

5/10/24 Friday

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Tara Reade: Anita Dunn Was 'Basically Reporting' to Biden About Her Accusations

The Me Too movement rose to prominence after accusations of sexual harassment and assault against filmmaker Harvey Weinstein surfaced in the media. The next year, Time's Up was funded by Hollywood celebrities to provide legal and media support for victims of workplace sexual harassment and assault. It raised at least \$24 million by 2020.

Anita Dunn, a senior advisor to the White House and the co-founder of SKDKnickerbocker, a crisis management fund that worked with Time's Up, ostensibly an advocacy group for survivors of sexual assault, was "basically" reporting back to then-candidate for President Joe Biden about the sexual assault accusations leveled at him by former Senate Staffer Tara Reade, Reade said in an interview.

"I went to [the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund] for help to come forward about Joe Biden. And, all the time, Anita Dunn... was basically reporting back to Joe Biden. She was literally getting paid at the same time I was there," Reade told [Sputnik's Fault Lines](#). "It was egregious. It was absolutely egregious."

In a [previous interview](#), Reade explained that she would have never gone to Time's Up if she had known Dunn was involved with the organization, noting that she only found out after an article about her case by journalist Ryan Grim was published about the situation. "I gave them so much personal information and they say they didn't give it to Biden. But come on. They said they had firewalls or something."

"I feel like my trust was violated," she added.

Dunn's firm was given more than \$806,000 from the Biden campaign from the time Lucy Flores, the first Biden accuser to go public, made her claims until Time's Up informed Reade that they would not fund her legal fees.

Reade accused Biden of assaulting her while she worked for him as a Senate aide in 1993. She says the then-Senator raped her in the Senate hallway. Reade's case is significant because it has an unusual amount of corroborating evidence for an assault that allegedly took place decades ago.

Reade has multiple witnesses that she told about the assault shortly after it occurred and her mother seemingly called a US TV show to complain about the assault that same year. She also says she filed a complaint about the attack, but it is currently sealed by the University of Delaware, despite pressure to release them.

The school said in 2020 that it is "curating" Biden's Senate papers and will not release them until two years after Biden retires from public life.

Reade says there are also mentions of the assault in a legal protection order against her ex-husband in 1995, which he also signed.

Reade currently lives in Russia where she works for RT and hosts a podcast. The Russian translation of her book is due out in two weeks. She claims she was forced to move to Russia

because the FBI was harassing her, noting that they issued sealed subpoenas against her social media accounts but that they won't tell her what the accusations against her are.

"Why was I such a threat in 2019, 2020 all the way through now? Well, it's because I'm telling the truth and they know it," Reade concluded.

Anita Dunn was the communications director for the White House under former President Barack Obama. In 2019, she was hired by the Biden campaign to advise on communications, but she continued to work at SKDKnickerbocker, which also oversaw Time's Up Legal Defense Fund's public relations efforts.

In January 2020, she was reportedly given "decision making authority" in the Biden campaign, the same month that the Biden campaign contributed \$548,480,27 to the SKDKnickerbocker which also happened to be the same month Reade approached Time's Up about legal representation.

A SKDKnickerbocker spokesperson told media outlets at the time that it "was not involved in any conversations with them about Tara Reade's situation. In fact, SKDKnickerbocker didn't even know that Ms. Reade has asked for support from the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund until a reporter asked us about her."

However, Reade's case was not the only time Dunn was accused of using her position at SKDKnickerbocker to influence sexual malfeasance cases. Last year, it was reported that SKDKnickerbocker received more than \$200,000 to provide "crisis communications" to Michael Madigan, then the speaker of the House of Illinois and the leader of the Democratic party in that case. Madigan was accused of retaliating against an employee who claimed her immediate supervisor sexually harassed her through text messages. At the same time, that employee, Alaina Hampton, was receiving legal advice from SKDKnickerbocker and Time's Up.

"They never told me that they were also working for Michael Madigan and had they disclosed that with me, I would have never applied for legal funding or PR support with them," [Hampton said](#) in an interview with US media.

She, like Reade, felt betrayed by Time's Up. "It's really a violation of trust and it feels like a betrayal."

Besides Biden and Madigan, it was also revealed that SKDKnickerbocker advised Harvey Weinstein about the accusations levied against him and Time's Up Board Chair Roberta Kaplan resigned after it was revealed that she was advising Democratic former Mayor of New York Andrew Cuomo about sexual assault accusations against him.

Dunn, meanwhile, has continued to be embraced by the Biden White House. Initially, she was brought in as a "temporary" senior advisor. In 2021, she announced that her tenure in that role was ending and she would soon step down. But in 2022 it was announced that she was rehired in the same press release that announced that Karine Jean-Pierre would take over as White House Press Secretary for Jen Psaki. She is now described as the "senior advisor to the president" and "assistant to the president."

Last year, US media described her and her husband Bob Bauer, a personal lawyer to Biden as "the power couple at the center of Biden's political universe."

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Bibi's Bombing Backlog - Cartoon

On Wednesday, US President Joe Biden told media outlets that the US would stop sending heavy bombs to Israel as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu moved forward with his promise to invade the southern Gazan city of Rafah, where more than a million Palestinians have taken shelter after Israel designated it as the last safe area in Gaza.

Israel already launched an operation to seize the border between Rafah and Egypt and has been heavily bombing Rafah for weeks. Still, Biden insists that Israel has not begun its invasion of the southern refuge, and warned that it would cut off arms sales of some bombs if it did.

"I made it clear that if they go into Rafah – they haven't gone in Rafah yet – if they go to Rafah, I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah, to deal with the cities – that deal with that problem," Biden said.

