Education Development (GED) certificate to join the U.S. Army as long as they enlist before basic training ends (on October 1).

On Monday, NBC reported record low numbers of young Americans who are eligible to serve, and within that number, they found an even smaller percentage of Americans who would want to serve. The dwindling numbers show an unrealistic future for the all-volunteer force (AVF), which hasn't had to rely on a military draft since 1971.

"This is the start of a long drought for military recruiting," said Retired Lieutenant General Thomas Spoehr of the Heritage Foundation, a think tank which promotes conservative policies. He says the last time recruitment was this low was in 1973, the year the draft officially ended and the U.S. pulled their troops out of Vietnam. While Spoehr says it isn't a guarantee that the draft will return, he does believe that this is the year to re-examine the sustainability of the all-volunteer force.

There are a few different reasons as to why at least 71% of young Americans are unfit to join military service: drug use, obesity, physical health issues, mental health issues, misconduct, and a lack of talent and skills are hampering today's youth and keeping them from making the cut, according to the Army's Public Affairs Office.

And just last month, those numbers shrunk even further, with Army Chief of Staff General James reporting McConville that only 23% of Americans ages 17 to 24 are eligible to serve in the military.

The low recruitment numbers could be a reflection of how the public views the U.S. military overall. An internal Defense Department survey shows that 57% of those (young Americans) who answered it believe they would experience emotional or psychological problems if they served in the military.

Overall public trust in the military is also shrinking, with only 45% of Americans having a "great deal of trust and confidence in the military," according to a 2021 annual Reagan National Defense Survey by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute.

In addition to that, only 13% of young Americans who answered a survey conducted by the Pentagon had parents who served in the military compared to 40% who had military parents in 1995, further hampering the military's popularity among America's youth. High school students (often those with middle class parents) are being encouraged to go to college before they choose a career such as the military, says Kate Kuzminski from the Center for a New American Security.

"Changing the mind of parents is the really tough part, particularly if these are parents who worked really hard for their children to go to college," said Kuzminski.

For fiscal year 2022 thus far the Army has only met 40% of their enlisting goals, with only three months left to lift those shrinking numbers. However, summer break (after high schoolers graduate) is usually when the military sees a rise in recruitment numbers.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

The Coast Guard has only filled roughly 55% of their goal for active-duty enlistments, and the Air Force has 4,000 less airmen than their target number for this month, the lowest number of recruits for the Air Force since 1999.

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.

Social Media Reacts to Alec Baldwin Yelling at Maid in Spanish During Interview with Woody Allen
By - Mary Manley

Alec Baldwin did a sit-down interview with controversial film director Woody Allen on Instagram Live. Allen, known for films such as “Manhattan” and “Vicky Cristina Barcelona,” was accused by his adoptive daughter Dylan Farrow of sexually molesting her when she was only seven.
Alec Baldwin, 64, is getting mocked online for yelling to his assistant in “terrible” Spanish during an Instagram Live interview.
“Leonetta! Leonetta! Basta! Las perritas! Basta! Las perritas, suficiente!” Baldwin yelled to his staffer after the interview experienced technical issues. Baldwin’s yelling translates to:
“Leonetta! Leonetta! Enough! The dogs! Enough. The dogs, that’s enough!”
The bizarre interaction between two Hollywood icons set off an internet frenzy, with many native Spanish speakers saying it was difficult for even them to understand.
“Inexplicably interviewing Woody Allen on Instagram Live, watching as Woody loses Wi-Fi, and then getting up to yell something in Spanish that I a native Spanish speaker can’t understand has surpassed Schweddy Balls as the new funniest thing Alec Baldwin has ever done. God tier,” wrote Twitter user Alexis Pereira, referring to an SNL comedy sketch Baldwin did in 1998.

The interview with Allen was apparently plagued by poor connection, making Baldwin’s outburst in Spanish exceedingly bizarre.
“-and they said comedy was dead!!!!!” Tweeted Carrie Courogen in response to the interview flop.
“I truly cannot believe this. Mr. Baldwin is a magnet for making me scream ‘HUH?’ at my phone,” wrote user @LukeMones.
“Absolutely lost my s*** when he threw that thang back,” wrote Twitter user @hamsnackattack, who then shared a photo of Baldwin’s rear end.
Baldwin came under scrutiny for simply doing an interview with the controversial Allen, now 86. The decision to interview Allen is especially unusual from a public relations perspective considering that he is still involved in an investigation concerning an accidental shooting onset during the filming of the movie “Rust.”
Baldwin was holding and fired the gun that fatally killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on October 21, 2021. The actor was also criticized for his decision to not allow comments during the interview with Allen.
“Alec Baldwin, who shot and killed his employee 8 month ago, is live on instagram now with Woody Allen who is married to his daughter,” wrote journalist Emily Miller on Twitter.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

“Remember when Alec Baldwin literally killed a crew member on a set last year, faced zero repercussions, and is now… promoting a special interview he’s doing with… Woody Allen? That’s literally all you need to know about the film&TV industry,” criticized Twitter user @t_NYC.

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 to Provide Ukraine With Combat Vehicles, Drone Cameras Worth $388Mln - Trudeau

OTTAWA, June 30 (Sputnik) - Canada will provide Ukraine with up to 39 Armored Combat Support Vehicles and six drone cameras that will complete the US$388 million in military aid allocated in the 2022 budget, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced in a press release on Thursday.

“Canada is providing an additional six drone cameras and is currently in process of finalizing negotiations to supply Ukraine with up to 39 armored combat support vehicles (ACSVs), including elements for repairs and servicing. This will complete the allocation of $500 [US$388] million in military support for Ukraine announced in Budget 2022”, the release said.

This announcement comes as Trudeau, Foreign Minister Melanie Joly and Defense Minister Anita Anand participated in the NATO Summit in Madrid, Spain, from June 28-30.

On June 29, Anand announced that Canada will deploy additional personnel, infrastructure and military capabilities in the region as part of Operation Reassurance, the country’s largest military deployment outside its own borders

At present, some 1,400 Canadian service members are stationed in the Baltics.

On February 24, Russia launched a special military operation in Ukraine after the breakaway Donetsk and Luhansk people’s republics requested help to defend them from intensifying attacks by Ukrainian troops. Since, Canada and its collective West allies have imposed comprehensive sanctions on Russia and provided Kiev with offensive and defensive weapons in the amount of multiple billions of dollars.

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.

Two Men From Jamaica Plead Guilty to Telemarketing Sweepstakes Fraud Plot in US – DOJ

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) – Two men who participated in a $9.4 million international telemarketing sweepstakes fraud scheme pled guilty to defrauding a number of senior citizens and vulnerable victims in the United States, the Department of Justice said Thursday.

"Maurice Levy, 51, and Derrick Levy, 54, both of Jamaica, admitted that between July 2008 and September 2016, they worked in call centers in Costa Rica that defrauded victims in the United States," prosecutors said. "Derrick Levy and Maurice Levy admitted that they concealed their physical location using Voice-over-IP technology, which enabled them to give victims telephone

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

numbers that, although bearing U.S. area codes, were actually answered at the call centers in Costa Rica."
The Levys told investigators they would call targeted individuals in the United States and tell that they had won a sweepstakes prize but needed to pay fees so that a purported prize could be delivered to them. However, after victims paid the initial fee, the Levys and their cohorts would call them back claiming that there had been a mistake, that the victim had actually won a bigger prize and that they needed to pay more money to claim that prize.
"Many victims sent tens of thousands of dollars to Maurice Levy, Derrick Levy, and their co-conspirators in response to these calls," prosecutors explained.
The fraud scheme netted the Levys more than $9,400,000 which they used to continue operating the call centers and to fund the lavish lifestyles of themselves and the other criminals involved. Maurice Levy pled guilty on June 29 to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and will be sentenced later. Derrick Levy pled guilty on January 25 to the same charge and will be sentenced on September 28.
The pair each face as much as 20 years in 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.

