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Humanoid AI-Driven Robots to Become $150 Billion Market by 2035 as China Plans for Mass Production

In the coming decade, humanoid robots stand to both augment human workers in many fields, but could also replace large numbers of them, too, experts have said. While once the realm of science fiction, humanoid robots are becoming more common, with China unveiling a plan for mass production.

Earlier this month, the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) published new guidelines on robot manufacturing for the country's rapidly advancing artificial intelligence sector, predicting the country could mass-produce humanoid robots by 2025. By 2027, humanoid robots could begin to make an impact in the economy, they noted, although pointing out that there were several key technological breakthroughs still to be made.

By then, "the technological innovation of humanoid robots will be significantly improved, a safe and reliable industrial supply chain system will be formed, an industrial ecology with international competitiveness will be constructed and our comprehensive strength will reach the world's advanced level," MIIT wrote, according to Chinese media.

China has been a world leader in artificial intelligence and robotics, with the socialist country's economic planners pushing a massive effort to advance the field in education, research, and manufacturing sectors. China's State Council has laid out the New Generation AI Development Plan, a roadmap to becoming a world leader in artificial intelligence by 2030, and set aside 400 billion yuan ($59.07 billion) to develop the core of its AI industry by 2025.

However, the race for both AI and for humanoid robots is global. Earlier this year, the European Union banned the export of certain AI technologies to China, and the US has banned the sale of certain AI-related computer chips to Chinese companies as well. Companies like Tesla, Agility, Apptronic, and Hanson Robotics have all introduced humanoid robots in recent years, and numerous research facilities and universities are pursuing similar projects.

Goldman Sachs predicted earlier this month that by 2035, the humanoid robotics industry could be worth $150 billion worldwide, saying it could "fill 4% of the projected US manufacturing labor shortage by 2030 and 2% of global elderly care demand by 2035."

Experts who spoke with British media recently highlighted many of the potential uses for intelligent humanoid robots, from caring for elderly people to performing precision medicine in remote parts of the countryside or on the battlefield.

"Mass producing reasonably-priced robots is achievable with economies of scale and advances in technologies, and we foresee all kinds of robots supporting workforces across manufacturing, healthcare, construction, transport, hospitality and more," one expert said. "Intelligent robots can increase productivity, improve quality control, and help deliver repetitive or dangerous tasks."

Another expert noted: "We now have robots also reacting to emotions, and reading behavior. We will have robots coping with mental disorders, behavioral disorders, with children and also

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

with adults. If we think about the old people, we'll have a lot of 65-plus people. Robots can come into play, to support and to help, which also enables people to live longer."
Another noted that robots can "more easily" do repetitive tasks and could even replace large numbers of human workers in manufacturing industries, but pointed out that "we will always need robot technicians," humans who monitor and provide maintenance for the robots.
"I think we'll gradually see them used in some sectors to support existing workers," the expert said.
"For example, humanoid robots could be employed in flexible manufacturing factories, working with people to assemble equipment parts. They could also be used for social care, or also as teaching helper tools in schools."

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GOP Suffering 'Revenue Problem' as Donations Slowly Dry Up

Less than a year before the November 2024 election, the Republican Party is short by millions of dollars in donations compared to the same time period before the 2020 election. The news comes as conservative politicos are ripping some members of the GOP for "corrosive" politics.
Recent filings with the Federal Election Commission show that as of October 30, the Republican National Committee had just $9.1 million in cash, its lowest amount since February 2015. Four years ago, in the lead up to the 2020 election, the party had $61 million in its war chest.
By comparison, the Democratic National Committee said last month it had $17.7 million of cash on hand.
Previous monthly donations reports show a similar trend: in September, the DNC outpaced the RNC by more than twice the amount, raising $13.3 million as compared to their $6.3 million. In August, when former US President Donald Trump, a Republican, was booked at a Georgia courthouse on charges that he incited the January 6, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol, the RNC raised $9.7 million while the DNC raised $7 million. In July, the Democrats raised $9.6 million and the Republicans $6.4 million.
"It's a revenue problem," Tennessee RNC member Oscar Brock told US media. "We're going through the same efforts we always go through to raise money: the same donor meetings, retreats, digital advertising, direct mail. But the return is much lower this year. If you know the answer, I'd love to know it. The staff has managed to tighten down on expenses to keep the party from going into the red."
However, the money flow doesn't necessarily reflect a change in party loyalties: a recent CNN poll found voters almost evenly split, with 48% saying they would support a generic Republican and 47% saying they would support a generic Democrat candidate.
RNC Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel told US media that more donors were "fully committed to their candidate" instead of giving to the party, which she said "is normal."
"There's nothing unusual about this, because they know that once their candidate gets in that we will merge and that we'll be working together to win the White House," she added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

However, the last few months have hurt Republicans' reputations, as the party brought down its own House Speaker, then squabbled for nearly a month over who should replace him. US Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL), the lawmaker who introduced and championed the resolution that forced Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) from the Speaker's chair in early October, was recently blamed by a conservative-leaning news outlet for being an agent of chaos in Congress.

Juan Williams, an analyst for Fox News, wrote in a Monday op-ed in The Hill that Gaetz is "politician of the year" - a title the journalist bestowed ironically, calling Gaetz "a provocateur" who is "dangerous and corrosive."

"Gaetz deserves a place in history," Williams said. "He is a living monument to an era of elected Republican officials with no interest in governing."

"Gaetz takes the prize for successfully paralyzing the House for the entire year," Williams continued. " With his hands on the wheel and driving toward revenge and chaos - all to raise his personal profile and stir up small, online donations - Gaetz crashed the House of Representatives in a ditch on a low road."

In January, Gaetz was instrumental in making McCarthy speaker, as the narrow Republican majority in the House gave inordinate "kingmaking" power to his small faction of right-wing Republicans. McCarthy's downfall came after he was seen as abrogating a deal with Gaetz for brinkmanship politics regarding the US federal budget and the national debt, including 11th-hour deals with Democrats to avert a pair of crises in June and September in which Republicans had hoped to extract concessions from the Dems.

Williams said Gaetz won out over other conservative politicians, including Reps. Lauren Boebert of Colorado, Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, and George Santos of New York, all of whom had similarly damaged the party's standing. He added that some antics by McCarthy had done nothing to contribute, either.

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'There's No Plan B': Democrats Need to Go All-In on Biden in 2024 - Analyst

The Biden 2024 campaign has so far failed to deploy its most potent weapons in the 2024 campaign race, including: the president's record on economic and social issues and the ability of US Vice President Kamala Harris to speak directly to some of the social groups the campaign needs support from the most.

While the Republicans have been tearing each other apart over political endorsements in the 2024 presidential primary race, the Democrats have largely failed to capitalize on the chaos in their adversary's ranks. US President Joe Biden has failed to make headway in the polls, with the latest round all showing him hovering at around 40% approval rating.

Kim Keenan, an adjunct professor at George Washington University and former general counsel of the NAACP, told Radio Sputnik's Political Misfits on Monday that the Democrats had no choice but to go all-in on Biden because they have no real alternative, noting that there were many ways the Biden team might try to improve their polling numbers among key groups, including young people, Black people, women, and Hispanic voters.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

"A year is a long time in a political campaign," she said.
"A year out, I don't know that they have hammered down on their true message to the American public. I think that a lot of people are really tuned out. I mean, it's overwhelming: all these candidates from all these different parties, and they're fighting with each other, they're fighting their parties, they're fighting Trump - I mean there's so much going on. But yeah, I think the polls are all accurate because they all say the same thing, but I also think they're polling the 'faithful few' and not the real people we need to get out on Election Day. I don't think it's too late, but I do think something has to be done, though, I don't think there's any laurels to rest on here."
Keenan said Biden needs to talk about "the positive things" on the campaign trail and "what people need," such as abortion access, economic gains, stemming inflation, and other "heavy hitter" things. Those, she said, would be key to winning over younger voters who might be skeptical of Biden's age.
'There's No Plan B'
Asked about the "Democratic bench" of candidates behind Biden if the incumbent president decided not to run, Keenan said "I don't think there is a bench" and Democrats shouldn't pretend otherwise.
"There is no Plan B. He's [Biden] Plan A and they better wind up Plan A until the wheels fall off," she said.
She noted that there have been "different formulas" when it comes to structuring presidential tickets, such as what role the vice presidential candidate is imagined to have, but that what mattered most was who was at the head of the ticket, as that is "who is there to pull it."
However, as far as vice presidents go, the chances to shine are few and far between, as US Vice President Kamala Harris has discovered.
"People act like this job is where you get to shine and where you show up: you get to do all the worst stuff, where all the worst things are happening, where all of it is something where we know we can't win but we gotta show up," she said. "To the extent that we have that to judge her by, I feel like sometimes it's a little unfair to judge her based on the jobs she's been given … she gets to do what she's told to do and that's been true" of any vice president, Keenan noted, adding that she thought Harris was unfairly judged as compared to other vice presidents because she is the first woman to hold the job.
The professor said she thought Harris would still be able to benefit Biden's campaign, however, because of her speaking skills when it comes to women and young voters - two demographics vital to their electoral success.
"I went to something recently and I got to see Kamala Harris speak, and I've got to tell you, when it's time to get those young people out, I'll bet we're going to see a whole lot of her because she is able to talk to people directly about the things that matter for them," she said. "That's where she's going to provide her balance for this."
'Tactical Error' of GOP Infighting
The hosts then turned to the GOP side of the aisle and asked about the furious Trump campaign response to the endorsement of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis by Jenna Ellis, a conservative lawyer who was part of Trump's legal team in 2020 that attempted to legally overturn the results of the November 2020 election.
"I think they made a tactical error," she said.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

