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Canada Adds 90,000 Jobs in April, Unemployment Unchanged at 6.1% - Statistics Agency

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) – Canada added 90,000 jobs in April, and unemployment remained unchanged at 6.1%, the country's statistics agency said on Friday.

"Employment increased by 90,000 (+0.4%) in April, and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 6.1%. The employment rate held steady at 61.4%, following six consecutive monthly declines," Statistics Canada (StatCan) said in its latest Labor Force Survey.

The creation of 50,000 (+1.4%) part-time jobs was the main driver of April's gains, StatCan said. Employment rose among men and women aged 25-54 by 41,000 and 27,000, respectively, it added.

In April, the number of unemployed Canadians remained unchanged at 6.1% or 1.3 million after it experienced a 0.3% increase in March, StatCan said. Compared to twelve months earlier, the number of unemployed people was up by 256,000 (+23.7%) in April, it continued.

The latest statistics mark the first pause in the employment rate decrease after six months of trending downwards. In March, Statistics Canada had recorded the single largest increase in unemployment since summer 2022.

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Family of Killed Airman Questions Sheriff's Deputy's Handling of Law-Abiding Gun Owner

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The family of Roger Fortson, a 23-year-old active-duty airman who was killed by a Florida Sheriff's deputy, released a statement questioning the offending officer's ability to deal with law-abiding gun owners.

"As the officer didn't tell Roger to drop the weapon before shooting, was the officer trained to give verbal warnings? Did the officer try to initiate life-saving measures? Was the officer trained to deal with law-abiding citizens who are registered gun owners?" said Fortson's family in a statement released by their lawyer, Ben Crump.

Fortson, a senior airman with the US Air Force, died on May 3 in his apartment near the airbase after a deputy from the Okaloosa Sheriff's Department shot him after entering the wrong apartment while responding to a service call.

The police said that the deputy reacted in self-defense after seeing Fortson armed with a gun, reports said.

Crump, a civil rights attorney representing the family, says in the released statement that Fortson was on a FaceTime call with his girlfriend at the time of the encounter. The girlfriend, who remains unidentified, is to hold a press conference in the coming days and is expected to

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release a portion of the recording, which was taken at the time of the shooting, Crump added.
The statement by Fortson's family comes in response to viewing bodycam footage released on Thursday, though heavily redacted.
According to a statement by the Okaloosa Sheriff's office, the offending officer has been placed on administrative leave while the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the State Attorney's Office conduct reviews of the shooting.

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US Army Orders $451Mln Upgrade For Multiple Rocket Artillery Launchers - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The US Army has awarded Lockheed Martin a $451 million contract to recapitalize more M270 mobile artillery rocket launchers expanding its force, the Department of Defense announced in a press release.
"The US Army awarded Lockheed Martin a $451 million contract to recapitalize additional M270 systems expanding its domestic fleet of launchers and providing upgrades for global partners," the release said on Thursday.
The modernization program will add additional capability to the M270-series launchers and maintain their capability for NATO forces for decades to come, Lockheed Martin Vice President for Precision Fires Jay Price said in the release.
"Recapitalization includes complete overhaul and upgrades to the systems with brand new engines, improved armored cabs, and the new Common Fire Control System (CFCS) which will provide compatibility with current and future MLRS [Multi-Launch Rocket Systems] Family of Munitions (MFOM)," the release said.
Lockheed Martin's next-generation Extended-Range GMLRS and Precision Strike Missile (PrSM) can only be fired by M270A2 and HIMARS launchers, it noted.

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President Biden Calls For Boeing, IFAA I-66 to Resume Talks After Lockout - Statement

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) — US President Joe Biden in a social media post called for renewed negotiations between Boeing and the International Association of Firefighters union (IFAA) chapter I-66 to resolve the lockout and secure fair compensation.
"I'm concerned by reports that Boeing locked out IAFF I-66 members. I encourage folks to return to the table to secure a deal that benefits Boeing and gets these firefighters the pay and benefits they deserve," Biden said via X on Thursday.
Biden added that collective bargaining is a right beneficial to both employers and employees.
According to reports, last week Boeing locked out approximately 125 firefighters represented by the IFAA chapter I-66. This action came after negotiations for a new contract reached a

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deadlock. The previous contract expired on March 1, but the firefighters, stationed at Boeing's Seattle-area plants continued working under its old terms while negotiations persisted.

The report added that talks, facilitated by a federal mediator, stalled when the firefighters rejected what Boeing termed as its final offer. This disagreement came to a head just minutes before the lockout started on Friday night. Despite the standoff, Boeing expressed a continued commitment to reaching an agreement.

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US Senators Introduce Act That Would Pull UN Funding Over Palestinian Rights, Privileges

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - 25 US Senators introduced the No Official Palestine Entry (NOPE) Act on Thursday, which threatens to cut off assistance to the United Nations if it gives more rights and privileges to the Palestinian Authority, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said in a release.

"The Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) are deeply flawed, plagued by corruption, and incite terrorism through the egregious 'pay for slay' program. Giving the PLO a voice at the United Nations is preposterous and fails to account for the PLO's role in inspiring generations of Palestinians to support acts of terror. This legislation will ensure taxpayer dollars are not used to give the PLO credibility," said Senator Jim Risch, ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee.

According to the release, US law currently prohibits US Funding to organizations which give the Palestine Liberation Organization full membership or standing as a member state. The Nope Act amends the existing law to include organizations that offer the PLO "any status, rights, or privileges beyond observer status."