Pfizer Seeks FDA Approval for Paxlovid Use on High Risk COVID-19 Patients – Statement

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - Pfizer issued a statement on Thursday that it has asked the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to approve its drug Paxlovid for patients who are at a high risk of a severe COVID-19 progression.
“Pfizer has announced the submission of a New Drug Application (NDA) to the FDA for approval of Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir [PF-07321332] tablets and ritonavir tablets) for patients who are at high risk for progression to severe illness from COVID-19,” the release said.
Paxlovid is already approved for emergency use in the treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults and pediatric patients 12 years of age and over and who weigh at least 40kg or 88lbs, the release said.
"The submission provides the longer-term follow-up data necessary for acceptance and potential approval," the release added.
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, 50% to 60% of the population in the United States still has one or more risk factors for potentially developing a severe case of COVID-19.

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, France, Germany Say Iran Has Made ‘Unrealistic Demands’ at Doha Meeting on JCPOA

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

UNITED NATIONS, June 30 (Sputnik) - Iran has not seized the opportunity to work to advance the goals of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear agreement during the meeting in Doha and has made instead "unrealistic demands," the United Kingdom, France and Germany said on Thursday.

"Unfortunately, it is our understanding that at the meeting which ended yesterday in Doha, Iran once again refused to seize the opportunity and, instead, made new extraneous and unrealistic demands," the statement said.

Diplomats representing the three countries read the statement prior to the UN Security Council meeting set to discuss Iran and its compliance under the JCPOA.

The UN Security Council convened its biannual briefing on the implementation of resolution 2231 that endorsed the JCPOA.

UN Security Council members have been at odds on whether Iran's actions have contravened resolution 2231 or Tehran complies with it.

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 Supreme Court Rules Biden Administration Allowed to End 'Remain in Mexico' Policy

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration is authorized to end the Trump-era "Remain in Mexico" policy requiring non-Mexican nationals who cross the land border into the United States to stay in Mexico during the course of their removal proceedings, the Supreme Court said on Thursday.

The legal questions presented to the court in the case were whether the Biden administration's decision to rescind the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) violated the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and whether the policy rescission was a valid final agency action by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

States including Texas and Missouri launched a lawsuit challenging the rescission of the MPP, arguing that the decision violated the INA and Administrative Procedures Act. A district court and court of appeals initially ruled in favor of the states against the Biden administration.

"For the reasons explained, the Government's rescission of MPP did not violate section 1225 of the INA, and the October 29 Memoranda did constitute final agency action. We therefore reverse the judgment of the Court of Appeals and remand the case for further proceedings consistent with this opinion," Chief Justice John Roberts said in the written majority opinion.

Justices Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas and Neil Gorsuch issued a dissenting opinion arguing that the Biden administration has no legal alternative to the policy and must continue enforcement of the rule.

"Due to the huge numbers of aliens who attempt to enter illegally from Mexico, DHS does not have the capacity to detain all inadmissible aliens encountered at the border, and no one suggests that DHS must do the impossible. But rather than avail itself of Congress's clear statutory alternative to return inadmissible aliens to Mexico while they await proceedings in this country, DHS has concluded that it may forgo that option altogether and instead simply release

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

into this country untold numbers of aliens who are very likely to be removed if they show up for their removal hearings," Alito said in the dissenting opinion.
The ruling came down on the last of the Supreme Court's opinion "issuance days" for the rest of the summer, as well as the last day of Justice Stephen Breyer's tenure on the bench.
US President Joe Biden earlier in June at the Summit of the Americas announced over $645 million in funding for the Latin American region to help address issues including what the president called "historic refugee and migration flows."

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.

UN Urges US to Lift Sanctions as Outlined in JCPOA, Extend Oil Trade Waivers

UNITED NATIONS, June 30 (Sputnik) - The United Nations calls on the United States to lift sanctions on Iran as outlined in the 2016 nuclear deal and extend oil trade waivers, Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo said on Thursday.
"'We welcome the step taken by the United States in February 2022 to reinstate waivers on nuclear non-proliferation projects. We again appeal to the United States to lift or waive its sanctions as outlined in the Plan and to extend the waivers regarding the trade in oil with Iran," DiCarlo 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.

UN Urges Iran to Reverse Steps Taken in Breach of JCPOA Commitments - DiCarlo
UNITED NATIONS, June 30 (Sputnik) - The United Nations urges Iran to reverse the steps taken in breach of its commitments under the 2016 nuclear deal, Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo said on Thursday.
"We also again call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to reverse the steps it has taken that are not consistent with its nuclear-related commitments under the Plan," DiCarlo 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 Supreme Court Narrows EPA Authority to Regulate Greenhouse Gas Emissions

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - The US Supreme Court on Thursday issued a decision narrowing the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, ruling that such powers must rest with Congress and an agency must be clearly delegated that authority by lawmakers.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

"Capping carbon dioxide emissions at a level that will force a nationwide transition away from the use of coal to generate electricity may be a sensible 'solution to the crisis of the day,'" Chief Justice John Roberts said in the court's majority opinion. "But it is not plausible that Congress gave EPA the authority to adopt on its own such a regulatory scheme… A decision of such magnitude and consequence rests with Congress itself, or an agency acting pursuant to a clear delegation from that representative body."

The case brought before the Supreme Court involved challenges to the EPA's authority under the Clean Air Act to require coal-fired power plants to reduce their production of electricity, or subsidize it with green energy sources in order to combat greenhouse gas emissions.

The requirement was issued in 2015 under the Clean Power Plan as the being "best system of emission reduction" for existing coal-fired power plants.

The Supreme Court's decision ruled that the EPA lacks the authority to implement the rule under the Clean Air Act.

Justices Elena Kagan, Stephen Breyer and Sonia Sotomayor issued a dissenting opinion in which they argued that the EPA was indeed granted authority by Congress under the Clean Air Act to issue such a regulation.

"The majority says it is simply 'not plausible' that Congress enabled EPA to regulate power plants' emissions through generation shifting," Kagan said in the dissenting opinion. "But that is just what Congress did when it broadly authorized EPA in Section 111 to select the best system of emission reduction for power plants."

The decision came on the last day of the Supreme Court's opinion "issuance days" for the rest of the summer as well as the last day of Breyer's tenure on the bench.

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 Non-Energy, Food Inflation Shows Slower Annual Growth 3rd Month in Row - Commerce Dept.

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - Non-energy-and-food inflation in the United States grew at a slower annual pace for a third month in a row in May as the Federal Reserve kept up with aggressive interest rate hikes, data from the Commerce Department showed on Thursday.

The core portion of the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Index, which is stripped of volatile energy and food prices, grew 4.7% in the year to May from 4.9% in the 12 months to April, the Commerce Department said.

In April, the core PCE Index slowed from an annual growth of 5.2% in March. Prior to that, the PCE showed an annual growth of 5.3% in February.

The main PCE Index, which includes energy and food prices, however, grew 6.3% in the year to May, unchanged from April. That led economists to think that the Federal Reserve still had some way to go in arresting inflation, especially with the average price of gasoline at US pumps hovering at $4.86 a gallon, not too far below June's record highs of $5.02.