“You guys are asking me if the bullies picked on somebody who really just gave their own opinion over in their corner and they now want to out this person, cancel them, make them a pariah, you know, why would they do that? Because they’re the bullies on the playground and they pick on people, and sometimes they don’t realize it’s not in their best interest. If they had let this go it would have gone away, but no, they had to call her a harlot. If they call her a harlot then what does that make Trump?” she said, adding that Ellis was “right to laugh and make fun of this because it’s a joke.”

Keenan said this kerfuffle, just one of several feuds between Trump and other conservative leaders and GOP politicians, did not seem to have hurt the Republican presidential primary front-runner.

“Unfortunately nothing seems to hurt him. I think at the end of the day, what it comes down to is, there are some Republicans who are starting to say: ‘is this really the guy we want to be president? I know he’s ‘MAGA’, I know everybody is obsessed with him, but day-to-day, time-over-time, is this really the guy we’re picking? Are we picking someone who’s basically dishonest and lies when they’re talking and someone who hasn’t accomplished any of the things he said he did and who pretty much is likely to be a criminal in the next year or so?’ I think they start thinking to themselves ‘how do we defend this, objectively’? And that means we pick DeSantis.”

“Talk about not having a bench? Sometimes you can have a bench but the bench is so bad. I mean, the bench is so bad that [former New Jersey Governor Chris] Christie looks good,” she added.

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Trump Claims He Was Being ‘Sarcastic’ When Mixing Up Biden, Obama

A series of apparent verbal gaffes from the former US leader is reinforcing concerns that both likely major party candidates for the presidency are too old to serve.

Former President Donald Trump defended his mix-up of former President Barack Obama and President Joe Biden on Monday, claiming the verbal flub was a “sarcastic” attempt to suggest Obama’s alleged influence on the Biden administration.

“I know both names very well, never mix them up, and know that they are destroying our Country,” wrote Trump in a post on his Truth Social online platform.

“Whenever I sarcastically insert the name Obama for Biden as an indication that others may actually be having a very big influence in running our Country, Ron DeSanctimonious and his failing campaign apparatus, together with the Democrat’s Radical Left ‘Disinformation Machine,’ go wild saying that ‘Trump doesn’t know the name of our President, (CROOKED!) Joe Biden. He must be cognitively impaired.’”

The post was a response to attacks from the presidential campaign of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, which has questioned the former president’s mental acuity in recent days.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

"Trump has been having serious trouble with names lately," read a post from the DeSantis War Room account on the X platform earlier this month. "On a number of occasions, he's confused Obama and Biden. Here's a really concerning moment."

Trump's dislike for Obama is well documented, with some news outlets reporting the real estate magnate first decided to enter politics after being mocked by Obama during a comedy routine at the 2011 White House Correspondents Dinner.

Trump has been echoing a conservative conspiracy theory in recent weeks that former President Obama is secretly in control of the Biden White House. "It's never been worse than it is now under crooked Joe Biden and, frankly, his boss, Barack Hussein Obama," said Trump at a campaign event in New Hampshire last month.

But Trump's advanced age – at 77, he's just four years younger than President Biden – may lend credence to suggestions the former president is suffering mental decline.

Polling has consistently suggested the majority of Americans believe Biden is too old to serve another term as president, but voters may increasingly share the same perception of Trump. A survey earlier this month showed 39% of voters in six battleground states believe Trump is now too old to be commander-in-chief.

Trump has made a series of apparent verbal gaffes recently, once referring to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán as the "leader of Turkiye" (Turkiye is led by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan). Trump has also mistakenly claimed that Hungary shares a border with Russia and apparently confused DPRK President Kim Jong Un with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Trump has consistently rejected doubts over his cognitive abilities, once claiming in 2018 he is "a very stable genius." He continues to lead all other candidates for the Republican Party's presidential nomination by wide margins despite facing 91 felony charges across four separate criminal cases.

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'I've Been Waiting for You': Suspect Apprehended in US Shooting of Palestinian Students

Jason Eaton of Burlington, Vermont was arrested Sunday and charged with three counts of attempted murder relating to the shooting of three Palestinian college students. He has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

An arrest has been made after the weekend shooting of three Palestinian college students underscored an increase in violence and hate faced by Muslims and Arabs living in the United States.

Jason J. Eaton, 48, of Burlington, Vermont, was apprehended Sunday afternoon after a police search of his apartment near the scene of the shooting one day prior. Eaton has been charged with three counts of attempted murder in the second degree and has pleaded not guilty to the charges. He is being held without bond.

Local officials said they are working to confirm the motive for the crime, with Burlington Police Chief Jon Murad saying, "We still do not know as much as we want to know," at a press briefing on Monday. "We are working hard to find out this information," he added.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

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But the law enforcement official echoed the immediate sentiments of many when the crime was reported over the weekend. “In this charged moment, no one can look at this incident and not suspect that it may have been a hate-motivated crime,” said Murad in a news release on Sunday.

Murad also confirmed that two of the three young men, all of them 20 years old, had been wearing the keffiyeh on the evening of the shooting, a traditional scarf that’s a symbol of Palestinian culture. They were also reportedly speaking a mixture of English and Arabic.

All three are students at nearby colleges and universities: Hisham Awartani attends Brown University in Rhode Island, Kinnan Abdalhamid attends Haverford College in Pennsylvania, and Tahseen Ali Ahmad studies at Trinity College in Connecticut. As of Monday they are recovering at an intensive care unit in Burlington.

All three are stable, although Awartani reportedly suffered a serious injury to his spine.

“Their lives have been changed forever,” said Burlington Mayor Miro Weinberger at a Monday press briefing. “One in particular faces a tremendous struggle and recovery, with injuries that may be lifelong,” he added, referring to Awartani.

“We are praying that he can walk,” said Rania Maayeh, the headmaster of Ramallah Friends School where the men attended high school in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Agents from the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives reportedly encountered Eaton around 3:30 pm local time on Sunday during a canvass of the shooting area.

“I’ve been waiting for you,” said Eaton when approached by the agents, according to a probable cause affidavit. Eaton told investigators he had a shotgun in his apartment but refused to identify himself or answer further questions about other firearms in his home.

After obtaining a search warrant, investigators retrieved a Ruger .380 semi-automatic pistol from his apartment. ATF investigators are currently working to confirm the pistol was the one used in the shooting Saturday evening.

Burlington police say Eaton had only been a local resident for a short time; it’s believed he moved to the city from the Syracuse, New York, area over the summer. He faces up to life in prison if convicted of the charges against him.

“Tragically, this incident is yet another example of the diminished regard for the lives, suffering, and inherent humanity of Palestinians,” read a statement released by the Ramallah Friends School Monday.

Family members of the victims spoke at a news conference Monday, saying they had believed the young Palestinian men would be safe in the United States.

“Kinnan grew up in the West Bank, and we always thought that that could be more of a risk in terms of his safety, and sending him here would be the right decision,” said Radi Tamimi, the uncle of Abdalhamid. “I feel somehow betrayed in that decision here, and we’re just trying to come to terms with everything.”

Elizabeth Price, the mother of Awartani, currently lives in Ramallah and is reportedly seeking to travel to the US to see her son. Palestinians living in Israel-occupied territories often face severe difficulties in traveling abroad.