The paused shipment includes 1,800 MK84 2,000-pound bombs and 1,700 500-pound bombs. According to investigations, Israel has been dropping these "dumb" bombs in civilian areas since it started its post-October 7 invasion of Gaza. In just the first few weeks, it dropped hundreds of such bombs, including in heavily populated civilian areas and reportedly in areas that Israel ordered Gazans to flee to.

None of that was enough to make Biden change his policy of providing virtually unlimited arms to Israel. However, facing ever-increasingly dire poll numbers and a growing protest movement, the Biden administration seemingly set an actual red line for Netanyahu that could change US policy.

However, Netanyahu said on Thursday that Israel will "stand alone" and invade Rafah if the US halts arms sales to his country. One reason he may feel confident in doing so is that despite the unfathomable number of bombs Israel has dropped on Gaza, Netanyahu still has an extensive backlog of US weapons to get through before he needs to worry about any pause in shipments. A US official told US media earlier in the day that Israel already has enough munitions to carry out its campaign in Rafah and none of the paused shipments are a part of the \$26 billion in military and other aid package for Israel that Biden signed last month.

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The Zionist Project Doomed Itself by Rejecting Peace Advocates

You wouldn't know it now by observing the Israeli government and hearing the genocidal comments by high-ranking officials and politicians, but the Zionist project since its formation had a wing that advocated for peaceful coexistence with the Palestinian people and their Arab neighbors.

Unfortunately, as Jeremy Kuzmarov writes in Covert Action Magazine, they were pushed aside and blacklisted by the militaristic wing of Zionism, inevitably leading to the very situation the peace advocates warned about.

"There were a lot of good people in that movement who said that the Zionist movement would only be successful if they coexisted with the Palestinian populations who lived there, whereas

others tried to promote this myth of an empty land and had no regard at all for the Palestinians and just wanted to drive them out. And that was the strain of [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu," Kuzmarov told Sputnik's [The Critical Hour](#).

In 1967, in the wake of the Six-Day War, during which Israel captured the West Bank and Gaza, a socialist organization headed by a coalition of Arabs and Jews pleaded for Israel to stop cementing itself as an occupying force.

"Holding onto the territories will turn us into a nation of murderers and murder victims. Let us leave the Occupied territories now," their letter, published in the Israeli newspaper Ha'Aretz read.

But the push for a Zionist movement based on peace goes back further than that, nearly to its founding, Kuzmarov explained.

"Ahad Ha'am, who actually helped revive the Hebrew language," was one such leader. "He wrote a scathing report called 'The Truth About Palestine,' in the late 19th century. Already then, he was saying that the Jews were being cruel toward the Palestinians and that this was not right, and this would destroy the Zionist project, which should be rooted in humanity," Kuzmarov explained, adding that Ha'am advocated for a binational state, also known as the one-state solution.

Kuzmarov also writes about Martin Buber, a philosopher who advocated that Israel's main objective should be peaceful coexistence with its neighbors, Albert Einstein and Hannah Arendt as three other prominent "humanist Zionists" that have no living heirs with the possible exception of Noam Chomsky.

"I think they would say that Netanyahu is not a real Zionist. He's a barbarian and he's compromised the integrity of the Zionist project. And he threatens the security of the Jewish people. This is something a lot of these humanists, including Chomsky, warned about, that if Israel started attacking the Palestinians and disrespected them, they would face violence, in turn, from the Palestinians. And, I think that's what we're seeing now, a vicious cycle of violence. And, these brutal Israeli policies could invite revenge in the future."

That revenge could come as soon as the United States feels that Israel has outlived its usefulness or has become too much of a burden to support.

"The US uses Israel for its own agenda, but if they lose their strategic [importance] and cut ties and move somewhere else, then the Israelis will be in big trouble because their horrific policies have caused anger among their neighbors and the Arab people and they may one day take revenge on them. That's what Ahad Ha'am and many others warned about, including Chomsky, who advocated for coexistence and either a binational state or some kind of peace arrangement."

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Trump or Biden, Either Way America Is The Face of Fascism

In November, American voters will go to the polls, ostensibly to determine the future direction of their country. But on the critical issues of foreign policy and civil liberties, they lack a meaningful voice.

"Hell is empty and all the devils are here," William Shakespeare, *Tempest*.

Since at least 2016, former President Donald Trump has been depicted as a unique danger to American democracy. A jingoistic buffoon with a cult of personality, Donald Trump, they say, will usher in a regime of oppression and imperialism. He will jail his political opponents, censor voices of dissent, beat protesters, and act with reckless abandon on the world stage.

The problem for the #Resistance group is that they have already won. In 2020, they somehow managed to drag their geriatric candidate across the finish line and expelled Trump from the White House. It's surprising they have seemingly forgotten about it, since there was a whole riot on Capitol Hill over it, and they've been trying to put Trump in jail for it ever since. But forget they did, it seems, because they continue to paint the former president as a unique evil, even as their leader continues the same fascist policies as his predecessor, going even further in many cases.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Palestine, where US-provided bombs have been dropped on civilian areas, killing tens of thousands of children. A poll [released on Wednesday](#) showed that 56% of Democrat voters, Biden's party, believe Israel's actions in Palestine equate to genocide, yet Biden nevertheless continues to provide weapons to the Israeli regime, despite recent threats of a shipment pause.

"It doesn't matter whether it's Biden or Trump. Look at this ongoing genocide in Gaza. Is this not [the] face of fascism?" Researcher and geopolitical analyst Christopher Helali rhetorically asked during an interview [with Sputnik's The Critical Hour](#). "The open condemnation of peaceful campus protesters and people of all religions coming together around the United States while [it is] supplying arms and weapons to an actual fascist military. I mean, that's the true face of fascism."