"The broader market is reluctant to buy into the 'peak inflation ' narrative," economist Adam Button said in a post on the ForexLive platform.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Many economists say the Federal Reserve left "rates too low for too long" and its aggressive catch-up with that now could unravel the economic recovery made since last year from the coronavirus pandemic.
The Commerce Department reported that US Gross Domestic Product contracted by 1.6% in the first quarter of this year versus a 6.9% growth in the fourth quarter of 2021. If the current second quarter registers a negative growth as well, the United States would technically be in a recession.
The Federal Reserve kept rates at between zero and 0.25% for two years during the coronavirus pandemic and only raised them this year in March. It has since brought key lending rates to between a 1.5% and 1.75% range.
The US central bank has said it will continue with rate hikes until inflation returns to its annual target of 2%. The Consumer Price Index, which the US public follows more closely, grew at an annual pace of 8.6% in the year to May.

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 Jobless Claims Hover at Around 300,000 for 4th Straight Week - Labor Dept.

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - Jobless claims in the United States hovered at around 300,000 for a fourth week in a row, the US Labor Department reported on Thursday in data that indicated little change in the country's tight employment market.
Jobless claims came in at 231,000 last week, after staying at 229,000 for three previous weeks, the Labor Department said.
"These numbers are slowly picking up but anything below 300,000 is still very healthy [for employment]," economist Adam Button said in a comment posted on the ForexLive forum. "There is no sign of any significant layoff activity and it's still a tight jobs market."
Unemployment in the United States reached a record high of 14.8% in April 2020, with the loss of some 20 million jobs in the aftermath of the coronavirus breakout.
Jobs recovery has been strong over the past 18 months, with the unemployment rate staying at 3.6% since April.
An unemployment rate of 4% or below is regarded by the Federal Reserve as maximum employment.

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 Will Not Ask Saudis to Increase Oil Production

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said on Thursday that he has no plans to ask the leaders of Saudi Arabia to increase oil production.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

"Now, I am not going to ask them that," Biden said during a press conference when asked whether he would ask the Saudi King and Crown Prince during his upcoming trip to Saudi Arabia to increase oil production.
Biden said he had indicated to all countries in the Persian Gulf the importance of increasing oil production and expressed hope those states will see it is in their interest to do so.

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 to Announce Soon Additional $800Mln in Military Aid for Ukraine - Biden

(Updates with more details, background in paras 3-5)
WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - The United States will announce soon that it would provide $800 million in additional military aid for Ukraine, including air defenses, US President Joe Biden said on Thursday.
"In the next few days we intent to announce $800 million more," Biden told a press conference after attending the Group of Seven (G7) and NATO summits.
The US president then said he will announce "shortly" the additional military aid for Ukraine and what the package would include.
"I guess I'll announce it shortly but another $800 million in aid for additional weaponry for Ukraine, including air defense and offensive weapons," Biden said.
Earlier this week, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan confirmed that the United States is finalizing a new aid package for Ukraine that would include advanced medium- and long-range air defense capabilities.

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 US Drivers Will Have to Pay High Prices for Gasoline 'as Long as It Takes'

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden said on Thursday that US drivers will have to pay record prices for gasoline as long as it takes.
"As long as it takes so Russia cannot in fact defeat Ukraine and go beyond Ukraine," Biden said when asked how long American drivers and drivers around the world will have to pay high prices at the pump. "This is a critical position for the world."

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 Congress Approval Needed to Send F16s to Turkey, Thinks He Can Get It

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden said on Thursday that he needs Congressional approval to sell F-16 jets to Turkey, and expressed hope that the White House could get it.
"I need Congressional approval to be able to do that, and think we can get that," Biden told reporters after the NATO summit in Madrid.
He reaffirmed his stance that the US should sell F-16s to Turkey.
"It is not in our interest not to do that, and I indicated to them, I have not changed my position at all," Biden 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.

Oil Price Caps Will Let Russia Receive Profit, But Not at Exorbitant Prices - Biden

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said on Thursday that the oil price cap will allow Russia to make profit but not at "exorbitant" prices.
"I suggested a while ago that what we should consider doing is putting a cap on the amount of money that the world would pay for Russian oil and that we would not provide them insurance, we would not insure Russian ships carrying oil, we would not provide insurance for them so they would have great difficulty getting customers," Biden told reporters after G7 and NATO summits. "A point is that we've said to them here is the deal we are going to allow you to have a profit on what you make but not at the exorbitant prices that you are charging for the oil now."

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 US Going to Support Ukraine as Long as It Takes

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - The United States intends to support Ukraine as long as it takes, President Joe Biden said on Thursday
"We are going to support Ukraine as long as it takes," Biden said when asked whether there will be time when the US will tell Volodymyr Zelenskyy that Washington cannot support Ukraine any longer.

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.

G7 Leaders Task Teams to Work on Details of Russia Oil Price Cap – Biden

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) – G7 leaders tasked their teams with working on details of the price cap on Russian oil, US President Joe Biden said on Thursday.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

"We tasked our teams to work on the details of the price cap on Russian oil to drive down Putin's revenues without hurting Americans and others at the gas pump," Biden told reporters after G7 and NATO summits.

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 to Announce Over $800Mln in New Military Aid for Ukraine in Coming Days - Biden

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - The United States will announce over $800 million in additional assistance to Ukraine, including air defenses, in the coming days, US President Joe Biden said on Thursday.
"In the next few days we intent to announce $800 million more [to Ukraine]," he told a press conference after G7 and NATO summits in Europe.

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 Finland, Sweden Joining NATO a 'Historic Act'

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - The acceptance of Sweden and Finland into NATO is "a historic act", US President Joe Biden said on Thursday.
"It was a historic act," he told press conference after G7 and NATO summits in Europe.

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: ANALYSIS - Biden Ukraine Policies, Democratic Party Intolerance Help Drive Voter Exodus

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden's approach to the conflict in Ukraine, concerns over his mental stability, and liberal intolerance could be among the reasons why over one million Democrats switched allegiances and joined the Republican Party in the past year, analysts told Sputnik.
According to data collected by AP, more than one million Democrats have registered as Republicans during the course of the past twelve months, most notably among independent "swing voters" in highly-populated suburbs, where presidential and national congressional elections are usually decided. AP in its report published on Monday said the switch also encompassed agricultural regions, poor inner cities, and small towns.
The Democratic voter mass defections coincide with Biden's approval ratings sinking to historical lows as inflation runs at all-time highs with mid-term elections looming in November.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Meanwhile, the White House's policies toward the conflict in Ukraine are also becoming less popular. A poll released on Tuesday by Morning Consult Global shows American support for sanctions against Russia is steadily declining - largely because of rising energy costs.

"Workers and seniors are ravaged by an inflationary curse sparked by an inept war against the fossil fuel industry," political analyst and former hedge fund manager, Charles Ortel, told Sputnik when asked about the Democratic voter exodus.

The Democratic voter defections and low approval ratings, he added, could indicate Biden administration efforts to rally patriotism around his "tough" policies against Russia over Ukraine have failed.

Political commentator and historian Dan Lazare believes the fact voters are switching parties is less an endorsement of the Republican Party than a loss of confidence in Democrats, especially in their handling of the Ukraine crisis and the related rise in gas prices.

"Skyrocketing gas prices are the gift that keeps on giving - for the Republicans, that is. The war in the Ukraine is turning into a Democratic nightmare as Russia continues to reap real battlefield gains," Lazare told Sputnik. "So, what Democrat wouldn't lose faith given a record like that?"

Ortel said history suggests that citizens reluctantly support foreign conflicts even when leaders provide compelling evidence that causes are just. Not to mention, US efforts that started under the Clinton administration to push NATO eastward have never been explained nor have potential costs and complaints by the Russian side, Ortel said.