Residents there are currently suffering severe economic challenges amidst Israel-ordered shutdowns. And in recent weeks, at least 200 Palestinians in the West Bank have been reportedly killed by Israeli settlers and military forces.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

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Meanwhile, the death toll in the besieged Gaza Strip reportedly stands at at least 14,000 since an October 7 surprise attack by Hamas which killed some 1,200 Israelis.
Christina H. Paxson, the president of Brown University, called the shooting of the three young Palestinian men a "heinous and despicable act of violence – this latest evidence of anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian discrimination and hate spiraling across this country and around the world." However, Brown has been accused of encouraging such discrimination after they had pro-Palestinian protesters on the university's campus arrested earlier this month.
Pro-Palestine protesters – including members of explicitly Jewish groups like If Not Now and Jewish Voice for Peace – have faced challenges after being banned at Columbia University, George Washington University, and other campuses throughout the United States. In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis is facing a lawsuit after attempting to ban the group Students for Justice in Palestine from college campuses in the state.
Meanwhile, some Zionist students on college campuses have complained that being confronted with opposing views makes them feel unsafe.

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'The West Has Lost Confidence': Political Dysfunction in Ukraine May Cost Zelensky His Job - Analyst

Amidst political infighting and underwhelming performance on the battlefield, security analyst Mark Sleboda believes the foreign backers of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky may be looking for a way to remove him from power "without another blatantly obvious US-backed coup."
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is on thin ice.
That's the conclusion of international affairs and security analyst Mark Sleboda, who joined Sputnik's Political Misfits crew Monday to discuss the ongoing political drama in the country in the wake of the country's failed counteroffensive this year.
"He fears another Maidan… he fears a coup," said Sleboda, referring to the 2014 protests that saw far-right mobs drive elected president Viktor Yanukovych out of Ukraine. The unrest, openly backed by Western powers, was supported by only a minority of the Ukrainian population but succeeded in firmly shifting the politics of the country towards a Russophobic stance.
Sleboda believes the primary challenger to Zelensky's power is Valerii Zaluzhny, the current commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian military. Political forces inside and outside the country may be coalescing around Zaluzhny as an alternative to Zelensky's leadership, according to Sleboda.
Aware of the threat, Zelensky "has replaced several of Zaluzhny's generals in the past weeks – fired them – without any consultations with him," said Sleboda. The analyst also noted the recent death of Major Gennadiy Chastyakov, a top aide to Zaluzhny, who was killed earlier this month when a grenade given to him as a birthday gift exploded. Sleboda speculates that the strange incident may have been a "political hit by Zelensky's administration."

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

“Most of the Ukrainian social media channels believe it was a political hit, a warning to Zaluzhny,” said Sleboda.

Sleboda discounted a story that has recently re-emerged chiefly blaming former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson for Ukraine’s unwillingness to seek peace with Russia in early 2022, calling it a “salvo in the quite opaque political infighting that is now going on in Kiev.”

“I don’t think they [the Ukrainian government] were ever more serious about this than they were about the Minsk accords,” said Sleboda, noting the “ideological nature” of the country’s firmly anti-Russian leadership since 2014.

Zelensky has faced criticism over Ukraine’s counteroffensive earlier this year which failed to significantly challenge Russian forces as the country’s special military operation in Ukraine continues. Sleboda noted recent comments by Zelensky’s officials in US media calling the Ukrainian president “delusional.”

Host Michelle Witte noted the damage to morale in the Ukrainian armed forces caused by the chronic political dysfunction, saying “constant purges of relatively high ranking military officers during war would seem to perhaps have a negative effect on your war effort.”

Sleboda agreed, claiming President Zelensky’s western backers are looking for a way to replace the Ukrainian leader.

“It seems quite obvious to me that the US and in general the West has lost confidence in Zelensky and they’re trying to find a way to replace him with Zaluzhny without another blatantly obvious US-backed coup in the country so soon after the last one,” said Sleboda, referring to widely-reported evidence of US involvement in the 2014 ouster of Yanukovych.

Sleboda noted that last week, for the first time, Zaluzhny was invited to a NATO meeting discussing Ukrainian military policy in Ramstein instead of Zelensky.

Sleboda’s analysis comes amidst recent comments by a senior Ukrainian MP lamenting that the country’s military leadership “has been unable to provide a [strategic] plan for 2024.” The country’s Western backers have reportedly encouraged Ukraine to draft the elderly, teenagers, and women into the army.

Sleboda also commented on the state of politics in the Netherlands, where the party of populist rightwing figure Geert Wilders recently won elections.

“He [Wilders] has also come out publicly as being against aid for Ukraine, which is the big foreign policy kicker against the Western orthodoxy,” said Sleboda.

“And at the moment that may be more important for everyone else’s panic than anything else. Especially considering that the Netherlands has been a disproportionately large supplier of financial and military aid to the Kiev regime, and they are one of the two principal countries that is supposed to supply F-16s to Ukraine next year.”

“That gets interesting from an international perspective,” said Sleboda, speculating that the politician’s support (or lack thereof) for the Western proxy conflict against Russia may ultimately be more important to leaders than his controversial anti-immigrant views.

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Canada to Refurbish CANDU Reactor at Romania's Cernavoda NPP - Global Affairs

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - Canada has signed a contract to refurbish the Unit 1 CANDU reactor at Romania's Cernavoda nuclear power plant, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) said on Tuesday.

"The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development today announced the signing, at the World Nuclear Exhibition, in Paris, of a 3-way contract between the Canadian Commercial Corporation, Societatea Națională Nuclearelectrica SA and AtkinsRéalis to support the work to extend the life of the Unit 1 CANDU reactor at the Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant, in Romania," GAC said in a statement.

The C$750 million ($552 million) contract to refurbish the reactor will ensure an emissions-free, low-cost and uninterrupted flow of power to both Romania and neighboring Moldova, the statement said.

The contract will help Romania reduce its dependence on Russian energy and strengthen its energy security, while also creating well-paying jobs in Canada, as a large proportion of the project will be completed in Canada, the statement stressed.

The CANDU technology is a pressurized heavy-water reactor created in Canada in the 1950s-1960s. AtkinsRealis (formerly SNC-Lavalin) is the sole licensee of its intellectual property.

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Hunter Biden Agrees to Testify in Public Hearing in Congress on December 13 - Lawyer

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden has agreed to testify before the House Oversight Committee as requested on December 13, his lawyer said in a letter sent to the panel on Tuesday.

"Mr. Chairman, we take you up on your offer ... Biden will appear at such a public hearing on the date you noticed, December 13, or any date in December that we can arrange," lawyer Abbe David Lowell wrote in the letter.

The committee earlier in November issued a subpoena for Hunter Biden to testify as part of their ongoing impeachment inquiry into the president.

Hunter Biden's lawyer said his client would insist on a public proceeding in order to "prevent selective leaks, manipulated transcripts, doctored exhibits, or one-sided press statements."

He added that the committee would find that its accusations against his client were "baseless."

The House committee is investigating President Biden and his family members as part of an effort to uncover alleged financial schemes and corruption.

In September, then-House Speaker Kevin McCarthy launched an impeachment inquiry into Biden, following probes into alleged criminal activity by the president and his son, Hunter Biden. The Biden family is alleged to have enriched themselves through foreign bribery and influence peddling.

Biden has dismissed the accusations against him, claiming to have never discussed foreign

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business deals with his son.

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First Flight With US Aid for Gaza to Arrive in Egypt on Tuesday - White House

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - The first of three US humanitarian aid flights for Gaza will land later in the day in North Sinai in Egypt and will be delivered to the enclave by the United Nations, a senior Biden administration official said during a press briefing.

"Tomorrow, we will have the first of three relief flights that are facilitated by the unique capabilities of the US military that will be arriving in North Sinai in Egypt, and this will be to bring a series of items, medical items, food aid, winter items, given that winter is coming in Gaza, for the civilian population, and these will be delivered by the United Nations to civilians in need in Gaza," the official said on Monday.

Two more flights will arrive in Egypt in the coming days while the Biden administration continues to work with regional partners on how to increase the flow of aid to Gaza, the official said.

Since October 21, more than 2000 trucks with humanitarian aid have crossed the border into Gaza at the Rafah crossing, the official added.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has so far resulted in the death of nearly 1,200 people in Israel and nearly 15,000 people in Gaza as well as the West Bank since October 7, with tens of thousands wounded in the Palestinian enclaves.