The office of the UN official spokesman declined Sputnik's request to comment on the subject.

The move comes just as the Palestinian Authority is expected to pursue a vote in the United Nations General Assembly to enhance its current status at the UN to garner more rights and privileges normally only granted to full members, the release added.

On October 7, 2023, Palestinian movement Hamas launched a large-scale rocket attack against Israel and breached the border, attacking both civilian neighborhoods and military bases. Nearly 1,200 people in Israel were killed and some 240 others abducted during the attack. Israel launched retaliatory strikes, ordered a complete blockade of Gaza, and started a ground incursion into the Palestinian enclave with the declared goal of eliminating Hamas fighters and rescuing the hostages. Over 34,700 people have been killed so far by Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip, according to local authorities. More than 100 hostages are still believed to be held by Hamas in Gaza.

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Trump 'Hush Money' Case Judge Refuses Motion for Mistrial - Reports

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - New York State Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan denied a motion from former US President Donald Trump's defense team to declare a mistrial in the so-called hush-money case against him, CNN reported.

Merchan rejected Trump's lawyer's argument that adult film star Stormy Daniels changed her account last week during testimony as a witness in the case, the report said on Thursday.

Trump is accused of falsifying business records related to an alleged hush money payment to cover up purported relations with Daniels. Trump has denied both the charges and the relations.

Trump has characterized the case as a form of election interference amid the 2024 US presidential race.

Trump called Merchan corrupt and conflicted after the court adjourned on Thursday, the report said.

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Pistorius Says Germany Wants to Contribute to 'Rules-Based Order' in Indo-Pacific

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) – Germany intends to contribute to the "rules-based order" in the Indo-Pacific by enhancing cooperation with partners in the region and enforcing UN sanctions against North Korea, German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said during an event hosted by Johns Hopkins University.

"Germany is committed to making its contribution to the rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific as well by enhancing our cooperation with valued partners in the region, by upgrading our participation in military exercises, but also by contributing to the maritime and enforcement of UN sanctions against North Korea," Pistorius said on Thursday.

Pistorius noted that Europe is well aware that the United States is currently shifting its attention and resources toward the Indo-Pacific region and wants to do the same.

To this end, already this year Germany plans to deploy a frigate, a supply ship, and an Air Force detachment to the Indo-Pacific, Pistorius added.

Earlier this week, Pistorius said that the German army may conduct its first joint exercises with the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force in 2025, Japanese news agency Kyodo reported.

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Times Square Machete Attacker Sentenced to 27 Years in Prison - US Justice Department

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - A man who attacked law enforcement officers in Times Square on New Year's Eve 2022 was sentenced to 27 years in prison for the incident, the US Justice Department said in a statement.

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"Trevor Bickford, 20, of Wells, Maine, was sentenced to 324 months in prison for attempting to kill officers and employees of the US Government and persons assisting them during his brazen attack using a machete-style knife against three New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers in Times Square on Dec. 31, 2022," the Justice Department said on Thursday.

Bickford pleaded guilty on January 11 to terrorism charges, the statement said.

Bickford's attack was inspired by radical Islamic extremism, the statement said. Bickford consumed materials that promoted the Taliban (under UN sanctions) and a spiritual mentor of the al-Qaeda terrorist group (banned in Russia), the statement said.

Bickford declared that he intended to kill as many military-aged men employed by the US government as he could before becoming a martyr, the statement said.

The conviction and sentencing of Bickford demonstrates the US law enforcement's resolve to protect the country and its core values, the statement said.

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German Defense Chief Says Berlin Delivered One-Quarter of Its Patriot Systems to Ukraine

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) – Germany has already delivered one-quarter of its own Patriot systems to Ukraine, but intends to send more in the future, German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said during an event hosted by Johns Hopkins University.

"We are delivering one-quarter of our own Patriot systems to our Ukrainian friends, and we will not stop here," Pistorius said on Thursday.

According to the German Ministry of Defense, Berlin has so far delivered to Ukraine two Patriot systems, including two launchers and missiles. In April, Pistorius announced that Berlin intended to send one more Patriot system to Kiev.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said in April that the country's reserves of air defense systems had been exhausted and that Berlin, together with its partners, was looking to buy these systems for Ukraine from third countries.

Russia has consistently warned the West against continued arms deliveries to Ukraine, arguing they will do nothing but escalate hostilities and prolong the conflict. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has warned that any military cargo will be a legitimate target for Russia.

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USAID Completes Delivery of 7 Autotransformers to Grow Ukraine's Energy Capacity-Statement

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) — The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has completed the delivery of 7 autotransformers to Ukraine, expanding their energy capacity, USAID Administrator Samantha Power said on Thursday.

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"Recently, USAID completed the delivery of 7 autotransformers – a step in expanding their energy capacity," Power said via X on Thursday.

Power added that Ukraine requires critical assistance to maintain the flow of electricity to millions of its citizens across the country.

Yesterday, the Russian armed forces launched a massive strike on energy facilities, as well as enterprises of the military-industrial complex of Ukraine in response to attempts by Kiev to damage Russian energy facilities.

As a result of the strike, Ukraine's ability to produce military products, as well as transfer Western weapons and military equipment to the line of combat contact, was significantly reduced.