"No sane actor wants perpetual conflict," Ortel explained. "And no American would tolerate parallel expansion into Mexico or Canada by Russia."

OTHER DRIVERS OF DISCONTENT

Ortel also attributed the voter surge away from the Democrats to the party's "intolerant" attitude, including toward those who oppose the administration's Ukraine policies. The Democratic Party used to be a group that embraced cooperation and was tolerant of perspectives that competed with liberal or progressive views. However, in recent years that has changed, Ortel said.

"Particularly under the Obama-Biden Administration, tolerance for other viewpoints was replaced with a 'take-no-prisoners' approach towards any challengers," Ortel said.

To make matters worse, the analyst added, Biden administration officials propagate theories and slogans claiming they are succeeding "when even unschooled citizens see clearly that Biden and his team are rapidly wrecking the American economy and what remains of America's standing abroad."

Other drivers of voters fleeing the Democratic Party are the questions surrounding the commander-in-chief's mental stability in light of nonstop gaffes and concerns over Vice President Kamala Harris's capabilities, Ortel said.

"Joe Biden is clearly not playing with mental faculties intact nor is Kamala Harris fit to replace him," Ortel said.

Lazare has pointed to Biden's dismal domestic policy record as another culprit.

"Joe Biden is The Incredible Shrinking President: His one significant success, the $1.9-trillion COVID-19 relief bill that passed in February 2021, has roundly backfired by giving inflation a significant boost. Everything else has meanwhile flopped," he said.

Meanwhile, Lazare added, voting reform is dead in the water, student debt relief is stalled, and there is a dispiriting deadlock over gun control in the wake of mass shootings.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Although the midterm congressional elections were still four months away, all signs already pointed to a historic catastrophe for the Democrats, Lazare warned.
"Predicting an election that's still four months away is risky business. But given that Biden's poll numbers are still sinking - the last is just 36%! - and given that inflation is accelerating, I don't see how the midterms can be anything less than a Democratic debacle," Lazare 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 Calls for Nationwide Ceasefire in Syria - Deputy Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, June 30 (Sputnik) - The United States calls for a nationwide ceasefire in Syria in line with UN Security Council resolution 2254 and hopes for progress in discussions, the US Deputy Permanent Representative Richard Mills said in a UNSC meeting.
"We reiterate our call for a nationwide ceasefire [in Syria], which is another key aspect of 2254," Mills said on Wednesday.
The ambassador blamed the Syrian government for the failure of discussions on political settlement and lack of progress, hoping there would be some progress during the next meeting.
"We hope that the ninth round next month in Geneva will be an opportunity for long-overdue progress that the Syrian people deserve," Mills said.
UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen earlier in the day said the United Nations is working on the logistics on the planned meeting of the Syrian Constitutional Committee in July and has already sent out formal invitations.
The Syrian Constitutional Committee was established during the congress of the Syrian national dialogue in Sochi in 2018. It operates in Geneva and its main objective is to prepare a constitutional reform in Syria.
The Syrian war has been ongoing since 2011, with different insurgent groups - including terrorist groups - fighting the Syrian Arab Army in an attempt to topple the government.

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.

Western States Block Russian Statement Condemning Israel Strikes in Syria- UN Deputy Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, June 29 (Sputnik) - The Western states on the UN Security Council blocked a Russian draft press statement condemning Israel's airstrikes in Syria, Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanskiy said.
"We regret the fact that due to the politicized and biased positions of Western delegations, our draft Security Council press statement was blocked," Polyanskiy said at the UN Security Council on Wednesday.
Russia believes that to resolve the political crisis in Syria, the illegal foreign military presence in the country and Israel's air strikes have to end, Polyanskiy added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

The press statement by Russia condemned Israel for striking the Damascus international airport on June 10.

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.

UPDATE - US Army Selects General Dynamics to Provide New Light Tanks in $1.14Bln Deal - Statement
(Adds details, fixes attribution in para 4)
WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - The US Army chose General Dynamics Land Systems to provide new light tanks as part of the military's Mobile Protected Firepower program in a $1.14 billion contract, General Dynamics said in a press release.
"The US Army, through a competitive process, has chosen General Dynamics Land Systems' offering for the Mobile Protected Firepower (MPF) program to provide enhanced firepower for Infantry Brigade Combat Teams (IBCTs). The Low Rate Initial Production award is valued at $1.14 billion," the release said on Wednesday.
The light tank is a "highly lethal, survivable and mobile" vehicle that combines new and battle-tested designs, the press release said. The vehicle is manned by a four-person crew and includes thermal vision, a large-caliber cannon and modern diesel engine system, the release said.
The vehicles are expected to be first fielded in fiscal year 2025, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) said in a report in May. The report also said the Army might have trouble meeting demand for MPF crew and maintenance soldiers for new units in light of recruiting challenges.
The Army award also includes test, logistics and systems technical support, the release added.
General Dynamics Land Systems also incorporated feedback from soldiers into the final design of the vehicle, general manager for US operations Gordon Stein said in the press release. The company is honored that the Army chose their offering, Stein also said.
General Dynamics Land Systems, a business unit of the larger General Dynamics company, focuses on developing land combat vehicle support for the US military and its allies, 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.

Oil Down 2% Giving Back Most of Previous Day's Gains on Mixed Factors

NEW YORK, June 30 (Sputnik) - Oil prices fell 2% on Wednesday to give back almost all it gained in the previous session as delayed weekly US oil inventory data and sliding GDP clouded the picture for energy market investors.
Adding to the market's conundrum was the Federal Reserve's vow to keep raising interest rates to beat inflation, without promising that it could deliver a soft-landing at least for the US economy from the sum of its actions.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Investors were also uncertain over how Thursday's monthly meeting of the OPEC+ group of oil producers would play out for market sentiment, especially with the 23 countries in the alliance signaling a 53% rise in July output over June's, despite their inability to match action with rhetoric over the past year.

New York-traded West Texas Intermediate, the benchmark for US crude, settled down $1.98, or 1.8%, at $109.78 per barrel. It had gained $2.19 in Tuesday's trade.

London-traded Brent crude, the global benchmark for oil, settled down $1.35, or 1.5%, at $112.45 on its most-active September contact. It rose $2.82 in the previous session.

US crude oil inventories fell over the past two weeks combined, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) said on Wednesday as it released composite data for the period that showed a drop of 2.8 million barrels for the weeks ending June 17 and June 24th.

But any price optimism from the drop in crude inventories was offset by a build in petroleum product inventories announced by the EIA.

Inventories of gasoline and distillates both rose by 2.6 million barrels for the combined period, the EIA said.

Clouding the outlook for oil traders was US Gross Domestic Product, which contracted by 1.6% for the first quarter versus the 6.9% growth in the fourth quarter of last year, according to the Commerce Department. The department issues three GDP readings for each quarter. What was interesting about the first quarter was that each of the last two estimates came in a percentage point lower than previously.

The latest GDP reading reinforced market expectations that the United States was headed for a recession. With the 1.6% contraction in the first quarter, the economy will technically slip into a recession if it does not return to positive growth by the end of the second quarter, which ends Thursday.

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell proved to be of little help. Speaking on Wednesday at an European Central Bank event live-streamed from Portugal, Powell said the Federal Reserve was running against the clock to beat inflation. The US central bank had no choice but to keep raising interest rates to achieve this, although there was no guarantee that it could provide a soft landing for the US economy, he said.