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Israel's Operation in Southern Gaza Must Avoid Mass Displacement of People - US Official

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - Israel military operation in southern Gaza must avoid another mass displacement of citizens as seen in the north of the strip at the beginning of its campaign, a senior US administration official told reporters.

"It is extremely important, and from the president [Joe Biden] down we have reinforced this in very clear language with government of Israel: it's very important that the conduct of the Israeli campaign when it moves to the south must be done in a way that is to a maximum extent not designed to produce significant further displacement of persons," the official said during a conference call.

Israel, during its upcoming military operations in southern Gaza, cannot replicate the level of displacement that took place in northern Gaza last month, the official said.

According to the official, a further displacement of Gaza residents in the south would be beyond disruptive and beyond the capacity of any humanitarian network to support.

On Monday, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Israel Defense Forces (IDF) operation in

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Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

the Gaza Strip will be more intense after the end of the ceasefire with Hamas and will take place throughout the Palestinian enclave.

The minister added that Hamas will use the ceasefire to regroup and rest its forces, so the IDF will initially use air forces and artillery before resuming ground operations.

The conflict has so far resulted in the deaths of an estimated 1,300 people in Israel and over 16,000 in the Gaza Strip.

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Lockheed Martin Wins $200Mln MLRS Munitions Engineering Deal - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - Lockheed Martin has received an almost $200 million US Army contract to provide industrial engineering services for the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) munitions programs, the Defense Department said in a press release.

"Lockheed Martin Corp., Grand Prairie, Texas, was awarded a $199,154,320 hybrid... contract for industrial engineering services for the Multiple Launch Rocket System Family of Munitions programs," the release said on Monday.

The MLRS is a mobile automated launch platform that fires surface-to-surface rockets.

The US said its allies and partners have delivered about ten MLRS for Ukraine since Russia's special military operation began.

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Oil Falls With Brent Reaching Below $80 Per Barrel Mark Amid OPEC+ Uncertainty

NEW YORK, November 27 (Sputnik) - Crude oil prices fell on Monday, with the Brent benchmark settling beneath the key $80 per barrel level amid concerns on whether global producer alliance OPEC+ would be able to restrict supply meaningfully to a market weakened by demand uncertainty.

“Arguably, the OPEC+ meeting will be the week's most impactful event - not just because any decision could have direct consequences for price and therefore inflation but also due to the meeting already being pushed back by four days, so there's clearly some disagreement within the alliance,” Craig Erlam, analyst at online trading platform OANDA, said.

UK North Sea-origin Brent settled at $79.98 per barrel, down 60 cents, or 0.7%, on the day.

New York-traded West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude settled below the key $75 mark at $74.86 per barrel, down 68 cents, or 0.9%, on the day.

The 23-nation OPEC+ is to meet on Thursday after an original round of talks was postponed to November 30 amid disagreement among its ranks, particularly African producers, on whether there should be new production cuts.

Since the middle of this year, Saudi Arabia, which leads the core 13-member OPEC, has

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

teamed up with Russia, which leads nine other independent oil producers to restrict 1.6 million barrels per day of supply from the market. Total OPEC+ cuts are almost at around 4 million barrels per day. The Saudis, who have been shouldering around 1 million barrels of the daily cuts, are expecting a firmer commitment from the rest of OPEC+ to rollover cuts and possibly strengthen them into 2024.

"The group has always found a way to get an agreement over the line before, even if that means the biggest producers taking on more of the additional commitments, so it's probably safe to say something similar will be achieved this week," Erlam said. "But the question is how far they'll push it, given the recent trend in oil prices and increasing concerns around global growth next year."

Global demand for oil has been spotty in recent months, with top importer China still exhibiting signs of economic sluggishness despite multiple stimulus programs.

Another problem has been the absence of any impact on Middle East crude supply and traffic from the Israel-Hamas war, despite the conflict's proximity to some of the largest oil producers. Initially oil prices rose sharply to more than one-year highs after the outbreak of the war on October 7. As of Monday, both Brent and WTI were down about 6% on the year.

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Northrop Grumman Gets $265Mln Contract Extension to Maintain G/ATOR Radars - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - Northrop Grumman Systems has received a US Navy $265 million modification contract to provide ongoing engineering support for the Ground/Air Task Oriented Radar (G/ATOR) program, the US Defense Department said.

"Northrop Grumman Systems Corporation [of] Linthicum Heights, Maryland is awarded a modification ...by $265 million of a previously awarded firm-fixed-price and cost-plus-fixed-fee basic ordering agreement," the Defense Department said in a press release on Monday.

The additional funding will pay for sustaining engineering and logistics support services for the G/ATOR program, including engineering changes, contractor logistics support and depot lifecycle support, the release said.

It will also fund the retrofit of six fielded Gallium Arsenide G/ATOR Low Rate Initial Production systems with gallium nitrite technology, operational spares buys, software development for current and future radar systems and the 5G spectrum accommodation, the release added.

Work on the project is scheduled to take 22 months and is expected to be completed by Sept. 28, 2025, according to the release.

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Blinken to Visit West Bank, Israel During Overseas Trip This Week - State Dept.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit the West Bank and Israel later this week to discuss security and humanitarian related developments in the Gaza conflict, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a press release.

"Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken will travel to Belgium, North Macedonia, Israel, the West Bank, and the UAE from November 27-December 2, 2023," Miller said in the release on Monday.

According to Miller, in Israel and the West Bank, Blinken will discuss security and humanitarian operations in Gaza, including ongoing efforts to secure the release of more hostages. Blinken will also discuss "tangible" steps to further the creation of a future Palestinian state, and the need to prevent the Gaza conflict from widening in the region, Miller added.

Blinken might hold a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah on Thursday to discuss the situation in the Gaza Strip, a source told Sputnik earlier in the day.

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Elbit Systems Wins $500Mln US Navy Contract to Make Night Vision Goggles - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - Elbit Systems of America – Night Vision has received a US Navy $500 million contract to manufacture Squad Binocular Night Vision Goggle systems, the Department of Defense announced in a press release.

"Elbit Systems of America – Night Vision [of] Roanoke, Virginia is awarded a $500 million ...contract for the procurement of Squad Binocular Night Vision Goggle systems," the release said on Monday.

The contract will also include the manufacture of spare and repair parts, contractor logistics support and test article refurbishment, the Defense Department said.

Work on the contract will be performed in Roanoke, Virginia, over the next five years and is expected to be completed in November 2028, the Defense Department said.

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Ten Construction Firms Share $700Mln Deal to Expand US Facilities on Guam - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - Ten construction companies have been awarded a $770 million contract to build facilities on Andersen Air Force Base and Northwest Field on the island of Guam, a key US base in the Western Pacific, the Defense Department announced.

"The companies included] AIC International [of] Agat, Guam; Environet [of] Kamuela, Hawaii; Fargo Pacific [of] Tamuning, Guam; InfraTech International [of] Harmon, Guam [and] Modern International [of] Barrigada, Guam," the Defense Department said in a press release on Monday.

The other companies participating in the project are Pacific Rim Constructors of Dededo,

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Guam; Reliable Builders of Tamuning, Guam; Serrano Construction and Development Corporation of Barrigada, Guam; Techni-Con of Mangilao, Guam; and Weldin Construction of North Las Vegas, Nevada, the release added.

Work on the program will be carried out over the next year and a half and is expected to be completed by June 2025, according to the release.

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Pentagon Says Can't Verify Claim North Korea's Satellite Took Photos of US Gov't Buildings

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - The Pentagon cannot confirm the accuracy of claims a North Korean spy satellite took photos of the White House, Pentagon and US aircraft carriers, a Defense Department spokesperson told Sputnik in a statement.

Earlier in the day, KCNA reported that North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un received photos recently taken by their spy satellite of the White House, Pentagon, and US aircraft carriers at the naval base in Norfolk, Virginia.

"We cannot confirm the accuracy of this claim," the spokesperson said on Monday.

The White House National Security Council did not immediately respond to Sputnik's request for comment on the matter.

Last week, North Korea's KCNA state news agency reported that Pyongyang had successfully carried out the previously announced launch of its Malligyong-1 military reconnaissance satellite and announced plans to launch several more satellites in a "short span of time."

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White House Holiday Events Set to Exclude Certain Journalists - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - Holiday events hosted by the White House for members of the press are set to exclude certain journalists for the second year in a row, The New York Post reported, citing invitations - or lack thereof - to the events.

The White House sent out invitations to two media parties two weeks ago, the report said on Monday. However, a number of outlets included in the press corps were not invited, the report added.