During the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, Trump was rightly criticized for his crackdown on those protests, including the use of federal officers. Trump branded the protesters as "terrorists," a comment that led Oregon Congress members to describe his actions as "chillingly reminiscent of autocratic governments that 'disappear' critics and opponents."

In 2024, in Biden's America, the Democratic stronghold of New York has introduced a new bill in response to the anti-genocide protests that would amend the state's domestic terrorism definition to include blocking traffic, a time-tested protest method going back to the civil rights movement.

Similar bills have been introduced in several Republican states, but it is New York that proves fascist reactions to protests are not limited to one party.

Fascism in America is not a new phenomenon. It is ingrained in its history, going back to the Native American genocide and slavery. But it never really went away in America and has been the backbone of its foreign policy since the US has become strong enough to have a meaningful foreign policy.

Despite America's marketing materials about spreading democracy and being a beacon of freedom on the hill, as legendary NFL coach Bill Parcells would say "You are what your record says you are."

The US, either officially or unofficially, supported fascist regimes in El Salvador, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala, Cuba, Greece, Honduras, Haiti, Costa Rica, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Syria, Indonesia, Vietnam, South Africa, the Congo, Laos the list goes on.

Quite the record indeed. Today, the US government supports a fascist regime in Kiev, one put in place during an illegal coup and backed by Nationalists who idolize the notorious Nazi Stepan Bandera.

And when countries throw the yolk of fascism from their backs, the US still fights against them. "Even when the people rise up and they're able to create their own political projects, they're able to vote in their own leaders by popular demand, to have sovereignty, to have their independence, what ends up happening? Maximal sanctions. You end up having hybrid warfare, covert warfare, CIA involved, all of these nefarious actors are involved, and then people end up leaving," Helali explained, adding that the media helps build the narrative. "Then, of course, people say... 'oh that socialist project failed' without giving the context that the socialist project is strangled by sanctions."

Another facet of fascism is an extreme restriction of civil liberties. The United States, under both Republicans and Democrats, has been working to erode the rights of Americans for decades. In 2001, in the wake of the September 11 terror attacks, the US Congress overwhelmingly passed the Patriot Act, giving the government sweeping surveillance powers. In 2008, Barack Obama, a constitutional scholar, ran on a platform that included the rolling back of the excesses of the George W Bush administration, but when in office he not only declined to do so but facilitated the expansion of those powers after Congress passed a law retroactively making the intelligence communities' overreaches legal.

Earlier this year, when part of that law, which enabled the warrantless spying of millions of Americans, came up for renewal, it passed with bipartisan support and Biden quickly signed it into law.

"It's not two parties," Helali explained. "It's a uniparty. It's a party that serves big capital, the ruling class and the military-industrial complex."

Democrats have also been pressuring social media companies to censor their political opponents, as revealed in the Twitter files, and last month, both parties came together to essentially ban TikTok, an app voluntarily used by 150 million Americans.

While the media and Democratic elite are clutching their pearls over fears that Trump may jail them if he comes into office, they are too busy trying to jail Trump to notice that Biden has been locking up his political opponents for years.

In 2022, the Justice Department arrested leaders of the Uhuru African People's Socialist Party for alleged connections to the Russian government, arguing that they violated the Foreign Agents Registration Act. Uhuru's leaders had been critical of the US policy in Ukraine, along with other actions of American colonialism.

"The Uhuru group, January 6th (Capital riots) people. So, on the left, on the right, anyone that Joe Biden considers a political opponent, he's basically weaponized the intelligence community against them," Tara Reade, a former Senate Staffer that accused Biden of rape and who says she was forced to move to Russia due to FBI harassment [told Sputnik's Fault Lines](#).

"That's really what a lot of Black activists have been saying for many decades about the true face of fascism and looking at various aspects of the US government as being inherently fascistic," Helali explained.

Which isn't to say Trump would be better. He has called for more support for Israel and even more draconian crackdowns on protesters. Despite his earlier proclamations of bringing peace to Ukraine within "24 hours" his vocal support was critical to getting the latest aid package passed, which included another \$61 billion intended to extend a lost war past the election. Earlier this week, [US media reported](#) that "some in Biden's orbit" are "aggressively pushing" to make the Democratic National Convention a hybrid online event. It says those in his administration fear that protests will interrupt the event and turn it into a repeat of the 1968 riots. The Democrats would rather shut out their base, even arrest them, than change their policies. Now they are considering upending decades of party tradition, just to avoid hearing the chants of the people they claim to represent. This, they say, is saving democracy. Come August, as leftist protesters fighting against genocide are corralled miles away from a convention and the so-called leftist party coronates the man they dubbed "Genocide Joe" without letting them be heard through the ballot box, online, or on the streets, they may find themselves asking if this is a democracy worth saving.

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Scott Ritter Predicts How Ukraine Will End

With Russia liberating village after village and Ukraine seemingly unable to secure a defensive line ahead of the onslaught, former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter predicts that the conflict will end this summer, in line with the timeline established by the Russian Ministry of Defense at the start of this year.

On Friday, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced that Russia liberated Novokalinovo in the Donetsk People's Republic and Kiselevka and Kotlyarovka in the Kharkov region, the latest in a string of villages to fall, this rapid deterioration of the frontline was the result of the consistent work of Russian forces to grind the Ukrainians down until they had no reserves to stabilize the front line.