Many economists say the Federal Reserve left "rates too low for too long" and its catch-up now could unravel the recovery made since last year from the coronavirus pandemic measures. The US central bank kept rates at between zero and 0.25% for two years during the pandemic, and only raised them this year in March. It has since brought key lending rates to between 1.5% and 1.75%. The Federal Reserve has said it will continue with rate hikes until inflation, running at 40-year highs of more than 8% per year, returns to its target of 2% per year.

There was also a degree of uncertainty in the oil market about the impact from OPEC+'s impending announcement of monthly production targets.

Members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and their allies have already said they will put out 50% more oil in July than in June. But the 23-nation group, led by Saudi Arabia and supported by Russia, is also observing production cuts by more than 250% above its own prescribed levels, according to an internal OPEC+ report published by newswires. OPEC+ has consequently trimmed its projected 2022 oil market surplus to 1 million barrels per day from a previous estimate of 1.4 million, according to the report.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

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 Selects General Dynamics to Provide New Light Tanks in $1.14Bln Deal - Statement

WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) - The US Army chose General Dynamics Land Systems to provide new light tanks as part of the military's Mobile Protected Firepower program in a $1.14 billion contract, General Dynamics said in a press release.
"The US Army, through a competitive process, has chosen General Dynamics Land Systems' offering for the Mobile Protected Firepower (MPF) program to provide enhanced firepower for Infantry Brigade Combat Teams (IBCTs). The Low Rate Initial Production award is valued at $1.14 billion," the release said on Wednesday.
The light tank is a "highly lethal, survivable and mobile" vehicle that combines new and battle-tested designs, the press release said. The vehicle is manned by a four-person crew and includes thermal vision, a large-caliber cannon and modern diesel engine system, the release said.
The vehicles are expected to be first fielded in fiscal year 2025, the release also said.
The Army award also includes test, logistics and systems technical support, the release added.
General Dynamics Land Systems, a business unit of the larger General Dynamics company, focuses on developing land combat vehicle support for the US military and its allies, 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.

SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY
WASHINGTON, June 30 (Sputnik) -

UKRAINE DEVELOPMENTS
* Taher Saadoun, the father of Moroccan mercenary Brahim Saadoun who has been sentenced to death in the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), wrote a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin asking him to contribute to pardoning his son.
* The United Nations is urging again the parties to the conflict in Ukraine to allow access for unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid, the UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said.

NATO SUMMIT
* US National Security Council Coordinator for Strategic Communications John Kirby said on Wednesday there is no requirement to contact Moscow regarding the current changes to the NATO posture.
* NATO states decided on new measures to increase political and practical support to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Moldova.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

* NATO considers Russia's "military build-up" in the Baltic, the Black and the Mediterranean Sea regions a challenge to its interests, the alliance said in a declaration.
* The NATO leaders have labeled Russia as "the most significant and direct threat" to the security of the alliance member states, according to the final declaration.
* NATO states pledged to deploy additional in-place combat-ready forces on the alliance's eastern flank.

ENERGY MARKETS
* Egypt's nuclear and radiation control authority (ENRRA) said on Wednesday that it had issued a license to Russian state nuclear agency Rosatom to build the first power unit at the El Dabaa nuclear power plant.
* The European Union will boost its decarbonization efforts by investing $61.8 billion, French President Emmanuel Macron said.
* NATO states agreed to enhance their energy security and maintain reliable energy supplies to the alliance's military forces in the conditions of the current global energy crisis.
* France will mitigate implications of energy price spikes by establishing "new balances" in energy mix and coordinating production and consumption, French President Emmanuel Macron said.

KALININGRAD
* The transit of goods from Russia to its Kaliningrad enclave via Lithuania may resume in a few days thanks to a compromise between Vilnius and the European Union, Reuters reported on Wednesday, citing sources.
* Lithuanian Defense Minister Arvydas Anusauskas said that he considers intense cyberattacks against the country's public and private enterprises Russia's retaliatory measures for restricting the transit of goods to its exclave of Kaliningrad.

RUSSIAN ECONOMY
* As many as 70 foreign organizations from 12 countries have already joined the Russian analogue of the SWIFT international payment system, Elvira Nabiullina, the head of the Central Bank of Russia, said on Wednesday.
* The Central Bank of Russia supports the idea of allowing Russian companies to repay foreign currency debts ahead of schedule, Nabiullina said, noting that in the case of Eurobonds, it is necessary to protect the interests of Russian investors.
* Worldwide shipments of microchips to Russia are down almost 90% since export restrictions were introduced, leaving weapons manufacturers in the country without crucial supplies needed to produce precision-guided missiles and tanks, US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo 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.

Singer R. Kelly Sentenced to 30 Years for Sexual Abuse, Trafficking - Reports

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - Singer Robert Kelly - also referred to as "R. Kelly" - has been sentenced to 30 years in prison for participating in a scheme to lure underage girls and young women to have sex with him and for sexually abusing them.

"These crimes were calculated and carefully planned and regularly executed for almost 25 years. You taught them that love is enslavement and violence," Ann Donelly, US District Court Judge for the Eastern District of New York, said during the sentencing hearing.

Allegations about Kelly's offenses were first revealed by former Chicago Sun-Times music journalist Jim DeRogatis followed by a 2017 series from Buzzfeed News and a 2019 documentary series Surviving R. Kelly that prompted prosecutors to begin investigating.

Prosecutors asked Donnelly to sentence Kelly to a minimum 25-year prison term, while the defense sought a ten-year sentence or less.

Kelly's lawyers tried and failed to convince Donnelly to give him a lower sentence, citing his childhood trauma, violence, sexual abuse and poverty he had experienced.

Last year, Kelly was found guilty on eight counts of violating the Mann Act for trafficking women across state lines for sex and one count of racketeering. Kelly was indicted on child pornography charges in 2002 and acquitted in 2008.

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.

Democrats' January 6 Probe Fails to Dent Trump Support for 2024 White House Bid - Poll

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - The Democratic-led congressional investigation into the January 6, 2021 events at the US Capitol has failed to even slightly dent former President Donald Trump's status as the most popular Republican in the contest for his party's 2024 presidential nomination, a Morning Consult poll revealed on Thursday.

"Former President Donald Trump has lost no support among Republican voters for a third presidential bid as a special House committee reveals unflattering details about his culpability for the January 6 Capitol attack," a release on the poll said.

According to the poll, which was conducted from June 24-26, Trump still enjoys the support of more than half of registered Republicans - 53% - despite allegations against him that have been aired or leaked from the US House Select Committee probing the January 6 events, the release said.

Instead, Trump's own former Vice President Mike Pence, who has been campaigning across the United States for more traditional party candidates opposed to Trump, is losing ground with his support for the nomination falling from 13% to 8%, the report added.

Trump's main challenger so far is Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, a longtime Trump supporter whose support now stands at 22%, 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.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Islamic State Continues to Launch Attacks in Syria - UN Special Envoy

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - The Islamic State terror group (banned in Russia) continues to carry out attacks in Syria and claims responsibility for killing Syrian military personnel, UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen said on Wednesday.
"ISIL [Islamic State] and all the rest of the terrorist groups continue to launch attacks and claim responsibility for killing Syrian army soldiers," Pedersen said.
The Syrian war has been ongoing since 2011, with different insurgent groups - including terrorist groups - began fighting the Syrian Arab Army to topple the government of President Bashar Assad.
Russia became engaged in the war in 2015 at the invitation of the Assad government and has since maintained a significant military presence in Syria. The Russian military effected the decimating of the Islamic State forces in the country.
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.