"If you're hosting a reception for the press, invite the entire press corps or just call it what it is, a private party for your friends," one longtime White House journalist reportedly said.

Another White House journalist alleged that the Biden administration limits access to such events as part of a pay-to-play system, the report said. The journalist claimed that members of the press are expected to cover certain stories in order to gain access, the report said.

One White House journalist who has attended such holiday parties for years under both Democratic and Republican administrations reportedly said that only Biden has barred him from

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

the events.
The White House said on Monday that its theme for the holiday season is "magic, wonder and joy," for which volunteers decorated the presidential residence with 98 Christmas trees, nearly 15,000 feet of ribbon and more than 33,892 ornaments.

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US Border Authorities Say Limiting Texas, Arizona Vehicle Crossings Amid Surge in Migrants

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said in a statement that it is limiting operations at vehicle crossings in the states of Texas and Arizona amid a surge in migrants at the United States' southern border with Mexico.
"Beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time, CBP's Office of Field Operations will temporarily suspend vehicle processing operations at Eagle Pass International Bridge 1 in Eagle Pass, Texas, and at 2 p.m. local time, reduce vehicle processing in Lukeville, Arizona, in order to redirect personnel to assist the US Border Patrol with taking migrants into custody," the statement said on Monday.
CBP is seeing increased levels of migration at the southwest border, fueled by smugglers who prey on vulnerable individuals, the statement said.
CBP will continue to deploy all available resources to expeditiously and safely process migrants at the border, the statement added.

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President Biden, First Lady 'Horrified' Over Shooting of College Students in Burlington

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden on Monday said that he and First Lady Jill Biden were horrified at the shooting of three college students of Palestinian descent, two of whom are American citizens, during Thanksgiving in Burlington, Vermont.
"Jill and I were horrified to learn that three college students of Palestinian descent, two of whom are American citizens, were shot Saturday in Burlington, Vermont. They were simply spending Thanksgiving gathered with family and loved ones," Biden said in a statement.
Biden said that he had spoken to Burlington Mayor Miro Weinberger and extended his support. He expressed gratitude for the swift efforts of the Burlington Police Department, along with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and other law enforcement partners, in identifying and apprehending the suspect.
"Our [Biden] Administration will provide any additional federal resources needed to assist in the investigation," Biden added.
Three 20-year-old students - Hisham Awartani, Tahseen Aliahmad and Kinnan Abdalhamid - were shot last week on Saturday evening in Burlington while walking on a street in the vicinity of the University of Vermont campus. They were visiting their relatives for the occasion of

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Thanksgiving.
The suspected shooter, Jason Eaton, was later arrested near the scene of the shooting and has already pleaded not guilty to three counts of attempted murder, according to media reports.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, November 28 (Sputnik) -

GAZA CEASEFIRE
* The military wing of Hamas, the Al Qassam Brigades, said on Monday that it was handing over the fourth group of Israeli hostages to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) since the start of the truce in the Gaza Strip, Al Jazeera reported.
* The ICRC informed the Israeli authorities that 11 hostages are on their way to Israel, the IDF said.
UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that he hopes the Israel-Hamas ceasefire will enable the United Nations to increase much needed humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip.
* Hamas said on Monday that it received a list of 33 Palestinians who are scheduled to be released from Israeli prisons as part of the humanitarian truce.
* Hamas said that it has reached an agreement with Qatar and Egypt on the extension of the humanitarian truce with Israel in Gaza.

US-RUSSIA RELATIONS
* The United States has not requested a meeting between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the OSCE summit in Macedonia, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said on Monday.
* The resumption of the strategic stability dialogue between Russia and the United States in the near future is unlikely, Ryabkov said.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON NORTH KOREA
* North Korea launched its reconnaissance satellite in order to get a clear picture of the United States military moves in the region and prepare accordingly, the country's Ambassador to the United Nations Kim Song said on Monday.
* A draft UN Security Council resolution on North Korea, submitted by Russia and China, remains on the table and can contribute to resolving the situation in the region, Russian Deputy Envoy to the United Nations Anna Evstigneeva said.
* The Korean Peninsula has reached a "dangerous threshold" whereby it is now hard to conduct any negotiations on achieving a political settlement, Evstigneeva said.
* US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield said that North Korea's development of nuclear weapon delivery systems and ballistic missile technology is threatening

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

all its neighbors and UN member states.

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

* Media reports alleging that the United States and Germany are pushing Ukraine into negotiations with Russia are "intriguing" but are not true, US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs James O'Brien said on Monday.
* Russian air defense systems have shot down two S-200 missiles converted to hit ground targets over the southern part of the Azov Sea, the Russian Defense Ministry said.
* Russia has undeniable evidence of the United States' participation in the supply of toxic chemicals to Ukraine, Russian Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Kirill Lysogorsky said.
* NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said he was not ready to predict the outcome of the alliance's summit in Washington regarding Ukraine's membership, stressing that Kiev could not join NATO while it was in a state of a military conflict with a neighboring country.

SCYTHIAN GOLD

* The Allard Pierson Museum located in Amsterdam confirmed on Monday that it has handed over the Scythian gold collection to Kiev.
* The Scythian gold collection belongs to Crimea, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

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Schumer Says US Senate Will Hold Classified Briefing on Ukraine Conflict in Coming Days

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - The US Senate will hold an all-Senators classified briefing on the conflict in Ukraine in the coming days, US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said on Monday.

"For the information of Senators: in the coming days, we will hold an all-Senators, classified briefing on the situation in Ukraine," Schumer said during remarks on the Senate floor.

Lawmakers will receive an update on the situation on the ground, Schumer said. All Senators are urged to attend, Schumer added.

The US Congress must pass assistance for Ukraine as part of a supplemental aid request by the Biden administration, Schumer said.

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US Does Not Believe Americans Are Among Hostages Freed by Hamas Today - Kirby

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - The United States does not believe that there are any Americans in the group of hostages released by Hamas earlier in the day, White House National

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on Monday.

"We do not believe that there are Americans in this group coming out today," Kirby told CNN.

Kirby added that the US does not know how Hamas is making up the lists of the hostages to be freed.

"We are working very very hard to keep this flow of hostages going," he said. "We are glad to see that there is a two day extension and we certainly would hope that in the next two days, in these next couple of installments that we'll see some Americans coming out."

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Biden Says Spoke With Family of 4-Year-Old American Hostage Released by Hamas

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said on Monday that he spoke with the family of a four-year-old American-Israeli hostage released by Hamas and pledged to work with Israel to provide all the necessary care and support to the girl who lost her parents in the October 7 attack.

"I spoke with Abigail's family following her release, and we are working closely with our Israeli partners to ensure she gets the care and support she needs as she begins to recover from this unspeakable trauma," Biden said in a statement.

Biden said Abigail Edan turned four years old during her captivity after her parents were killed in front of her.

Abigail Edan was released on Sunday and is currently in the custody of International Committee of the Red Cross officials. Abigail will be reunited with her siblings and live with their aunt, uncle and grandparents in Israel, the family previously said.

Last week, Israel and Hamas agreed to a four-day pause in military operations to exchange some of the prisoners and hostages, as well as allow the delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza. On Monday, they agreed to extend the truce by two more days to allow the release of more hostages.

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White House Says Biden Creating Council on Supply Chains, Taking Other Related Actions

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden is creating a new Council on Supply Chain Resilience and taking nearly 30 other actions in an effort to bolster supply chains in the United States, the White House said on Monday.

"As part of his Bidenomics agenda to lower costs for American families, President Biden is announcing nearly 30 new actions to strengthen supply chains critical to America's economic and national security," the White House said in a statement. "President Biden will announce these actions alongside members of his Cabinet and other senior Administration officials at the

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

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inaugural meeting of the new White House Council on Supply Chain Resilience."
The new council will be co-chaired by the National Security Advisor and National Economic Advisor, the statement said. The council will also include the Secretaries of Defense, Energy, Homeland Security, Commerce, Treasury and others cabinet members, the statement added.
Additionally, Biden is taking actions including authorizing use of the Defense Production Act to enable investments in domestic medicine manufacturing, according to the White House.
The Department of Homeland Security will also launch a new Supply Chain Resilience Center to address supply chain risks and conduct tabletop exercises in coordination with other federal agencies and foreign governments, the statement said.
The set of actions will help ensure access to goods across the US, enable reliable business deliveries, strengthen food systems and support union jobs, the statement said.