"As we speak, the attritional warfare model has Ukraine losing around 1,500 troops a day. This number is going up now because Russia's expanded its operations into the Kharkov region. So, you can expect this number [to] easily top 2,000 a day," Ritter [told Sputnik's Fault Lines on Friday](#).

"What the Ukrainians have had to do is pull in reserves and take forces out from other fronts, including the Kharkov front and the Odessa front, to come into the battlefield where they've been eliminated, or they've been worn down and there are no replacements...what's going to happen is Ukraine will be compelled to withdraw reserves from the Kiev region and from Odessa, to go to Kharkov to fill that gap. While they do that, the Russians will then launch a second major attack somewhere in the Zaporozhye area, and Ukrainians are going to be put to the classic horns of a dilemma where if they go north they lose, they go south they lose, if they stay in the middle they lose - there's no good option for them," Ritter explained, adding that we will then see "the total collapse of the Ukrainian army" and the "rapid withdrawal beyond the

Dnepr River” to set up a new defense line, something he does not think the Ukrainians will be able to accomplish.

Eventually, Ritter predicts, “Ukrainian generals faced with the inevitable slaughter of the totality of their force will sue for peace.”

Noting that he was told by his sources back in January to expect “dramatic alterations” to the battlefield map in May, Ritter predicts that Russia will capture significant territory in Kharkov and the Donbass this month, with Ukraine’s eventual capitulation a few months later.

“They say that the Ukrainian capacity to continue cohesive resistance will collapse this summer - that’s the Russian assessment and I agree with it,” Ritter said, noting that Russia’s operations aren’t driven by “calendars” and have already allocated the resources to continue the conflict until 2027 if necessary.

The decision of what happens to Ukraine now rests solely in the hands of Russia, Ritter argued, noting that they had “very favorable terms on the table” in March and April 2022.

“Nobody has a say in this but Russia, and Russia has made that very clear... this is a decisive defeat of NATO, the European Union and the United States. It’s as decisive as you can get without them being directly involved and they can’t become directly involved because that is a suicide pill.”

Ritter added that the military aid package recently signed into law by US President Joe Biden has had “zero impact” on the battlefield. “What we’ve seen, for instance, the desperately needed 155-millimeter artillery shells were brought in from Romania on a ship, offloaded in Odessa into a warehouse and struck by two Iskander missiles. Boom, there goes a couple of billion dollars right there.”

But the biggest issue for Ukraine remains manpower, not ammunition, Ritter explained. “Today, they don’t have the manpower to waste, and there’s nobody being trained. There’s nothing there. So everybody that dies just puts Ukraine deeper into a hole... you could give the best gold-plated ammunition in the world, but it doesn’t matter if you don’t have anybody to use it.”

Also on Friday, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced that the Ukrainian military suffered 3,300 losses in the Kharkov region and the Donetsk People’s Republic alone during failed attempts to retake Novokalinovo, Kiselevka and Kotlyarovka over the past week.

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“There were a lot of good people in that movement who said that the Zionist movement would only be successful if they coexisted with the Palestinian populations who lived there, whereas others tried to promote this myth of an empty land and had no regard at all for the Palestinians and just wanted to drive them out. And that was the strain of [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu,” Kuzmarov told Sputnik’s The Critical Hour on Wednesday.

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Trump Leads Biden in Five Out of Six Battleground States – Polls

WASHINGTON, May 13 (Sputnik) - Former President Donald Trump leads incumbent Joe Biden in five out of six battleground states as the current administration faces problems with the economy and conflict in the Middle East, a set of surveys conducted by the New York Times, Philadelphia Inquirer and Siena College polls showed on Monday.

About half of registered voters in Nevada, Georgia, Michigan and Arizona said they were ready to vote for Trump, while only 38-42% of people surveyed there chose Biden, according to the surveys. In Pennsylvania, Trump leads Biden 47-44%.

Among the key battleground states, Biden has a slight lead (47-45%) only in Wisconsin, the poll found.

Trump leads in three out of four age groups, and only those who are age 65 and older (45-40%) expressed their support for Biden.

The polls also revealed that Black Americans strongly support Biden (49-14%), while the Latino

population is divided between the two candidates (31-31%). At the same time, Trump has an advantage among white Americans (46-33%).

The set of polls was conducted among 4,097 registered voters in six states from April 28 to May 9, 2024.

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Majority of US Voters Give 'Quite a Lot' of Thought to Presidential Election – Poll

WASHINGTON, May 13 (Sputnik) – Seventy-one percent of Americans say they have given "quite a lot" of thought to the US presidential election in November, according to a Gallup poll released Monday.

Historically, Gallup polls have indicated the amount of thought that voters give to an election corresponds with the level of turnout, thus boding a robust voter showing this year.

Most of the American voters who identify with either of the major political parties fall into the "quite a lot" category, including a record high of 84% of Democrats for this stage in a campaign, as well as 78% of Republicans

The poll was conducted April 1-22.

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US, China delegations to meet in Geneva on Tuesday to discuss risks associated with advanced artificial intelligence - senior administration official

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US, China to Meet in Geneva on May 14 to Discuss AI Risks - Senior Official

WASHINGTON, May 13 (Sputnik) - A US delegation will meet with Chinese counterparts in Geneva on May 14 to discuss risks related to advanced artificial intelligence, a senior US administration official said.

"The US delegation will meet in Geneva on the 14th to discuss risks associated with advanced artificial intelligence and more specifically, the talks will focus on emerging risks associated with the industry-recognized transformative potential of AI technology and the necessity of striking a balance between the opportunities to develop a contract focused on safe, secure and trustworthy AI," the official said.