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TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) -

ISRAEL MILITARY OPERATIONS IN GAZA

* Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir said on Thursday that the Palestinian movement Hamas loves US President Joe Biden in a bristling response to the United States' decision to hold back delivery of some weapons to Israel.
* Biden believes that Israel "smashing into Rafah" will not advance its objective of defeating Hamas, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said.
* The United States does not have intelligence indicating that Hamas plans to target an aid pier off the coast of the Gaza Strip, Defense Department spokesperson Pat Ryder said.
* The United States has not seen the number of civilian casualties in the Gaza Strip "come down far enough" amid Israel's military operations there, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.
* The policies of European Union institutions in the Gaza Strip have shaken the trust in "European values" as Islamophobia is on the rise across the continent, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said.

UKRAINE CONFLICT

* Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has signed bills into law to extend the mobilization and martial law in the country, according to information published on the parliament's website on Thursday.
* Germany intends to supply Ukraine with three US-made HIMARS multiple launch rocket systems, Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said.
* Some NATO troops have been deployed in Ukraine and the alliance is trying to assist Kiev as much as it can, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said.
* Tusk's statement confirms that the collective West is waging a hybrid was against Russia, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Sputnik.

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* The US Army erred in awarding some noncompetitive contracts related to the Ukraine aid efforts, the Defense Department's Office of Inspector General said in an audit report.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

* The B-2 Stealth Bomber, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and F-15 Eagle aircraft have been approved to carry and deliver new B-61 nuclear bombs, the Defense Department's Office of Inspector General announced in a report on Thursday.
* Russian President Vladimir Putin said Belarus would join Russia during the second stage of military drills to practice use of non-strategic nuclear weapons given that the country hosts tactical nuclear capabilities on its territory.
* The world has edged closer than ever to a nuclear disaster, but Moscow and Minsk consider tactical nuclear weapons only as a means of deterrence, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said.

PROTRESTS IN ARMENIA

* The leader of the current protests in Armenia, Primate of the Diocese of Tavush of the Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, said on Thursday that Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan should resign within an hour and he is ready to discuss that decision with him.
* Opposition parties in the Armenian parliament are ready to start impeachment proceedings against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, a senior Armenian cleric who leads the ongoing protests against border delimitation with Azerbaijan said.

US RESTRICTIONS ON CHINESE ENTITIES

* The US Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) on Thursday imposed export restrictions on 37 Chinese entities for allegedly acting contrary to US national security and foreign policy interests, BIS said in a final rule released on Thursday.

VENEZUELA-GUYANA TENSIONS

* The US Embassy in Guyana said that two F/A-18F jets embarked on the US aircraft carrier George Washington will fly over the county's capital Georgetown.
* Venezuela categorically rejects repeated US provocations as Washington plans to fly two F-18 jets over the skies of Guyana, Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez said.

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Natrona County, Wyoming Faces Record Unnatural Deaths in 2024 - Reports

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) — Natrona County Coroner Jim Whipps reported a surge in unnatural deaths in Natrona County in 2024, with a significant rise in suicides, the Cowboy State Daily reported.

According to the report published on Wednesday, the rise in the number of unnatural deaths

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began last fall and continues to increase, affecting various aspects of community health and safety.

The report said that the suicide rate in the county is also escalating, projecting to surpass previous highs with an estimate of 36 to 40 suicides expected this year, based on the 12 cases recorded in the first four months.

In addition to the increase in deaths, the coroner's office is facing nearly double the usual number of unclaimed bodies, with issues often linked to family estrangement or financial difficulties, prompting commissioners to take over financing to alleviate the burden on affected families, the report added.

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US Specifically Paused Weapons Shipment to Israel Including 2000-Pound Bombs - Ryder

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) — The US specifically paused a weapons shipment to Israel, including eighteen hundred 2000-pound bombs and seventeen hundred 500-pound bombs, Pentagon Press Secretary Pat Ryder said on Thursday.

"Specifically, we [the US] paused one shipment of weapons consisting of 1800 2000-pound bombs, and 1700 500-pound bombs," Ryder said during a press briefing.

On Wednesday, Biden said in an interview that the United States will go as far as to stop the flow of weapons to Israel should the Netanyahu war cabinet decide on a major military operation in the Gaza Strip.

US Secretary of State Lloyd Austin confirmed Wednesday that the US has paused one shipment of "high payload munitions" to Israel and is "reviewing near-term" shipments amid Israel's heightened offensive in Rafah.

It remains unclear whether the suspension of weapons deliveries to Israel will make any difference and cause Israel to call off its Rafah operation. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly stated that his country stands ready to proceed with its military plans no matter what Washington or any other country says or does.

On Monday, Israel started a military operation in the eastern parts of Rafah and took control of the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing with Egypt. Hamas said that it had agreed to the provisions of the ceasefire deal proposed by Egypt and Qatar mediators, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the truce deal unacceptable. Over a million people are believed to be sheltering in the city.

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Trump Reiterates Debate Challenge to Biden, Suggests White House as Possible Venue

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WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump on Thursday reiterated his challenge to President Joe Biden to hold a debate ahead of the 2024 US presidential election, suggesting the White House as a possible venue for the event.

"Dear Joe, now that you've committed to Debate on the now dying Howard Stern Show, no less, let's set it up right now. I'm ready to go anywhere that you are. We could do it in DC, even pinpoint the White House, or in New York when your Radical Left Fascists are finished with ELECTION INTERFERENCE against your Political Opponent, ME," Trump said in a statement via Truth Social.