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Trudeau Condemns Attack on Montreal Jewish Community Council Offices

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday condemned the attempted arson via a Molotov cocktail attack on the offices of the Jewish Community Council (JCC) of Montreal.
Earlier on Monday, the JCC Montreal reported that their offices became the target of an attempted arson by Molotov cocktail on Sunday shortly after midday. The Council said that the premises being empty, no one was harmed, and the offices suffered minor damage.
In a separate statement, the Federation CJA said that a Jewish Day School in the St-Lauren District had also been vandalized with antisemitic graffiti.
"I strongly condemn the attack on the Jewish Community Council of Montreal building yesterday. These continued acts of antisemitic violence are deplorable and unacceptable - and must stop immediately," Trudeau said via X (formerly Twitter). "We must all stand united against such vile, hateful acts."
The prime minister's words echoed those of Montreal's Mayor Valerie Plante who expressed feeling shocked upon learning of the incident, and who reaffirmed her commitment to the preservation of peace and inclusion throughout the city.
Since the onset of the armed conflict between Israel and the Palestinian organization Hamas, and amid strong disagreements between the pro-Israeli and pro-Palestine movements, Jewish-related institutions across the city of Montreal have become targets of arson attempts, the depiction of antisemitic graffiti, and Jewish Schools have fallen pray to targeted shootings.
On November 21, Trudeau had noted that Canada was in a state of polarization over the Israel-Hamas war which posed many challenges emanating from grief, anger, and pain amid the war in Gaza.
The prime minister had emphasized that it was imperative for Canadians to differentiate between expressing support for the Palestinian people and being anti-Semitic as well as expressing grief over Israeli hostages and not supporting the murder of innocent Palestinian

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civilians.

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US Envoy Traveling to Czechia, Moldova to Discuss Religious Freedom, Security – State Dept

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) – US Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya is traveling to the Czech Republic and Moldova from November 27 to December 2 to discuss religious freedom, security, and other issues, the State Department said on Monday.

"In Prague, she will lead the U.S. delegation to the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance (IRFBA) Ministerial Conference, where she will give remarks on U.S. efforts to promote and protect religious freedom worldwide," the State Department said in a statement.

While in Prague, Zeya also intends to highlight the importance of supporting refugees from Ukraine, according to the statement.

In Moldova, Zeya will participate in the Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA) project launch.

"This project, a collaboration between the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the Moldovan Ministry of Internal Affairs, will upgrade Moldova's law enforcement communications system and build domestic and border security resilience," the statement said.

In both countries, Zeya plans to meet with senior officials and other partners to discuss bilateral cooperation, human rights, anti-corruption efforts, and other topics.

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TSA Says Screened Over 2.9Mln People at US Airports on Sunday, Busiest Day in History

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - The US Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screened more than 2.9 million people on Sunday at airports in the United States, marking the busiest aviation travel day in the country's history, according to TSA screening data.

TSA screened 2,907,378 passengers at checkpoints in the United States, surpassing a previous record of 2.88 million set in June, the agency said.

The increase in travel coincided with the Thanksgiving holiday in the United States. More than 2.7 million people traveled by air on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, making it the second busiest air travel day of this season.

Air travel numbers are up compared to Thanksgiving seasons since 2020, when travel significantly declined due to the draconian COVID-19 pandemic measures.

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with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

AUKUS Critical to Open Indo-Pacific, Reinforces US Submarine Industrial Base - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - The Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) military pact is a critical element for an open Indo-Pacific region and reinforces the US submarine industrial base, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Bonnie Jenkins said on Monday.

"More broadly, AUKUS is strengthening the US submarine industrial base by growing our industrial workforce and expanding submarine supply chains," Jenkins said in remarks at the Atlantic Council. "These investments in our industrial base and workforce are critical to contribute to a free and open Indo-Pacific."

Jenkins emphasized that AUKUS would not be a short-lived partnership, but rather a long and enduring commitment that will create and preserve job opportunities on several levels of the US submarine industry sector and build upon its alleged leadership and commitment to excellence.

The AUKUS partnership is a commitment for years to come and represents defense, diplomacy and security for the future, Jenkins said.

"It's being unafraid to tackle new challenges, an opportunity to engage citizens in robust democracies, and offer a clear choice about our clear future," Jenkins added.

Under the terms of AUKUS, the United States plans to sell between three to five Virginia-class submarines to Australia as an interim capability in the early 2030s.

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Biden 'Horrified' to Learn About 3 Palestinian Students Shot in Vermont - White House

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden were horrified when they learned about the shooting in Burlington, Vermont, over the Thanksgiving weekend that resulted in three students of Palestinian descent seriously wounded, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said on Monday.

"The President and the First Lady were horrified to learn about the three college students of Palestinian descent, two of whom are American citizens, who were shot Saturday in Burlington, Vermont," Jean-Pierre said during a press briefing.

Three 20-year-old students - Hisham Awartani, Tahseen Aliahmad and Kinnan Abdalhamid - were shot on Saturday evening in Burlington while walking on a street in the vicinity of the University of Vermont campus. They were visiting their relatives for the occasion of Thanksgiving.

The suspected shooter, Jason Eaton, was later arrested near the scene of the shooting and has already pleaded not guilty to three counts of attempted murder, according to media reports.

Awartani, Aliahmad and Abdalhamid remain hospitalized with wounds in the spine, chest and glute, respectively.

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US Won't Preview Actions to Protect Forces After Houthis Shot at Navy Ship - White House

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - The United States will not preview actions it will take to protect US forces in the Middle East after two missiles were fired from Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen towards the location of a US warship in the region, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on Monday.

"I'm not going to telegraph punches," Kirby said during a press briefing. "We will take steps appropriate to protect our troops and our forces in the Middle East region."

According to US Central Command (CENTCOM), on Sunday, a US Navy destroyer and allied ships rescued an Israeli-linked commercial tanker that was under attack. Shortly after the rescue, two ballistic missiles were fired from Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen toward the general location of the USS Mason and MV Central Park. The missiles landed in the Gulf of Aden approximately ten nautical miles from the ships.

The USS Mason, which is part of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group, was concluding its response to the MV Central Park distress call at the time of the missile launches. There was no damage or reported injuries from either vessel during this incident, CENTCOM added.

Earlier in the day, a US defense official told Sputnik that Sunday's attempted hijacking of the commercial vessel appears to have been carried out by Somali pirates, but the investigation is ongoing.

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Biden Says Working With Egypt, Qatar, Israel to Ensure Implementation of Hostage Deal

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said on Monday that he remains in contact with Egyptian, Qatari and Israeli officials to ensure that the terms of a hostage release deal are implemented.

“I remain in contact with leaders of Qatar, Egypt, and Israel to make sure every aspect of the deal is implemented,” Biden said in a statement via social media platform X.

Biden and his national security team will stay engaged on efforts to further extend the deal, White House Strategic Communications Coordinator John Kirby said earlier on Monday. Israel and Hamas agreed to extend their truce by two days to allow for additional hostages to be released.

Biden said that he has consistently pressed for a pause in the fighting between Israel and Hamas to expand humanitarian assistance and facilitate hostage releases.

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Greenland May Lose Ice Sheet if States Do Not Change Behavior on Climate Change - UN Chief

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Monday that the Greenland and West Anctarctic ice sheets may be lost if countries do not change their behavior toward climate change.

"If we continue as we are and I strongly hope we will not, the Greenland and Western Antarctic ice sheets will cross a deadly tipping point," Guterres said.

Such a development will push up the sea levels by approximately ten meters, Guterres added.

Earlier on Monday, US media reported that President Joe Biden will skip the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), scheduled to take place from November 30-December 12 in Dubai. The likely reason for not attending is the amount of time Biden is dedicating to Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip and the tensions in the Middle East, the report said.

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Somali Pirates Attempted Hijacking of MV Central Park Vessel in Mideast - US Official

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - Somali pirates were behind the attempted hijacking of the MV Central Park commercial vessel transiting the Middle East that a US Navy destroyer rescued before coming under fire by missiles from Yemen, a US defense official told Sputnik on Monday.

"The USS Mason was shot at by two missiles that were fired from Houthi controlled areas of Yemen," the official said. "Initial assessments indicate the armed individuals that attacked the MV Central Park were Somali pirates, however the investigation is still ongoing."

According to US Central Command (CENTCOM), on Sunday, a US Navy destroyer and allied ships rescued the Israeli-linked tanker that was under attack. Shortly after the rescue, two ballistic missiles were fired from Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen toward the general location of the USS Mason and MV Central Park. The missiles landed in the Gulf of Aden approximately 10 nautical miles from the ships.