The official added that the talks will not focus on any particular deliverables, but instead on an exchange of views on the technical risks of artificial intelligence and the opportunity to share

prospective areas of concern.

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SpaceX Might Conduct Starship's Fourth Test Flight in 3 to 5 Weeks - Musk

UNITED NATIONS, May 11 (Sputnik) - The fourth test flight of SpaceX's Starship rocket might launch in three to five weeks, the private US space company's founder, Elon Musk, said on Saturday.

"Probably 3 to 5 weeks," Musk replied to a conversation on his X social media platform.

He clarified that one of the fourth flight's goals would be "for the ship to get past max heating or at least further than last time."

Earlier, the SpaceX owner also mentioned that the rocket will be set to have a coordinated landing. The space team will try to send it to a pre-determined ocean spot and practice soft water landing on a virtual tower. The fifth flight will then try to perform an actual landing on a tower.

In mid-March, SpaceX launched its third test flight of the Starship rocket from the Starbase facility in Boca Chica, Texas, with the rocket reaching orbital speed for the first time.

The Starship is the centerpiece of SpaceX's efforts to develop a fully reusable transportation system designed to carry humans to the Moon and on long-duration flights to Mars and beyond. The system is designed for in-space refueling and the ability to land at destinations across the solar system and return to Earth.

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NOAA Upgrades Solar Storm Status to 'Extreme', Warns of Geomagnetic Storm Impacts

WASHINGTON, May 11 (Sputnik) -The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Space Weather Prediction Center has updated the solar storm status on Earth to "Extreme"(G5), the highest possible level.

According to the center's website, power systems and spacecraft operations may be impacted by the space weather conditions.

The last G5 level storm to be registered was in October 2003 and resulted in power outages in Sweden and damaged transformers in South Africa, the website said.

The Space Weather Prediction Center has forecasted that northern lights would possibly be visible in parts of the US.

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NOAA Upgrades Solar Storm Status to 'Extreme', Warns of Problems With Power Systems And Spacecraft Operations

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US Army Orders \$332Mln More Multiple Launch Rockets From Lockheed Martin - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, May 11 (Sputnik) - Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control was awarded a \$332,126,764 US Army modification contract for the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System, the Department of Defense announced in a press release.

"Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control [of] Grand Prairie, Texas was awarded a \$332,126,764 modification ... contract for the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System," the release said on Friday.

Work on the contract will be carried out over the next three and a half years with an estimated completion date of October 20, 2027, the Defense Department said.

The US Army Contracting Command, Redstone Arsenal, Alabama will oversee work on the contract, the defense Department added.

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China Backs UNSC Reconsidering Palestine's Membership, Urges US Not to Block Process-Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, May 11 (Sputnik) - Beijing is in favor of the UN Security Council reconsidering Palestine's full membership at the United Nations and urges the US not to block this process, the Chinese Ambassador to the UN Fu Cong said on Friday.

"China supports the Security Council's early reconsideration of the application of the State of Palestine as mandated by the GA resolution, and expects the relevant country to not create further delays or hurdles," Fu told the UN General Assembly Hall.

Earlier in the day, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution recognizing Palestine as qualified to join the world organization in a 143-9 vote with 25 abstentions, having more rights incorporated within its membership status as a "Permanent Observer State."

In April, the United States vetoed an Algerian resolution at the UN Security Council recommending that the General Assembly admit Palestine to the UN. The United Kingdom and Switzerland abstained. The remaining members of the UN Security Council voted in favor.

Palestine has held permanent observer status at the UN since 2012, while Israel has been a full member of the organization since 1948.

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Israel's Use of US Weapons May Breach Int'l Humanitarian Law Obligations -US Admin. Report

WASHINGTON, May 11 (Sputnik) — Israel's military forces have potentially violated international humanitarian law in Gaza, however, the US does not possess information that US weapons were used in such instances, according to the Biden Administration's National Security Memorandum 20 (NSM-20) report.

"Nevertheless, given Israel's significant reliance on U.S.-made defense articles, it is reasonable to assess that defense articles covered under NSM-20 have been used by Israeli security forces since October 7 in instances inconsistent with its IHL obligations or with established best practices for mitigating civilian harm," the report said.

However, the report noted that it lacked "complete information" on the use of its weapons in these actions.

"Although we have gained insight into Israel's procedures and rules, we do not have complete information on how these processes are implemented. Israel has not shared complete information to verify whether U.S. defense articles covered under NSM-20 were specifically used in actions that have been alleged as violations of IHL or IHRL in Gaza, or in the West Bank and East Jerusalem during the period of the report," the report added.

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US Unaware of Ukraine Misusing, Not Receiving US Defense Articles - Report

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration has yet to find any instances of Ukraine misusing or not receiving defense articles from the United States, an accountability report to Congress said.

"The US government is not aware of defense articles... not being received by the intended foreign government recipient and/or being misused for purposes inconsistent with the intended purpose," the report said on Friday in its section on Ukraine aid.

The US has committed more than \$50.2 billion in security assistance to Ukraine since the launch of Russia's special military operation in February 2022, the report said.

The Ukrainian government is aware of the challenges it would face if implicated in the misuse of US-provided defense articles, the report added.

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New Arms Package for Kiev Shows US Reaction to Russia's Successes at Front - Antonov

WASHINGTON, May 11 (Sputnik) - The new US military package provided to Ukraine reflects Washington's reaction to the successes of the Russian army on the front, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov said.

"Another arms supply to the Zelensky regime is a reaction to the successes of the Russian armed forces at the front," Antonov said on Friday. "Our soldiers and officers continue to liberate Russian soil with heroic efforts. This fact is also recognized in the United States."