Last month, Trump challenged Biden to a debate anywhere and anytime, after Biden told Stern that he would be willing to debate Trump.

Independent presidential candidate Robert Kennedy Jr. also challenged Trump to a debate at the Libertarian Party's national convention later this month, although Trump has yet to respond to the challenge.

Kennedy said on Wednesday that he could beat both Trump and Biden in a debate, even if afflicted with multiple brain worms; US media reported earlier on Wednesday that doctors found a dead parasite in Kennedy's brain after he experienced memory loss and mental fogginess in 2010.

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Pentagon Says Expects Gaza Aid Piers to Move Into Position in 'Very Near Future'

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The United States expects temporary aid piers off the coast of the Gaza Strip to move into position soon, Pentagon Press Secretary Pat Ryder said on Thursday.

"We expect these temporary piers to be put into position in the very near future, pending suitable security and weather conditions," Ryder said during a press briefing.

In March, the US announced its intention to deploy joint logistics over-the-shore (JLOTS) capability off the coast of the Gaza Strip to help facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid into the Palestinian enclave.

Earlier this month, US Central Command said that it moved the piers and associated vessels to the Port of Ashdod due to sea conditions, where work to assemble the structures continued.

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Pentagon Says US Has No Intel Indicating Hamas Plans to Target Gaza Aid Pier

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The United States does not have intelligence indicating that Palestinian group Hamas plans to target an aid pier off the coast of the Gaza Strip, Pentagon Press Secretary Pat Ryder said on Thursday.

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In March, the US announced its intention to deploy joint logistics over-the-shore (JLOTS) capability off the coast of the Gaza Strip to help facilitate the flow of aid into the Palestinian enclave.

"We have no intelligence at this point in time to indicate that Hamas is actively targeting JLOTS or humanitarian assistance," Ryder said during a press briefing.

The US Defense Department has not held discussions with Hamas about the project, Ryder said.

The pier is expected to be moved into position in the very near future, pending security and weather conditions, Ryder said.

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B-2 Bomber, F-35, F-15 Jets Approved to Carry Nuclear Gravity Bombs - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The B-2 Stealth Bomber, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and F-15 Eagle aircraft have been approved to carry and deliver new B-61 nuclear bombs, the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Inspector General (OIG) announced in a new report on Thursday.

"The Department of Defense OIG evaluated the extent to which the Air Force's nuclear design certification of the F-15E, B-2 and F-35A to carry the B61-12 nuclear bomb complied with DoD and Air Force requirements," the report said.

The OIG found that the Air Force complied with the Nuclear Design Certification requirements for the F-15E, B-2 and F-35A aircraft to carry the B61-12 nuclear bomb in accordance with Defense Department and Air Force requirements, the report said.

However, although the Air Force complied with these requirements, the Air Force's Independent Verification and Validation processes could be improved with detailed guidance to ensure independence, the report added.

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Veterans Administration Wrongly Gave $10.8Mln Bonuses to Its Own Executives - Report

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The US Veterans Administration (VA) has improperly awarded almost $11 million in bonuses to its own executives, a report by the organization's Office of Inspector General (OIG) said on Thursday.

"In total, VA awarded $10.8 million in CSIs to 182 senior executives (ranging from nearly $39,000 to over $100,000 each) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) at VA's central office," the report said.

The Inspector General concluded that almost none of the payments, all given under the VA's critical skills awards program, were justified, the report said.

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"The OIG found the award of CSIs to nearly all VHA and VBA central office executives lacked adequate justification and was inconsistent with the PACT [Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics] Act and VA policy," the report added.

These failures were due, in part, to breakdowns in leadership and controls at multiple levels of the Veterans Administration, according to the report.

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More Announcements on US Military Aid for Ukraine in Next Few Weeks - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The United States will be making more announcements regarding military aid for Ukraine in the next few weeks with funds provided by the newly adopted national security supplemental, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said on Thursday.

"We've started to see the money that was passed in the supplemental flow. I can assure you there will be more announcements coming in the next few weeks," said State Department spokesman Matthew Miller.

Biden in April signed into law a $95 billion national security supplemental that provides about $60 billion in funds for Ukraine.

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Venezuela Rejects US Provocations After Announcement of F-18 Flights Over Guyana -Official

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - Venezuela categorically rejects repeated US provocations as Washington plans to fly two F-18 jets over the skies of Guyana, Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez said on Thursday.

Earlier in the day, the US Embassy in Guyana said that two F/A-18F jets embarked on the US aircraft carrier George Washington would fly over the county's capital Georgetown. The flight is taking place amid heightened tensions between Venezuela and Guyana over the Essequibo region.

"We had already warned about the threat to regional peace posed by the presence of the USS George Washington in the Caribbean," Padrino Lopez said via X. "Now they announce the takeoff of F-18 planes to fly over 'Georgetown and its vicinities'. The Bolivarian Nacional Armed Forces categorically reject the repeated provocations by the [US] Southern Command."

Padrino Lopez said the provocations could only happen with the complicity of Guyana, a country that has accepted the role of being a new North American colony.

Venezuela's air defense system remains activated to repeal any potential violation of its territory, including that of the oil- and mineral-rich Essequibo region, Padrino Lopez said.

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Essequibo was recognized as part of Venezuela when the country gained independence from Spain in 1845. However, the United Kingdom filed in 1899 an arbitration claim to recognize Essequibo as part of its then-Caribbean colony of British Guiana and won the case.