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Guterres Says Cannot Believe That UAE Planned to Pitch Energy Deals at COP 28 Sidelines

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UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Monday that he cannot believe claims that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) planned to pitch fossil fuel deals on the sidelines of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) later this week.

"I can't believe it is true," Guterres said, when asked about the allegations during a press conference.

The UAE, which is hosting COP28, planned to discuss gas and oil deals with 15 countries, UK media reported, citing leaked documents. UAE officials did not deny planning private business meetings alongside COP28, the report said.

COP28 will take place from November 30 to December 12 in Dubai. Annual COP events focus on addressing climate change and its impacts.

The UN seeks a "clear and credible" commitment to phase out fossil fuels on a timeline that limits global temperature to a 1.5 degree Celsius increase, Guterres said.

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US Consumers Pay 20% More in Post-Pandemic Era, Slowing Inflation Little Relief - Survey

NEW YORK, November 27 (Sputnik) - American consumers are easily paying about 20% more for the same goods and services they could afford before the three-year long coronavirus pandemic, with prices having risen about as much as they had in the decade before the health emergency, a Bloomberg survey said Monday.

"It now requires $119.27 to buy the same goods and services a family could afford with $100 before the pandemic," the survey said.

Grocery and electricity cost about 25% more since January 2020 while some things have risen a lot more, with used-car prices up 35%, auto insurance 33% and rents roughly about 20%.

Government data indicating a slowdown in inflation has offered little comfort to consumers who have only seen smaller price rises or stagnant prices - not what they used to pay pre-pandemic.

The survey said this was one reason for Americans' dissatisfaction with the economy, with their consumption routine back to pre-pandemic norms, minus the cost of living. And multiple rate hikes by the Federal Reserve over nearly two years have added to the burden.

"Many Americans have seen their pay rise rapidly since 2020, but much of those gains have been gobbled up by inflation. Some of the fastest wage increases in decades have left the average American largely no better off than before," the survey said.

More profoundly, the impact of elevated prices and borrowing costs could help decide whether President Joe Biden wins a second term in elections due in a year, with voters in four in 10 swing-states saying the economy was their top issue in the 2024 presidential election.

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Guterres Says Hopes Truce Will Enable More Deliveries of UN Humanitarian Aid to Gaza

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Monday that he hopes the ceasefire reached between Israel and the Palestinian movement Hamas will enable the United Nations to increase humanitarian aid to the residents of the Gaza Strip.

"I strongly hope that this will enable us to increase even more the humanitarian aid to the people in Gaza that are suffering so much, knowing that even with that additional amount of time, it will be impossible to satisfy all the dramatic needs of the population as shown here," Guterres said.

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Argentina's President-Elect Will Meet US Officials This Week, Not Biden - White House

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - Argentina's President-elect Javier Milei will meet with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and other US officials this week in Washington, but not President Joe Biden, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on Monday.

"President-Elect Milei will be coming into Washington, DC largely to meet with the IMF and the World Bank over their fiscal and economic issues, but while he's here in town he'll have a chance to meet with some National Security Council folks, including Jake Sullivan...President [Biden] won't unfortunately be able to be with him because of domestic travel," Kirby said during a press briefing.

The United States looks forward to hearing Milei's ideas and where he wants to go on policy issues, Kirby said, adding that they want to ensure they can keep communications lines open between both countries.

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North Korea's UN Envoy Says If US Seeks Stability It Will Halt Joint Military Drills

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - North Korea called for an immediate cessation of all joint military exercises by the US, asserting that such actions are hindering peace and stability in diplomatic relation, North Korean Ambassador to the United Nations Kim Song said on Monday.

"If [the] United States really wish the peace and stability for diplomacy it must immediately stop all kinds of the joint military exercise," Kim Song told the United Nations Security Council.

Kim Songs statement came in response to a previous remark by US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield, who emphasized the US' commitment to providing

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humanitarian assistance to North Korea rather than weaponry that could potentially harm its people.

Last week, North Korea's KCNA state news agency reported that Pyongyang had successfully launched its Malligyong-1 military reconnaissance satellite and would launch several more satellites in a short period of time.

Japan and South Korea have condemned the launch.

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US Hopes Another Batch of Hostages Gets Released Today Under Israel-Hamas Deal - Kirby

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - The United States is hopeful that another group of hostages will be released today after Israel and Hamas extended an agreement on the humanitarian pause in Gaza by two days, White House Coordinator for Strategic Communications John Kirby said on Monday.

"We're certainly hoping that another batch of hostages gets released today as part of the fourth and final day of the original agreement," Kirby said during a press briefing.

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Biden Team to Stay Engaged on Extension of Israel-Hamas Truce Deal - White House

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden and his national security team will stay engaged on efforts to extend the truce deal agreed to by Israel and the Palestinian Hamas group, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on Monday.

"[Biden] He and his entire national security team will obviously stay engaged on this over the coming days as we work to implement this extension of the original agreement as well as efforts to extend the pause from there," Kirby said during a press briefing.

Israel and Hamas agreed to extend their humanitarian truce deal by two more days, which will also allow for the release of additional hostages.

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Pentagon to Hold 2 Meetings in December to Discuss Policy on Russia Through 2050 – Notice

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) – The US Department of Defense will hold two classified briefings on December 5 and 6 to discuss the US defense policy toward Russia

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/28/2023 12:04:00 PM

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through 2050, according to a meeting notice published by the Pentagon.

"On December 5, 2023, and December 6, 2023, the DPB [the Defense Policy Board] will receive classified briefings regarding U.S. Defense Policy toward Russia through 2050," the notice said on Friday.

During the meetings, Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Mara Karlin, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Celeste Wallander, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Charles Q. Brown will provide an update on the department's approach to Russia.

The findings of the meeting will be passed to US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks to inform their decisions with respect to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the notice said.

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US Welcomes Qatar's Announcement on Extension of Humanitarian Pause in Gaza – White House

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) – The United States welcomes Qatar's announcement on an extension of the humanitarian pause in Gaza for two more days, White House Coordinator for Strategic Communications John Kirby said on Monday.

"We welcomed the announcement … by Qatar, that the humanitarian pause in Gaza, now in its fourth day, will be extended for another two days to Thursday morning Israel time," Kirby said during a press briefing.

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N. Korea UN Envoy Says Pyongyang Has Legitimate Right to Develop Same Weapons as US

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - North Korea believes that it has a legitimate right to develop and possess the same weapons systems as the United States, Ambassador to the United Nations Kim Song said on Monday.

"It is a legitimate right for the DPRK… to develop, test, manufacture and possess a weapon system equivalent to those that the US have already possessed and/or is developing right now," the envoy told the Security Council.

North Korea, he added, has a right to self-defense against US military activities in the region.

On Sunday, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and her South Korean counterpart, Park Jin, condemned North Korea's recent satellite launch at a meeting in Busan.

Last week, North Korea's KCNA state news agency reported that Pyongyang had successfully carried out the previously announced launch of its Malligyong-1 military reconnaissance satellite

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and announced plans to launch several more satellites in a "short span of time."

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Montreal Jewish Community Council Target of Attempted Arson by Molotov - Statement

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) – Canada's Jewish Community Council (JCC) of Montreal said on Monday that its offices became the overnight target of an attempted arson by Molotov cocktail.

"At approximately 12:35 p.m. a Molotov cocktail was thrown into the entrance way of the Jewish Community Council of Montreal. Thank G-d, no one was present, and minimal damage occurred," JCC Montreal said in a statement shared via X (formerly Twitter). "The rise in antisemitism in our city is frightening, and the repeated violence and attacks on our community are abhorrent and condemned in the strongest terms."

The Council expressed gratitude for Montreal's law enforcement and fire department swift and professional response to the incident, and said it hoped for the apprehension of the responsible individuals.

Aside of the arson incident, a Jewish Day School was also vandalized with antisemitic graffiti, the Federation CJA said via X.

"The antisemitic acts committed yesterday and overnight against the offices of @jcc_montreal and of a Jewish school in the St-Lauret district are shocking. Montreal is a city of peace and inclusion. It must remain as such and we will ensure it does," Montreal's Mayor Valerie Plante said on X in reaction to the news.

The mayor added that Montreal's law enforcement is currently investigating the incidents to find the culprits, and further expressed her solidarity with the Jewish Community.

Since the onset of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7, Jewish-related institutions across Montreal have increasingly been victim of attacks ranging from arsons, antisemitic graffiti as well as shootings targeting academic institutions.