Antonov pointed out that the vast majority of local politicians are silent about exactly how the neo-Nazi Kiev regime uses the arms supplies they receive from the United States.

"The administration is not interested in the fact that American weapons are destroying civilian objects on Russian territory," Antonov said. "The White House is hypocritically shrugging off responsibility for these attacks. Meanwhile, rockets are falling on residential buildings and schools in Donbass, Crimea and the Belgorod region. Children and women are dying."

Antonov emphasized that the Kiev regime only cares about the promises to their sponsors not to use Western weapons against targets in Russia.

The ambassador also underscored that the timing of the new military aid package was cynically chosen to coincide with the celebrations of the 79th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War.

"However, the attempts of Washington and like-minded people to distort history and make humanity forget the lessons of the past will not work," Antonov said. "Supplies of weapons to a bankrupt regime will not affect the results of the special military operation. Victory will be ours!"

On Friday, US President Joe Biden authorized the drawdown of up to \$400 million in defense items for Ukraine.

The package includes munitions for Patriot air defense systems and additional High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Friday.

The package also includes munitions for National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS), Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and 155mm artillery rounds, Blinken said.

Moreover, the package features TOW and Javelin Missiles, precision aerial munitions, Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers, coastal and riverine patrol boats, small arms ammunition and grenades, Blinken added.

The package comes following the passage of a multi-billion-dollar Ukraine aid bill by the US Congress last month.

The Kremlin has consistently warned against continued arms deliveries to Kiev, saying it would lead to further escalation of the conflict. In April 2022, Russia sent a diplomatic note to all NATO countries on the issue of arms supplies to Ukraine. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warned that any cargo containing weapons for Ukraine would become a legitimate target for Russia.

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US Blue Chips Rally 3rd Week in Row as Wall Street Fights Interest Rate Concerns

NEW YORK, May 11 (Sputnik) - US blue chip stocks mostly rose on Friday, finishing higher for a third straight week, as investors trained their sights on a robust economy and resilient first-quarter corporate earnings despite the Federal Reserve continuing to dither on interest rate cuts awaited by Wall Street.

The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite - two indexes laden with the priciest US stocks - continued a rally that began from mid-April.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, the broadest indicator for US equity markets, pushed higher for a fourth week in a row, performing relatively better than the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq.

While all eyes were still on the Fed, positive US economic numbers have taken some heat off the central bank and rate cuts awaited by investors, Brian Nick, senior investment strategist at the Macro Institute, said.

"If those things don't seem like they're completely falling off the cliff, that's good enough news for markets that are just kind of starved for rate cuts," Nick said, referring to the US economy and inflation.

The S&P 500, which tracks stocks of the top 500 US companies, closed Friday's session up 0.2% and the week 1.9% higher. Its compounded gain over the past three weeks was 4.2%.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq, weighted with Amazon, Apple, Netflix and Google, among others, edged lower on Friday but finished the week up 1.1%. Accumulated gains over the past three weeks stood at 6.7%.

The Dow closed up 0.3% on the day and 2.2% on the week. Compounded gains over a four-week stretch totaled slightly more than 4%.

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US State Dept. Approves Possible \$30Mln Sale of HIMARS Systems to Ukraine – Pentagon

WASHINGTON, May 11 (Sputnik) – The US State Department has approved a possible \$30 million sale of three High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems and related equipment to Ukraine, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) announced in a press release.

"The State Department has made a determination approving a possible emergency Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Ukraine of High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems and related elements of logistics and program support for an estimated cost of \$30 million," the release said on Friday.

The government of Germany will provide the funds for the sale on behalf of Ukraine, the release added.

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TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, May 11 (Sputnik) -

ISRAEL MILITARY OPERATIONS IN GAZA

* The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said on Friday it had detected 14 rocket launches from the Gaza Strip at the southern Israeli city of Beer Sheva, including at least nine from the city of Rafah.

* The United States finds reports on abuse of Palestinians at Israeli prisons "deeply concerning" and is reaching out to Israel for more information, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Friday.

* US Congressman Cory Mills said on Friday that he filed articles of impeachment against President Joe Biden for his decision to withhold military aid from Israel over its potential military operation in Rafah.

UKRAINE CONFLICT

* US President Joe Biden on Friday authorized the drawdown of up to \$400 million in defense articles for Ukraine, according to a memorandum released by the White House.

* Canada will contribute \$55.6 million to the German-led Immediate Action on Air Defense for Ukraine, Canadian Minister of National Defense Bill Blair said.

* The Russian armed forces have hit a US-made Patriot missile system and an AN/MPQ-65 radar of the Ukrainian military with an Iskander missile in the Zaporizhzhia Region, a security source told Sputnik.

* Russian air defense systems have shot down 17 missiles fired by Ukraine from the Vampire multiple launch rocket system, five guided bombs and one drone over the Belgorod Region on Friday, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

* One person was killed and another six were injured in a Ukrainian strike on an oil depot in the city of Rovenky in the Luhansk People's Republic, LPR head Leonid Pasechnik said.

* The United States expects Russia to try to press forward in the Kharkiv region and make more advances in the coming weeks, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said.

US-CHINA RELATIONS

* The United States and China have discussed their climate policies during the Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s meeting earlier this week in Washington and agreed on further engagements regarding climate issues, the US State Department said in a readout on Friday.

* The Biden administration plans to announce next week that it will increase tariffs from 25% to nearly 100% on Chinese electric vehicles, US media reported on Friday.