Independent Guyana cited the 1899 Arbitral Award in its 2018 International Court of Justice suit against Venezuela to reassert its claim of sovereignty over the disputed territory.

In December 2023, Venezuela held a referendum in which almost 96% of the population voted to incorporate the Essequibo region into the country.

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US, EU Continue to Work to Ensure Russian Assets Used for Ukraine's Benefit– State Dept.

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) – The United States continues to be engaged with European partners to ensure that Russian assets remain frozen and used for Ukraine's benefit, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Thursday.

"We continue to work with our European partners to ensure that we use those [Russian] assets that remain frozen and that will remain frozen, that we use those assets for Ukraine's benefit but I don't have any further announcements to make," Miller said during a press briefing.

The Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU said on Wednesday that the EU ambassadors have agreed in principle on the use of extraordinary revenues from Russia's immobilized assets to provide military support to Ukraine.

Bloomberg reported earlier in May that the United States is holding talks with allied states on leading a group that would give up to $50 billion in assistance to Ukraine which the windfall profits of Russian frozen assets would repay.

The G7, spearheaded by the US and the EU, has been discussing legal ways to confiscate Russian assets since the start of Russia's military operation in Ukraine in early 2022. Moscow has criticized the efforts to seize its sovereign assets as an act of stealing and a violation of international law. The European Central Bank has warned that seizure poses reputational risks to the euro in the long term and has suggested looking beyond an isolated conflict.

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us state department says can assure there will be more announcements on military aid for ukraine in next few weeks

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Gaza Aid Must Be Delivered to End Points, Not Left at Border - UN Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, May 9 (Sputnik) - The parties to the conflict in the Gaza Strip have an obligation to deliver humanitarian aid to people in need and that obligation does not end by dropping off the aid at the border, United Nations spokesperson Farhan Haq said on Thursday.

The United Nations has been reiterating to the parties that their obligation to facilitate humanitarian aid does not end at the border or at the drop off, Haq said.

"Their responsibility continues because aid has to safely reach the people who need it. So, simply dropping it off at a place is not sufficient," Haq said.

The spokesperson also noted that the truck drivers who deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza operate in very difficult and tense conditions.

On October 7, 2023, the Palestinian movement Hamas attacked Israel from Gaza, killing more than 1,100 Israelis, both military and civilians, and abducting some 240 others.

Israel implemented a complete blockade of Gaza, undertook a bombing campaign and then invaded the Palestinian enclave with a declared goal of eliminating Hamas and rescuing the hostages. Some 35,000 Palestinians have been killed, 78,000 injured and at least 1.8 million displaced, according to the local authorities.

International aid organizations have reported that the population of Gaza is experiencing severe malnutrition and famine amid Israel's blockade and military operations.

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US Has Not Seen Civilian Casualties in Gaza 'Come Down Far Enough' - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The United States has not seen the number of civilian casualties in the Gaza Strip "come down far enough" amid Israel's military operation there, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

"We haven't seen [civilian casualties] come down far enough," said Miller during a press briefing on Thursday.

On Monday, Israel started an operation in the eastern parts of the city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip and took control of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt.

Israel decided to start the operation despite the Palestinian movement Hamas agreeing to the terms of a ceasefire deal proposed by Egypt and Qatar. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the deal unacceptable.

Some 1.4 million Palestinians are believed to be sheltering in Rafah.

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US Court Denies Hunter Biden Appeal in Firearms Case - Filing

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - A US Circuit Court denied an appeal by Hunter Biden on Thursday in a case involving his alleged illegal purchase of a firearm, setting the stage for a trial in June.

"This appeal is dismissed because the defendant has not shown the District Court's orders are appealable before final judgment," the filing said.

Biden is accused of lying on a firearms purchase form about his drug use. Biden attempted to have the charges dismissed on procedural grounds.

A scheduling order was also filed for the case on Thursday, setting a three- to six-day jury trial for June 3. The order also sets a pretrial conference for May 24, for which the order demands Biden's presence.

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Moscow Values Contribution of Canadians to Victory Over Nazi Germany -Stepanov

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - Russia values the contribution of Canadians to the defeat of Nazi Germany, and the brotherhood in arms between the two countries during WWII serves as an unshakable foundation of bilateral ties, the Russian ambassador to Canada Oleg Stepanov said in a video message on Thursday.

"The memory of brotherhood in arms between the USSR and Canada during the war remains the unshakable foundation of bilateral relations," Stepanov said. "We value the contribution to the common victory of the brave sons and daughters of the "country of the maple leaf," who contributed to the defeat of the troops of Nazi Germany, and who participated in the Arctic convoys."

On the occasion of the 79th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War, the part of World War II fought by the Soviet Union from 1941-1945, Stepanov stressed that the Victory Day holiday is sacred for Russia as there is no family in Russia that has been spared the grief of war.

"The long-awaited Victory came at the cost of colossal sacrifices and hardships. Millions of Soviet citizens gave their lives in the battles with the invaders, died during the occupation, in death camps, and under bombing," he stated. "The heroic valor of the defenders of the Motherland, their unbending will are forever imprinted in our genetic code."

The patriotism of the people, Stepanov went on to say, allowed the country to maintain its independence and save humanity from the "brown plague."

"Unfortunately, today the followers of the Nazis are raising their heads again," he said. "The Bandera-SS regime in Ukraine and its sponsors are trying to take revenge, including for the defeat in World War II. They are trying to rewrite history, whitewashing the Nazi executioners and their accomplices."