UN Working on Logistics for Syrian Constitutional Committee Meeting in July - Pedersen

UNITED NATIONS, June 29 (Sputnik) - The United Nations is working on the logistics on the planned meeting of the Syrian Constitutional Committee in July and has already sent out formal invitations, UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen said on Wednesday.
"Formal invitations have been sent accordingly and we are taking logistical steps to move ahead with the session," Pedersen said.
Pedersen announced in the beginning of June that the ninth session of the Syrian Constitutional Committee will convene in Geneva from July 25-29.
The Syrian Constitutional Committee was established during the congress of the Syrian national dialogue in Sochi in 2018. It operates in Geneva and its main objective is to prepare a constitutional reform in Syria.

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.

Conditions at Al-Hol Refugee Camp in Syria Remain Dire - UN Special Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, June 29 (Sputnik) - The conditions ar the Al-Hol refugee camp in Syria continue to be grave, UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen said on Wednesday.
"Killings and malignancies attributed to ISIS [Islamic State terror group, banned in Russia] continue in Al-Hol camp. The conditions remain dire underlining the need for progress on repatriations," Pedersen said.
UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths expressed serious concern in March about the security situation in the camp and called on the international

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

community to protect its population. Griffith also called on for the full repatriation of third country nationals from the camp.
The camp houses more than 60,000 refugees, mostly Iraqis and internally displaced persons from Syria, the majority of which are women and children from families of Islamic State fighters. The Syrian and Russian governments have consistently warned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation at the camp, which is located in the US-controlled area around the At Tanf military base.

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 Helped Boost Grain Exports by Land, Rail Out of Western Ukraine, But Not Enough – Kirby

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) – The United States has helped to increase grain shipments out of western Ukraine by ground and rail, but that is still not enough, National Security Council Coordinator for Strategic Communications John Kirby said Wednesday.
"We're working very, very hard with partners all around the world to try to see what we can do to get more grain out of Ukraine. We have helped increase the flow by ground, by rail out of western Ukraine. But that's not enough. We know there's a sense of urgency here," Kirby told Bloomberg in an interview.
The issue of grain exports from Ukraine has been on the agenda of both the G7 and NATO summits this week, Kirby added.
World leaders and international organizations have been raising concerns over an imminent and large-scale food crisis since the start of Russia's military operation in Ukraine in February, citing disruptions to supply chains, soaring prices, and derailed crops production in one of the largest grain-producing regions in the world. Ukraine and Russia account for an estimated 30% of global exports of wheat, 20% of maize, and 76% of sunflower.
Western countries have accused Russia of blocking grain shipments in Ukraine's Black Sea ports. Moscow insists that the ports were mined by Ukraine, making shipments impossible. Moscow has also pointed out that sanctions imposed on Russia by the West are responsible for worsening the food situation in the world.

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 Defense Chief Issues Statement Honoring Death of Last WWII Medal of Honor Winner

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Wednesday issued a statement honoring the death of Woody Williams, the nation's last surviving Medal of Honor winner from the Second World War.
"Today, America lost not just a valiant Marine and a Medal of Honor recipient, but an important link to our Nation's fight against tyranny in the Second World War," Austin said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

The Medal of Honor is the most prestigious US military award, given to American service members who "distinguish themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty," according to the Defense Department.
Hershel Woodrow "Woody" Williams earned the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Battle of Iwo Jima. Williams, under significant gunfire, destroyed numerous Japanese positions over the course of several hours using a flamethrower and demolition charges.
Austin also called on every American to reflect on the service of the generation who fought in the Second World War and sacrificed for the cause of freedom.

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, Erdogan Discuss NATO Enlargement, Ukrainian Grain Exports – White House

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden met with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to discuss the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO and ways to export grain from Ukraine, the White House said on Wednesday.
"President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. met today with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the margins of the NATO Summit. President Biden welcomed Turkey's conclusion of a trilateral agreement with Finland and Sweden that paved the way for Allies to invite them to join NATO. The leaders discussed … the importance of removing Russian obstacles to the export of Ukrainian grain," the White House said in a press release.
The two also talked about maintaining stability in the Aegean and Syria, the release said.
On Tuesday, Turkey, Sweden and Finland signed a security memorandum, with the former withdrawing its objections to the two nations' entry into the alliance
Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said that NATO's further expansion will not bring greater security to Europe. At the same time, he has said he does not consider the accession of Sweden and Finland into the organization an existential threat to Russia.

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 to Strengthen NATO Eastern Flank With Troops, Infrastructure - Defense Minister

OTTAWA, June 29 (Sputnik) - Canada will deploy additional troops and increase the operational military capabilities of NATO's Operation Reassurance in the Baltic region to form a new combat-ready brigade stationed in Latvia, Defense Minister Anita Anand said on Wednesday.
"Canada will work with Latvia and with NATO allies to generate and stage forces in order to surge to a combat capable brigade," Anand said during a press briefing.
Canada will also establish and lead the elements of a forward brigade command and control and will be ready to provide "critical capabilities" to operations such as ammunition and explosives, air defenses systems and anti-tank weapon systems, she said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

The deployment will include additional personnel, infrastructure and military capabilities, Anand added.
The announcement comes as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Foreign Minister Melanie Joly and Anand are in Madrid, Spain, participating in the annual NATO Summit.
Canada currently has deployed some 1,400 troops in the Baltics in support of NATO's Operation Reassurance that aims to protecting the alliance's eastern flank from an eventual Russian invasion. Operation Reassurance is Canada's largest military deployment outside of its own borders.

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.

UN Urges Parties to Conflict in Ukraine to Enable Humanitarian Access - Spokesperson

UNITED NATIONS, June 29 (Sputnik) - The United Nations is urging again the parties to the conflict in Ukraine to allow access for unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid, the UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Wednesday.
"We again urged the parties to the conflict to protect civilians in Ukraine and to enable unimpeded safe access for humanitarian workers to support people everywhere," Dujarric said during a press briefing.
Dujarric's comment came in response to the worsening situation in region of Luhansk, an area where United Nations personnel have limited access.
"[W]e are particularly concerned about the situation in government and non-government-controlled areas of Luhansk oblast, where our humanitarian colleagues are unable to deliver aid or support in any possible evacuations of civilians due to the ongoing fighting activities," Dujarric said.
The Luhansk area has been subject to significant fighting, especially in Lysychansk, the last big town in the region that is still under Kiev's control.
The United Nations said it has been trying to provide humanitarian support to people in need there, but access has been restricted due to the military activities.

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.

Ex-Giuliani Associate Parnas Sentenced to 20 Months on Campaign Finance Charges - Reports

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - A US court sentenced to 20 months in jail Ukraine-born American businessman Lev Parnas, a former associate of Donald Trump's attorney Rudy Giuliani, for participation in a federal campaign finance scheme, CNN reported on Wednesday.
Parnas was also ordered to pay $2,322,500 as restitution, as well as three years of supervised release, the report added.
In October 2019, the US authorities charged Parnas and his co-defenders Andrey Kukushkin, David Correia and Igor Fruman with funneling $1 million in donations from foreign nationals to

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

unspecified political campaigns in the United States, in addition to making false statements and falsifying records to the Federal Election Commission.
Last fall, Parnas was convicted by a federal jury on six counts related to the alleged campaign finance scheme.

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.