FLOODS IN BRAZIL

The death toll from floods in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul has risen to 113, while 146 people are still unaccounted for, the region's civil defense authority said on Friday.

RUSSIA'S NEW GOVERNMENT

* Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree to appoint Mikhail Mishustin as the country's prime minister, the Kremlin said on Friday.

* The State Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, will consider candidates for deputy prime ministers on May 13 and for ministers on May 14, State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said.

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Oil In Modest Weekly Hike As Bulls Try To Shake Off May Malaise

NEW YORK, May 10 (Sputnik) - Crude prices ended virtually flat on the week as bulls tried to shake a May malaise for oil markets triggered by demand worries, despite supply risks posed by OPEC+ production cuts and the festering war in Gaza.

West Texas Intermediate (WTI), the benchmark for US crude, settled Friday's trade at \$78.26 per barrel, down \$1, or 1.3%, on the day. For the week though, WTI was up 0.2%, after the prior week's 6.9% slump. For all of May, the US crude benchmark was down 4.5%.

London-traded Brent, the global benchmark for crude, settled at 82.79, down \$1.09, or 1.3%. Unlike WTI, Brent also registered a loss on the week, sliding 0.2%, extending the prior week's tumble of 7.3%. Month-to-date, the UK-origin crude was down 4.1%.

Oil markets saw some support earlier this week as Israel defied international opposition, including from the United States, to push forth into the civilian-heavy Palestinian frontier Rafah in a bid to wipe out Hamas militants. The Gaza war and some of the disruptions from that to crude shipments in the oil-rich Middle East have been one reason for WTI to still carry a 9.4% premium on the year and Brent a 7.6% gain.

OPEC+'s determination to support the market with production cuts has also bolstered prices, helping sustain a rally from January through March. OPEC+ groups the 13-member Saudi-led Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries with 10 other oil-producing nations. The alliance intends to maintain supply cuts of 2.2 million barrels per day until the end of June.

But as the week drew to a close, oil traders' attention shifted back to demand for oil, which was weaker at this time of the year than a year ago. Weekly oil inventory data from the US Energy Information Administration, released on Wednesday, was particularly of concern to traders who noted builds in balances of fuel products gasoline and distillates despite a drop in crude stockpiles.

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ANALYSIS - Boeing Starliner Spacecraft Failure Deeply Rooted in Company, NASA, Pentagon Histories

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - Boeing's continuing problems with flying its long-delayed Starliner reusable spacecraft to the International Space Station (ISS) are deeply rooted in the company's history, the problems of NASA's bureaucracy and the nature of the Defense Department, US military and industrial analysts told Sputnik.

Last week, NASA was forced to scrub the long-planned and much-promoted first manned flight of the Starliner spacecraft after a buzzing alert on a rocket valve. The repeatedly delayed launch has now been rescheduled for May 17.

The latest in a long series of delays and engineering glitches has its roots in the troubled history of United Launch Alliance (ULA), the hastily cobbled together company that built the motors for Starliner's booster, veteran Defense Department analyst Chuck Spinney said.

"This rocket motor appears to be a design derivative of the old Atlas ICBM motor, which evolved, with added bells and whistles, from the WWII German V-2 rocket engine," Spinney said.

ULA was created as a joint venture company formed by Boeing Defense and Lockheed Martin Defense in 2006 to build rocket launchers for the Defense Department and NASA, but the two companies are historic rivals with different loyalties and management cultures, Spinney said.

Spinney noted that in addition to the intricate technical challenges, the rocket's developers faced bureaucratic hurdles from NASA and the Defense Department, known for their secrecy and changing subcontracting strategies. He added that Boeing's traditional focus on quality engineering was overshadowed by a short-term profit-driven approach.

The company had descended down the disastrous road of adopting "deindustrializing policies of financialization, managerialization and offshoring of jobs," Spinney added.

Financial analyst Alex Krainer attributed Boeing's woes to profit-driven strategies, including layoffs and cost-cutting measures, at the expense of quality.

"Profit-driven systems tend to do well during the 'land-grab' phase - while they're in expansion and providing quality goods and services is the way to grab market share and loyal customers," Krainer said.

Those cost-cutting moves inevitably have had an adverse impact on the quality of the company's products, but led to an increase in the stocks and earnings per share, with executives collecting fat bonuses as well as other shareholders for a time, Krainer said.

However, in the end, this process ended up destroying systems that took decades of hard, dedicated work to build and refine, Krainer added.

UNRAVELLING US HEGEMONY AMID INDUSTRIAL DECLINE

American University in Moscow President and former nuclear physicist Edward Lozansky put Boeing rocket design and other production problems in the context of the unraveling of the US global hegemony and empire.

"When the Empire starts claiming the unachievable role of global hegemony some things begin to fall apart. ... Boeing, being one of the Empire's most important mechanisms, shares the pain," Lozansky said.

Former merchant banker and economic analyst Martin Hutchinson focused on the multiple layers of government bureaucracy that interfered with and micromanaged every engineering decision in the Starliner and rocket engine production processes.

"NASA is a useless government bureaucracy that has achieved absolutely nothing useful since 1972. Leave space to the true private sector, who will go there when the market leads them to

it," said.

The 1960s to 1972 Apollo space program, which was the last US experience in sending astronauts to the Moon, was a wasteful government boondoggle, 50 years before the United States had the proper technology to do it on a sustainable and lasting, cost-effective basis, Hutchinson advised.

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Canada Now Recognizes Palestinian State Might Emerge Sooner – Trudeau on UNGA Vote

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) – Canada has chosen to change its stance on the creation of a Palestinian State from “no” to “abstaining” because it recognizes that its emergence might come sooner as a means to achieve a two-state solution, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Friday.