"Russia cannot allow this," Stepanov added. "And therefore it again entered into battle with the forces of evil, defending the truth, traditions and values. We continue the sacred battle of our

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fathers and grandfathers, who showed an example of unbending courage. Contrary to the ideas of those who seek to inflict a “strategic defeat” on our country in favor of their geopolitical ambitions, victory will be ours! This is a duty to our great ancestors and to future generations.”

Victory Day is a major Russian holiday that commemorates the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in 1945. A parade of service people and military equipment has been held on Red Square in the center of Moscow, as well as in other Russian cities, every year on May 9 to honor the memory of Soviet citizens who died during World War II.

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US Army Erred in Awarding Noncompetitive Ukraine Aid Contracts - Inspector General

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The US Army erred in awarding some noncompetitive contracts related to Ukraine aid efforts, the US Defense Department’s Inspector General said in an audit report.

In general, Army contracting officials awarded noncompetitive contracts "in accordance with federal, Defense Department and Army regulations and guidance," the report said. "However, we identified some administrative errors in the awarding of noncompetitive contracts."

Contracting officers failed to include previous justification for consideration for follow-on acquisitions for three contracts, the report said. Contracting officers also failed to specify the authority for the noncompetitive award in the contract in four instances, the report said.

Moreover, contracting officers failed to publicize the justification for the noncompetitive award for 10 contracts, the report said. Contracting officers failed to obtain justification approval before issuing a solicitation or awarding a contract in three cases, the report said.

Officials pointed to administrative oversight and a lack of awareness as reasons why the errors happened, the report said.

The administrative errors did not impact the validity of the noncompetitive award of the contracts, the report said. However, Army contracting officers can improve in meeting federal, Defense Department and Army regulations and guidance when awarding noncompetitive contracts, the report added.

The Inspector General recommends developing and implementing a quality control tool and training contracting officials to ensure proper documentation and adherence to regulations when awarding noncompetitive contracts, according to the report.

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Republican Senators Blast Biden for Restricting Weapons to Israel Over Operation in Rafah

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - A group of Republican US Senators held a press conference on Thursday to criticize President Joe Biden for his administration’s decision to withhold some

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military aid from Israel.

On Wednesday, Biden said that he would restrict the supply of weapons to Israel if the country launches an incursion into the city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip. Israel began military operations in the eastern outskirts of Rafah on Monday after issuing an evacuation advisory to residents of the area.

"Israel has to defeat Hamas in Rafah to win. Hamas wins if it survives in Rafah. And Joe Biden has threatened to withhold weapons from Israel for fighting in Rafah. Therefore, Joe Biden objectively favors a Hamas victory over Israel," Senator Tom Cotton said.

Senator Joni Ernst called Biden a "propaganda tool" being used by Hamas. Senator Ted Cruz said that Biden is the biggest friend on the planet to Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran. Senator Lindsey Graham urged Biden to reconsider his position on the matter.

Earlier on Thursday, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said that the Biden administration hopes it will not have to make decisions about weapons shipments to Israel, but will have to do so if Israel enters Rafah.

Biden does not believe that entering Rafah will help advance Israel's objective of defeating Hamas.

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Burns Coming Home From Cairo After Latest Talks To Close Gaps In Hostage Talks Fail -Kirby

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) — CIA Director William Burns is heading home following discussions in Cairo where gaps in hostage negotiations persisted, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Thursday.

"And I know he [Burns] went into his discussions in Cairo with that in mind, but the text was close enough that those gaps could have been closed. Now clearly, they have not been closed, as you and I are speaking...And Director Burns is on his way back home," Kirby said during a press briefing.

Kirby added that despite setbacks, discussions in Cairo are ongoing, and efforts to resolve the hostage situation have not ceased.

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Canada Registers 87 Wildfires Nationwide - Emergency Preparedness Minister

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - More than 85 wildfires have been registered throughout Canada, the vast majority raging in the western parts of the country, Emergency Preparedness Minister Harjit Sajjan said on Thursday.

The data was provided during a joint press conference held by Sajjan, Minister of Environment

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Steven Guilbeault and Minister of Natural Resources Jonathan Wilkinson where they provided an update on the 2024 wildfire season forecast.

"We urge everyone to be prepared … to date there are 87 wildfires burning and six are burning out of control. Approximately 1.47 million hectares have been burned so far," Sajjan said.

Current key areas of concern include the interior and northeastern parts of British Columbia due to the presence of highly flammable material; northern Alberta, which is experiencing several small and/or out of control fires; and the southern Northwest Territories due to the arrival of drier weather, Sajjan said.

Air quality remains high despite the heightened risks, but the situation could change in the coming week due to a rapid warming trend in western Canada, Sajjan said.

Despite the concerning situation in western Canada, the government remains hopeful for other regions, Sajjan added.

The Canadian government declared the 2023 wildfire season as the worst on record in the country's history, with some 18.5 million hectares of land lost to more than 6,500 fires.

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US, World Could See More Trade War, Output Risks if Trump Reelected - Fitch

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The United States and the world could see more trade disruptions and reduced output if former President Donald Trump is reelected in November, Fitch Ratings said on Thursday.

"Aggressive tariff rises under a possible second Donald Trump presidency would likely result in a reduction in US and global output in comparison to an illustrative baseline scenario with no further increases," Fitch said in a report.