UN Says in Response to Zelenskyy Threatening Reporters Press Freedom 'Applies Universally'

UNITED NATIONS, June 29 (Sputnik) - The United Nations stands on the principle that freedom of the press applies universally around the world, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Wednesday in response to Ukrainine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy threatening Russian journalists.
"Freedom of the press is freedom of the press, and it applies... universally around the world in 193 member states, and those principles remain unchanged and unbowed," Dujarric said during a press briefing.
On June 28, Zelenskyy threatened Russian journalists saying that all of them will be punished for their coverage of the events in Ukraine.
Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova denounced Zelenskyy for his statement threatening the journalists and urged him to stop issuing such hateful - and illegal - messages.
The United Nations has long advocated for freedom of the press and declared May 3 to be a World Press Day.

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 Lawmakers Say Supportive of UN Security Council Vote to Bolster Syria Aid Access

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - Senior US lawmakers on Wednesday sent a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken informing him that they support the Biden administration's efforts to bolster cross-border humanitarian aid access in Syria as part of an upcoming vote on a UN Security Council resolution.
"We write to convey our grave concern over the prolonged suffering of the Syrian people, and our strong support for your efforts to maintain and expand cross-border humanitarian access to Syria during the upcoming United Nations Security Council (UNSC) vote on the renewal of UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 2585," the letter said.
The UN Security Council is currently discussing whether to renew UNSCR 2585 that is set to expire on July 10. The resolution, adopted in July 2021 as a result of negotiations between the United Sates and Russia, authorizes one crossing point and emphasizes the need to improve cross-border aid deliveries and early recovery projects.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

The lawmakers said in the letter that the UN cross-border aid crossing operation at Bab al-Hawa must continue to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance to millions of Syrians. Approximately 14 million Syrians are dependent on humanitarian assistance, the letter said.
The lawmakers condemned the alleged efforts by the Russian and Syrian governments to hinder the delivery of aid, including through routing assistance through the capital city of Damascus.
The letter, signed by the chairmen and ranking members of both the House and Senate committees on Foreign Relations, also expressed appreciation for US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield's efforts to strengthen aid access in Syria.
Cross-border aid delivery is critical to delivering assistance to communities in the northwest of Syria in particular as humanitarian needs continue to increase, the letter added.

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.

Two-Thirds of Americans Support Tighter Gun Control Laws - Poll

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - Some two-thirds of Americans support tougher gun control laws, according to a Politico-Morning Consult poll out Wednesday.
At least 48% of respondents actively support stricter regulations in this area, and 18% partially support them. At the same time, 18% are strongly against tightening restrictions and another 12% are partially against. The remaining respondents were unable to give a definitive answer.
The poll showed that 80% of Americans consider it necessary to simplify the procedure for seizing weapons from owners, for inciting to kill themselves or others; and 82% support mandatory checks for those who want to buy firearms if they are under 21 years old.
The survey was conducted on June 24-26, 2022 among 2,004 Americans.
US Congress on Friday passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act which, when signed into law by President Joe Biden as expected on Saturday, will enhance background checks for buyers under 21-years-old, restrict firearm ownership by convicted domestic abusers, while providing funding for "red flag" laws and mental healthcare, among other provisions.
House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the act represents the most significant piece of gun control legislation Congress has passed in three decades. However, many gun rights advocates were disappointed the bill lacks outright bans on automatic weapons of the type used in recent mass shootings.
In Uvalde, Texas on May 24 an 18-year-old wielding an AR-15 automatic weapon slaughtered 19 schoolchildren less than two weeks after a white supremacist in Buffalo killed 10 Blacks with a Bushmaster XM-15. The weapons used in both incidents were purchased legally, authorities said.
This year alone the US has seen more than 200 mass shootings, including 27 at schools, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

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.

UN Secretary-General Discusses Grain Exports With Russia's Lavrov - Spokesperson

UNITED NATIONS, June 29 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres spoke with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov earlier enabling grain and fertilizer exports from Ukraine and Russia, United Nations spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Wednesday.
"The Secretary-General spoke to Foreign Minister Lavrov at about 10:00 a.m. this morning," Dujarric said during a press briefing. "It would not surprise you to know that they discussed the situation in Ukraine, including efforts to get Ukrainian grain and Russian grain and fertilizer back onto the global market."
Guterres has been trying to broker a deal between Russia and Ukraine on exporting grains from the two countries to meet demand amid the global food crisis.
Lavrov had previously criticized Guterres of worsening the prospects for grain and fertilizer exports given that he seeks to enable such exports concurrently from the two countries.
Russia has said that Ukraine had mined the Black Sea thereby preventing exports, but Moscow has meanwhile secured at least two sea corridors for exporting vessels and their escorts.

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 Racing Against Clock to Beat Inflation, No Guarantee of 'Soft Landing' - Fed's Powell

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - The Federal Reserve is running against the clock to beat inflation and has no choice but to keep raising interest rates for this, although there is no guarantee that it can provide a soft landing for the US economy, the central bank's chair Jerome Powell said.
"There's a clock running here," Powell said on Wednesday at an European Central Bank event live-streamed from Portugal. "Is there a risk we would go too far [with rate hikes]? Certainly there's a risk. "The bigger mistake to make —let's put it that way — would be to fail to restore price stability."
Powell also said the Federal Reserve, or Fed, was mindful that steering the US economy to a soft landing had been further complicated by "events of the last few months", referring to the conflict in Ukraine. Soft-landing is Fed speak for a mild economic contraction where growth slows but the job market stays steady, avoiding a painful or long recession.
"There's no guarantee that we can do that," Powell said. "It's obviously something that's going to be quite challenging. The risk is that because of the multiplicity of shocks, you start to transition into a higher-inflation regime. Our job is to prevent that from happening."
The challenge for the Fed went a notch higher Wednesday as the Commerce Department reported that US Gross Domestic Product, or GDP, contracted by 1.6% in the first quarter of this year versus a 6.9% growth in the fourth quarter of 2021. The Commerce Department issues

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

three readings for GDP in each quarter and each of the last two came in a percentage point lower than previously.
Many economists say the Fed left "rates too low for too long" and its catch-up now could unravel the recovery made since last year from the coronavirus pandemic.
The Fed kept rates at between zero and 0.25% for two years during the pandemic, and only raised them this year in March. It has since brought key lending rates to between 1.5% and 1.75%.
The central bank has said it will continue with rate hikes until inflation, running at 40-year highs of more than 8% per annum, returns to its target of 2% per year.
Along with pandemic-related supply chain disruptions, Powell said the Ukraine conflict has "added tremendously" to food and inflation pressures. That made the Fed's role of securing price stability and maximum employment "a different exercise from the one that we've had for the past 25 years."
"The economy is being driven by very different forces. What we don't know is whether we'll be going back to something that looks like, or a little bit like, what we had before," Powell said. "We hope that growth will remain positive."
What was heartening, he said, was that household, business finances and jobs growth were "tremendously strong" and "overall the US economy is well positioned to withstand tighter monetary policy."
"We think that there are pathways for us to achieve the path back to 2% inflation while still retaining a strong labor market. We believe we can do that," Powell said.
Economists fear that under its quantitative tightening approach, the Fed will push the economy into a recession with aggressive rate hikes and the simultaneous sale of hundreds of billions of dollars of assets and bonds in its holdings.
This month's 75-basis point rate hike was the Fed's highest in 28 years. With the 1.6% contraction in the first quarter, the economy will technically slip into a recession if it does not return to positive growth by the end of the second quarter.