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Tensions on Korean Peninsula 'May Spiral Out of Control' - Chinese Deputy Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - China is very concerned about the worsening tensions on the Korean Peninsula that may eventually spiral out of control, Chinese Deputy Envoy to the United Nations Geng Shuang said on Monday.

"China is deeply concerned about the escalation of antagonism and confrontation and the continuing tension on the [Korean] peninsula, which is increasingly on a downward spiral... may eventually spiral out of control," Geng said during a meeting of the UN Security Council.

Geng emphasized that such developments will only contribute to "new turbulence and instability

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to an already troubled world."
Last week, North Korea reported that it successfully launched its Malligyong-1 military reconnaissance satellite and would launch several more satellites in a short period of time.
Japan and South Korea condemned the launch of the military satellite.

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North Korea Launched Satellite to Obtain Clear Picture of US Military Moves - Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - North Korea launched its reconnaissance satellite in order to get a picture of the United States military moves in the region and prepare accordingly, the country's Ambassador to the United Nations Kim Song said on Monday.
"The DPRK's [North Korea's] launch of the reconnaissance satellite [was done] to get a clear picture of the dire military moves of the United States so we could get fully prepared," Kim said during a meeting of the UN Security Council.

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Korean Peninsula Reaches 'Dangerous Threshold' - Russian Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - The Korean Peninsula has reached a "dangerous threshold" whereby it is now hard to conduct any negotiations on achieving a political settlement, Russian Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations Anna Evstigneeva said on Monday.
"The region has reached a dangerous threshold beyond which the possibilities for a political settlement will be reduced to naught," Evstigneeva said during a meeting of the UN Security Council.
Proper conclusions have not been drawn given the United States' and its allies' military exercises in the region, Evstigneeva said.
On Sunday, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and her South Korean counterpart Park Jin condemned North Korea's recent military satellite launch.
North Korea reported last week that it had successfully carried out the launch of its Malligyong-1 military reconnaissance satellite and announced plans to launch several more satellites in within a short period of time.

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Russia-China UNSC Draft Resolution on DPRK Remains On Table – Deputy Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) – A draft UN Security Council resolution on North Korea, submitted by Russia and China, remains on the table and can contribute to resolving the situation in the region, Russian Deputy Permanent Representative Anna Evstigneeva said on Monday.

"The Russian, Chinese draft political, humanitarian resolution of the Security Council remains on the table, its adoption could constitute an effective constructive contribution of the council to resolving the current complex situation on the Korean Peninsula," Evstigneeva said at the UN Security Council meeting.

She added that Russia has consistently advocated for peaceful settlement of the whole range of problems of the Korean Peninsula by political and diplomatic means. She also stressed the importance of avoiding "outside pressure" in resolving regional issues.

We firmly call upon the parties to cease dangerous actions, which could lead to a large-scale conflict," Evstigneeva said.

She also urged all parties to show their interest in negotiating with each other in order to reach security in the region.

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White House Says Opposes Ban on Federal Funds Use to House Migrants on US Federal Lands

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration opposes the passage of legislation banning the use of federal funds to house illegal immigrants on federally managed lands in the United States, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) said on Monday.

"The administration strongly opposes HR 5283, which would prohibit the use of federal funds to provide temporary shelter to certain noncitizens, including migrants seeking asylum, on federal lands falling under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, or the Forest Service," OMB said in a statement.

The Biden administration opposes the legislation because it significantly restricts the ability of federal agencies to make decisions on appropriate use of their lands and resources, including in emergencies, the statement said.

The legislation, dubbed the Protecting our Communities from Failure to Secure the Border Act, passed the House Natural Resources Committee with bipartisan support last month. The US House Rules Committee is set to consider the bill on Tuesday.

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US Envoy to UN Says North Korea's 'Reckless Behavior' Threatens All Member States

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield said on Monday that North Korea's development of nuclear weapons delivery systems and ballistic missile technology is threatening all its neighbors and UN member states.

"The DPRK is unabashedly trying to advance its nuclear weapons delivery systems, testing ballistic missile technology in clear violation of this council's resolutions. This reckless unlawful behavior threatens all of the DPRK's neighbors and all member states," Thomas-Greenfield said during a UN Security Council meeting.

She stressed that the DPRK has conducted multiple missile launches, including four intercontinental ballistic missiles.

"Now, a North Korean reconnaissance satellite has been confirmed in orbit," Thomas-Greenfield said.

The US is ready to talk with Pyongyang on any topic without preconditions but North Korea has to choose the path of negotiation, the diplomat stated.

Last week, North Korea's KCNA state news agency reported that Pyongyang had successfully launched its Malligyong-1 military reconnaissance satellite and would launch several more satellites in a "short span of time."

Japan and South Korea have condemned the launch.

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AI Could Replace 50% of Human Jobs Over Next 20 Years, 70% of Labor Overall - Sukharevsky

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - Artificial intelligence (AI) technology could end up replacing half of human jobs in the next two decades and 70% of labor overall, global leader of McKinsey-owned AI consulting firm QuantumBlack Alexander Sukharevsky said on Monday.

"Seventy percent of employees' tasks today could be automated… in 20 years, 50% of them will be automated," Sukharevsky said during a discussion at the Fortune Global Forum in Abu Dhabi.

Employers should analyze each role in their workforce to understand the possible impacts of AI instead of making broad generalizations about its disruptive potential, he said.

Sukharevsky said that he focuses on how AI will augment the current workforce rather than on what it might eliminate.

AI could eliminate administrative and routine duties and allow workers to flourish, Sukharevsky added.

QuantumBlack uses "hybrid intelligence" to develop systems that harness both AI power and human insight, according to the consulting firm's website.

On Friday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the Kremlin is working on a new national

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AI development strategy due to a rapid development of the technology's potential.

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Military Entities on Korean Peninsula Should Re-Establish Communications - UN Official

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - Communications on the military level should be re-established on the Korean Peninsula in light of the increased tensions in the region, UN Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific Khaled Khiari said on Monday.

"With growing tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the importance of re-establishing communication channels and off-ramps is essential, particularly between military entities. Exercising maximum restraint is critical to avoid unintended accidents or miscalculations," Khiari said during a UN Security Council meeting on North Korea.

Khiari said he urges the UN Security Council to adopt measures that will halt the "negative trend."

On Monday, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol ordered the country's military to maintain firm readiness amid the fallout in relations with North Korea.

Last week, North Korea successfully carried out a launch of its Malligyong-1 military reconnaissance satellite and announced plans to launch several more satellites within a short period of time.

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North Korea's Launches Represent Risk to Civil Aviation, Maritime Traffic - UN Official

UNITED NATIONS, November 27 (Sputnik) - North Korea's ballistic launches cause risks to international civil aviation and maritime traffic, UN Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific Khaled Khiari said on Monday.

"The DPRK's launches represent a serious risk to international civil aviation and maritime traffic," Khiari told the Security Council during a meeting on North Korea.

Even though the DPRK issues pre-launch notifications to Japan, it failed to issue airspace or maritime safety notification, he added.

On Sunday, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and her South Korean counterpart, Park Jin, condemned North Korea's recent satellite launch at a meeting in Busan.

Last week, North Korea's KCNA state news agency reported that Pyongyang had successfully carried out the previously announced launch of its Malligyong-1 military reconnaissance satellite and announced plans to launch several more satellites in a "short span of time."

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Joly to Attend NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting in Brussels - Global Affairs Canada

WASHINGTON, November 27 (Sputnik) - Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly will visit Brussels to participate in NATO's Foreign Ministers meeting, Global Affairs Canada said on Monday.

"The Honorable Melanie Joly, minister of foreign affairs, today announced that she will be traveling to Brussels, Belgium, from November 27 to 29 to attend a meeting of the NATO foreign affairs ministers," Global Affairs Canada said in a statement. "Minister Joly will meet with her counterparts from NATO countries to discuss shared priorities and reaffirm Canada's commitment to addressing key global security challenges."

Joly will reaffirm Canada's support for Ukraine amid Russia's ongoing special military operation and will further advocate for the country's accession to NATO when conditions allow it, the statement said.

In addition, Joly will emphasize the necessity for a constructive political dialogue in the so-called Western Balkans to enhance regional stability and strengthen democratic institutions, the statement said.

Joly will also reiterate the call for the Palestinian movement Hamas to release all hostages it took after attacking Israel on October 7, allow foreign nationals to depart the area and avoid further bloodshed by working to achieve a lasting peace, the statement added.

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