Trump has made new tariffs a centerpiece of his potential White House return, with some economists saying he could try to force these into existence much more rapidly than thought.

Trump's allies are exploring an array of legally untested and potentially disruptive options that some experts say could prove to be a second destabilizing force for global markets on top of duties.

"The risk of a renewed US-led trade war in 2025 is increasing, with Trump flagging possible increases in tariffs on China of up to 60% and an across-the-board 10% tariff on all US imports," the report said.

Conducting a series of macroeconomic simulation scenarios by using the Oxford Economics Global Economic Model as a base, the ratings agency said it had estimated the potential impact to US and world GDP from a second Trump presidency.

In scenarios where tariffs are hiked aggressively, the United States would see short-term hits of between 0.4% and 0.8% to its GDP, report said.

"If the US's trading partners retaliate with tariff rises of their own, the impact would be larger - up to 1.1% - and more persistent," the report said. "Higher tariffs would mean higher inflation of up to 0.4 pp [percentage points], but only in the short run. Over the medium term, the impact on inflation would be negative, as weaker demand translates to easing price pressures."

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China, and particularly Canada and Mexico, could see the largest hits to GDP, averaging 1.8% in the worst-case scenario, the report said.

"The latter results reflect large-scale trade linkages with the US relative to Canadian and Mexican GDP," the report said.

Fitch pointed out that its findings aligned with empirical evidence from Trump's first term, which witnessed a rise in trade protectionism on a scale unseen since the 1930s.

The bulk of Trump's policy measures then were focused toward China, the report said.

The impact to the US economy included declines in GDP and an increase in prices, the report added.

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Biden Will Have to Make Decisions About Arms Shipments If Israel Invades Rafah – Kirby

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) — US President Joe Biden will have to make future decisions about future weapons shipments if Israel invades Rafah, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Thursday during a press briefing.

"I think the President was crystal clear last night, that if they [Israel] do smash into Rafah, go in and invade in a major way, then no, he's going to have to make future decisions, but again, we [the US] hope it doesn't come to that," Kirby said.

On Wednesday, Biden said during a CNN interview that the United States will not supply weapons to Israel if that country's military goes into Rafah in the Gaza Strip.

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US Wants to See Rafah Crossing 'Opened Up Now' – White House

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) – The United States wants to see the Rafah Crossing reopened now to resume the flow of humanitarian aid and fuel to the Gaza Strip, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Thursday.

"We want to see the Rafah crossing opened up now," Kirby said during a press briefing.

Kirby emphasized that the White House considers it unacceptable that the crossing remains closed for the delivery of fuel, food, water, and medicine.

On Monday, Israel started a military operation in the eastern parts of Rafah and took control of the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing with Egypt. Hamas said that it had agreed to the provisions of the ceasefire deal proposed by Egypt and Qatar mediators, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the truce deal unacceptable. Over a million people are believed to be sheltering in the city.

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US, Russia Collaborate in Space, Military Ties Informal But Ongoing- Space Ops Commander

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The United States continues cooperating with Russia in the civil space arena, and while the military relationship may be perceived as "informal," it is ongoing, Lt. Gen. David N. Miller Jr., Commander of Space Operations Command told reporters on Thursday.

"We continue in the civil space arena to cooperate with the Russian Federation. NASA continues to work with the Russian Federation on the International Space Station, and partial recovery of astronauts coordination- I think that that continues with Roscosmos. And I think that if you can speak to NASA specifically, I think that they see that that's an important relationship they want to sustain and keep going," Miller said.

"Our partnership from the military perspective with the Russians, may be not as continuous or formal, per se, but that doesn't mean that there isn't any," he added.

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US Space Command Expects China to Grow, Integrate Space into Military

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) – The US Space Operations Command expects China will continue to grow and integrate space activities into their military forces, its commander Lt. Gen. David Miller said on Thursday.

"I think you'll see that continued growth and integration of space into their military forces. If anything, they are either beating or meeting their projections from five or ten years ago," Miller said at a press briefing.

Miller called China's military "very capable."

He cited as examples hundreds of orbiting ISR satellites dedicated to surveillance; electromagnetic warfare capabilities to disrupt satellite communications; and high-energy laser systems to deny or disrupt surveillance and reconnaissance systems.

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Space Operations Commander Says US Not Seeking Conflict in Space Domain

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The United States is not seeking any conflict in the space domain, Lt. Gen. David N. Miller Jr., Commander of Space Operations Commander, told reporters on Thursday.

"We are not looking for nor do we seek any conflict in, through or from the space domain,"

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Miller said. “Our job is to deter conflict and not seek it out.”

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Biden Believes ‘Smashing Into Rafah’ Will Not Advance Objective of Defeating Hamas – Kirby

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden believes that Israel “smashing into Rafah” will not advance its objective of defeating Hamas, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Thursday.
“Smashing into Rafah, in Biden's view, will not advance that objective [of defeating Hamas],” Kirby said during a press briefing.
Kirby added that the Biden administration still hopes Israel does not proceed with its major military operation in Rafah.

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US Imposes Export Restrictions on 37 Chinese Entities - Commerce Department

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - The US Commerce Department’s Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) is imposing export restrictions on 37 Chinese entities for allegedly acting contrary to US national security and foreign policy interests, BIS said in a final rule released Thursday.
“In this final rule, the Bureau of Industry and Security amends the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) by adding 37 entities under 37 entries to the Entity List. These entries are listed on the Entity List under the destinations of the People’s Republic of China (China) and have been determined by the US Government to be acting contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the United States,” BIS said in a document submitted to the Federal Register.
BIS said some of the entities were blacklisted due to their alleged involvement in "the shipment of controlled items to Russia," while others allegedly support China's high-altitude balloon program or its quantum technology capabilities, or have tried to acquire US-origin items for Chinese military entities.