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 Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer Confirms Retiring on Thursday - Letter

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - US Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer on Wednesday sent a letter to President Joe Biden in which he confirmed his intention to retire on Thursday, setting the stage for judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to officially take his place.
"This past January, I wrote to inform you of my intent to retire from regular active service as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, upon the Court rising for its summer recess," Breyer said. "Accordingly, my retirement from active service… will be effective on Thursday, June 30, 2022, at noon."
Breyer, 83, also said it was his honor to serve as a justice and uphold the US Constitution and the rule of law.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

The US Senate in April confirmed Jackson's nomination to the Supreme Court to replace Breyer. Jackson previously served on the Washington, DC Court of Appeals and will be the first black woman to serve on the Supreme Court.
Biden's nomination of Jackson to the Supreme Court fulfilled his campaign promise to appoint the first black woman to the bench.
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.

FBI Investigating Sex Abuse Allegations Against New Orleans Catholic Church - Reports

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - The FBI has launched an investigation into allegations of sex abuse against the Roman Catholic Church in New Orleans, Louisiana, the Associated Press reported on Wednesday.
The investigation will look into whether Catholic priests transported minors across state lines to commit sex crimes, the report said, citing sources familiar with the matter.
Investigators have interviewed by more than a dozen alleged victims this year as part of the effort to determine whether the priests could be charged under the 1910 Mann Act, which stipulates trafficking of individuals across state lines for sexual purposes is a felony offense.
The federal government has prosecuted under the act various individuals, including sex trafficker Ghislaine Maxwell and pop star Robert "R." Kelly, who was found guilty of various sex crimes in 2021.
Investigators are looking into whether priests committed abuse during trips to Mississippi, Texas and Florida, the report said.
The FBI is also considering requesting access to church documents protected by a confidentiality order as part of the Catholic church's bankruptcy proceedings, the report added.
The records could contain evidence of church leaders moving abusive priests to different churches without informing law enforcement of their alleged crimes, 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.

ANALYSIS - Biden Ukraine Policies, Democratic Party Intolerance Help Drive Voter Exodus

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden's approach to the conflict in Ukraine, concerns over his mental stability, and liberal intolerance could be among the reasons why over one million Democrats switched allegiances and joined the Republican Party in the past year, analysts told Sputnik.
According to data collected by AP, more than one million Democrats have registered as Republicans during the course of the past twelve months, most notably among independent "swing voters" in highly-populated suburbs, where presidential and national congressional elections are usually decided. AP in its report published on Monday said the switch also encompassed agricultural regions, poor inner cities, and small towns.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

The Democratic voter mass defections coincide with Biden's approval ratings sinking to historical lows as inflation runs at all-time highs with mid-term elections looming in November. Meanwhile, the White House's policies toward the conflict in Ukraine are also becoming less popular. A poll released on Tuesday by Morning Consult Global shows American support for sanctions against Russia is steadily declining - largely because of rising energy costs.

"Workers and seniors are ravaged by an inflationary curse sparked by an inept war against the fossil fuel industry," political analyst and former hedge fund manager, Charles Ortel, told Sputnik when asked about the Democratic voter exodus.

The Democratic voter defections and low approval ratings, he added, could indicate Biden administration efforts to rally patriotism around his "tough" policies against Russia over Ukraine have failed.

Political commentator and historian Dan Lazare believes the fact voters are switching parties is less an endorsement of the Republican Party than a loss of confidence in Democrats, especially in their handling of the Ukraine crisis and the related rise in gas prices.

"Skyrocketing gas prices are the gift that keeps on giving - for the Republicans, that is. The war in the Ukraine is turning into a Democratic nightmare as Russia continues to reap real battlefield gains," Lazare told Sputnik. "So, what Democrat wouldn't lose faith given a record like that?"

Ortel said history suggests that citizens reluctantly support foreign conflicts even when leaders provide compelling evidence that causes are just. Not to mention, US efforts that started under the Clinton administration to push NATO eastward have never been explained nor have potential costs and complaints by the Russian side, Ortel said.

"No sane actor wants perpetual conflict," Ortel explained. "And no American would tolerate parallel expansion into Mexico or Canada by Russia."

OTHER DRIVERS OF DISCONTENT

Ortel also attributed the voter surge away from the Democrats to the party's "intolerant" attitude, including toward those who oppose the administration's Ukraine policies. The Democratic Party used to be a group that embraced cooperation and was tolerant of perspectives that competed with liberal or progressive views. However, in recent years that has changed, Ortel said.

"Particularly under the Obama-Biden Administration, tolerance for other viewpoints was replaced with a 'take-no-prisoners' approach towards any challengers," Ortel said.

To make matters worse, the analyst added, Biden administration officials propagate theories and slogans claiming they are succeeding "when even unschooled citizens see clearly that Biden and his team are rapidly wrecking the American economy and what remains of America's standing abroad."

Other drivers of voters fleeing the Democratic Party are the questions surrounding the commander-in-chief's mental stability in light of nonstop gaffes and concerns over Vice President Kamala Harris's capabilities, Ortel said.

"Joe Biden is clearly not playing with mental faculties intact nor is Kamala Harris fit to replace him," Ortel said.

Lazare has pointed to Biden's dismal domestic policy record as another culprit.

"Joe Biden is The Incredible Shrinking President: His one significant success, the $1.9-trillion COVID-19 relief bill that passed in February 2021, has roundly backfired by giving inflation a significant boost. Everything else has meanwhile flopped," he said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM

Meanwhile, Lazare added, voting reform is dead in the water, student debt relief is stalled, and there is a dispiriting deadlock over gun control in the wake of mass shootings.
Although the midterm congressional elections were still four months away, all signs already pointed to a historic catastrophe for the Democrats, Lazare warned.
"Predicting an election that's still four months away is risky business. But given that Biden's poll numbers are still sinking - the last is just 36%! - and given that inflation is accelerating, I don't see how the midterms can be anything less than a Democratic debacle," Lazare 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 States Can Prosecute Non-Natives for Crimes on Reservations Against Natives - SCOTUS

WASHINGTON, June 29 (Sputnik) - States can prosecute non-Indian defendants for crimes committed against Indian victims on reservations, the US Supreme Court said on Wednesday in a ruling.
"We conclude that the Federal Government and the State have concurrent jurisdiction to prosecute crimes committed by non-Indians against Indians in Indian country," Justice Brett Kavanaugh said in the court's majority opinion.
The ruling arose from the State of Oklahoma's attempt to prosecute Victor Manuel Castro-Huerta for child neglect. Castro-Huerta, a non-Indian, argued that the state did not have jurisdiction to prosecute him for the crime against his Cherokee Indian daughter, which occurred in Indian country.
Castro-Huerta's conviction was initially vacated by a state appeals court, but the Supreme Court's ruling reversed their judgement and remanded the case for further proceedings.
The decision reaffirms prior rulings by the court holding that Indian country is a part of a state, not separate from it, according to the majority opinion. Neither federal laws nor principles of tribal self-government preempt the jurisdiction of the state to prosecute crimes within their territory in this case, the opinion said.
Dissenting Justices Neil Gorsuch, Stephen Breyer, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor argued instead that states do not have criminal jurisdiction in Indian country unless specifically provided by Congress.
The dissenting opinion, authored by Gorsuch, cites historical recognitions of tribal sovereignty by the government, including a promise made to the Cherokee in Oklahoma in 1906 to cede any jurisdiction over Indian country in the state.
"After the Cherokee's exile to what became Oklahoma, the federal government promised the Tribe that it would remain forever free from interference by state authorities," Gorsuch said in the dissenting opinion. "One can only hope the political branches and future courts will do their duty to honor this Nation's promises even as we have failed today to do our own."
The Supreme Court's ruling narrows the scope of their 2020 decision in McGirt v. Oklahoma, which found much of eastern Oklahoma to fall under tribal and federal jurisdiction and prompted Oklahoma to begin vacating past criminal cases for transfer to federal courts.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 06/30/2022 12:40:29 PM