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us not seeking conflict with russia, our job is to deter it not to seek it - commander of us space operations

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US House Lawmakers Kept 'Uniparty' in Control by Blocking Effort to Oust Johnson - Greene

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - US House lawmakers voted to keep the so-called uniparty in control of the chamber by blocking her effort to oust Mike Johnson as House Speaker, US Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene said on Thursday.

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives tabled Greene's measure to vacate Johnson as speaker, with support from majorities of both parties.

"Congress, which is paid by the American people and sent to represent them, didn't stop the border crisis, didn't stop funding foreign wars, didn't protect America's energy industry, didn't cut spending to reduce inflation, didn't defund the weaponized government, instead Congress protected itself and kept the Uniparty control over the People's House," Greene said in a statement via social media platform X.

The status quo in the US Congress has done nothing for the American people or solved problems on serious issues, Greene said.

Critics who feared the motion to vacate Johnson could lead to Democrats gaining control of the chamber were proven wrong, Greene said.

Former US President and presumptive 2024 Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said on Wednesday that he did not support Greene's effort to oust Johnson at this time and instead urged unity within the Republican Party. However, Trump said that the House of Representatives may be in a position to vacate Johnson in the future.

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US Has No Right to Criticize Israel's Brutality After All Crimes It Had Committed - Milley

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley said on Thursday that he believes the United States has no right to criticize Israel for its brutality in the Gaza Strip given the long list of war crimes committed throughout its history, including in Japan and Iraq.

"Before we all get self-righteous about what Israel is doing … we shouldn't forget that we United States killed a lot of innocent people in Mosul, in Raqqa, that we the United States killed 12,000 innocent French civilians," Milley said at the Ash Carter Exchange on Innovation and National Security on Wednesday. "We destroyed 69 Japanese cities, not including Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We slaughtered people in massive numbers, innocent people who had nothing to do with their government, men, women and children."

Milley's attempt to justify Israeli brutality in Gaza, where some 35,000 civilians have so far been killed in Israeli strikes, most of them women and children, comes amid mass student protests and accusations that the Biden administration is supporting the genocide of Palestinians in

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Gaza.

The US State Department continues to claim that Israel's actions in Gaza do not amount to genocide and that the International Criminal Court has no jurisdiction over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and therefore has no right to issue arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and other senior officials.

On Monday, Israel started a military operation in the eastern parts of Rafah and took control of the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing with Egypt.

The Palestinian movement Hamas said that it had agreed to the terms of the ceasefire deal proposed by the Egypt and Qatar mediators, but Netanyahu called the truce deal unacceptable. Some 1.4 million Palestinians are believed to be sheltering in Rafah.

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RPT - Trump Slams Biden for Allegedly Abandoning Israel After Some Weapon Deliveries Halted

(Corrects Austin's title in para 4)

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) – Donald Trump on Thursday slammed US President Joe Biden for allegedly abandoning Israel in its war on Hamas after Washington halted the shipment of some weapons to its ally amid tensions over Israel's plans to conduct a major ground operation in Rafah.

"What Biden is doing with respect to Israel is disgraceful. If any Jewish person voted for Joe Biden, they should be ashamed of themselves. He's totally abandoned Israel," Trump told reporters before entering a court in New York City.

On Wednesday, Biden said in an interview that the United States will go as far as to stop the flow of weapons to Israel should the Netanyahu war cabinet decide on a major military operation in the Gaza Strip.

US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin confirmed Wednesday that the US has paused one shipment of "high payload munitions" to Israel and is "reviewing near-term" shipments amid Israel's heightened offensive in Rafah.

It remains unclear whether the suspension of weapons deliveries to Israel will make any difference and make Israel call off its Rafah operation. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly stated that his country stands ready to proceed with its military plans no matter what Washington or any other country says or does.

On Monday, Israel started a military operation in the eastern parts of Rafah and took control of the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing with Egypt. Hamas said that it had agreed to the provisions of the ceasefire deal proposed by Egypt and Qatar mediators, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the truce deal unacceptable. Over a million people are believed to be sheltering in the city.

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Canada Fines Binance $4.4Mln for Failing to Register as Foreign Money Service - Watchdog

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Sputnik) - Binance Holdings Ltd., which operates the Binance cryptocurrency exchange platform, has been fined C$6 million (US$4.4 million) for failing to register as a foreign money service business, the watchdog Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Center of Canada (FINTRAC) said on Thursday.

"This foreign money services business [Binance]was imposed an administrative monetary penalty of $6,002,000 on May 7, 2024, for non-compliance with Part 1 of the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act and its associated Regulations," FINTRAC said in a statement.

Binance was found to have committed two administrative violations: failure to register with

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FINTRAC as a foreign money services business; and failure to report large virtual currency transactions of $10,000 or more in the course of a single transaction, together with the prescribed information, the statement said.

Since December, FINTRAC has imposed penalties on a handful of financial institutions over violations to Part 1 of the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act as well as its associated regulations.

Binance follows the Royal Bank of Canada, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and the Toronto Dominion Bank in being charged administrative monetary penalties.

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