“Canada has decided to change our position from ‘no’ at the UN to ‘abstaining’, reflecting ... our long-standing position that you could only recognize the state of Palestine as an outcome at the end of a process leading to a two-state solution,” Trudeau said during a press conference. “We now recognize that it may happen sooner than at the end of the process, as a way of pushing towards that two-state solution.”

Trudeau noted that Canada has always stood behind a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict where both countries can coexist in peace and security.

However, the Premier also pointed out that his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu and his government have taken the “unacceptable” step of completely shutting the doors to any path leading to a two-state solution.

Earlier in the day, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution in a 143-9 vote with 25 member states abstaining, expanding the rights of Palestine in the world organization and recommending that the Security Council favorably reconsider its membership request.

The document "determines that the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations per article 4 of the Charter and should therefore be admitted to membership in the United Nations" and "recommends that the Security Council reconsider the matter favorably."

According to the resolution, the UN General Assembly decides, "on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent," to grant "additional rights and privileges" to the State of Palestine at the UN. Palestine, however, will not have the right to vote in the General Assembly or to put forward its candidature to United Nations organs.

Palestine has held permanent observer status at the UN since 2012, while Israel has been a full member of the organization since 1948.

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US Defense Secretary Austin Says Russian Military Most Powerful Land Force in Europe

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Friday characterized the Russian military as the most powerful land force in Europe amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

"[The Ukrainians] were invaded by the most powerful land force in Europe," Austin told reporters.

At present, the Ukrainians are primarily focused on the Kharkiv area of the battlefield and will be directing most of the US-provided resources there, Austin added.

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a special military operation in Ukraine after the breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk appealed for help in defending themselves against Ukrainian forces. Russia said that the aim of its special operation is to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine.

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UNSC Seeks Accountability Amid Reports of Mass Graves Discovered in Gaza - Statement

UNITED NATIONS, May 10 (Sputnik) - UN Security Council members are deeply concerned by reports that mass graves have been discovered in and around the Nasser and Al Shifa medical facilities in Gaza and stress the need for accountability, according to their joint statement released on Friday.

"The members of the Security Council expressed their deep concern over reports of the discovery of mass graves, in and around the Nasser and Al Shifa medical facilities in Gaza, where several hundred bodies, including women, children and older persons, were buried," the statement said. "The members of the Security Council underlined the need for accountability for violations of international law and called for investigators to be allowed the unimpeded access to all locations of mass graves in Gaza to conduct immediate, independent, thorough, comprehensive, transparent and impartial investigations to establish the circumstances behind the graves."

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Austin Says Absolutely Possible to Conduct Military Operation in Rafah, Protect Civilians

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) – US Secretary of State Lloyd Austin said on Friday that he believes it is “absolutely possible” to conduct a military operation in Rafah and protect civilians.

“The question is, ‘Is it possible to conduct effective operations and protect civilians?’ Absolutely, it’s possible. We clearly believe in that and that’s what we endeavor to do in any operation that that we conduct. The Israeli military is a professional military, and again, they have the ability to

do both of those," Austin said when asked about a potential Israel's major operation in Rafah. Austin added that there have been "far too many" civilian casualties so far in Gaza.

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un security council expresses deep concern over reports of discovery of mass graves near gaza medical facilities - statement

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us defense secretary austin says absolutely to conduct military operation and protect civilians

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Report on Use of US Weapons in Gaza Finds No Violations of Law by Israel - Reports

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) – The upcoming National Security Memorandum report on the use of US-supplied weapons, which the US State Department is expected to submit to Congress soon, does not conclude that Israel has violated any law during its military operations in Gaza, ABC reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the matter.

While the report does not conclude that Israel has violated either the US or international law it nevertheless contains criticism of some Israeli actions amid its military campaign in Gaza, the report said.

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US Reaching Out to Israel Over 'Troubling' Reports on Abuse of Palestine Prisoners - Kirby

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The United States finds reports on abuse of Palestinians at Israeli prisons "deeply concerning" and is reaching out to Israel for more information, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Friday.

"We have seen these reports on potential alleged prisoner abuse at this prison, it is deeply concerning, very troubling. We are reaching out to our Israeli counterparts to get more information here about these allegations. And obviously, our expectation is that we will get good answers here," Kirby said during a press briefing.

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US Anticipates Russia Could Press Forward in Kharkiv Region, Make More Advances - Kirby

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The United States expects Russia to try to press forward in the Kharkiv region and make more advances in the coming weeks, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Friday.

"We anticipate that Russia will attempt to press forward in the Kharkiv [region] as well," Kirby said. "It is possible that Russia will make further advances in the coming weeks, but we don't anticipate any major breakthroughs."

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US Aids Ukrainian Forces to Help Prepare for Kharkiv Offensive - White House

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The United States has been working closely with Ukraine to prepare for a Russian offensive on Kharkiv, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Friday during a press briefing.

"We have been anticipating that Russia would launch an offensive against Kharkiv, which appears now to have begun, and we've been coordinating closely with Ukraine to help them prepare," Kirby said during a press briefing.

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Oscars Launch \$500Mln Fundraiser Amid Dwindling Academy Awards Audience - Reports

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has launched a global campaign to raise \$500 million amid record low viewership of the Oscars ceremony, The Financial Times reported on Friday.

The Academy is trying to improve its financial position as the Oscars TV viewership has more than halved over the past decade. Only 19.5 million people watched the Oscars on their TVs in 2024, compared to nearly 44 million in 2014, according to data compiled by Statista.

The Academy decided on a fundraiser even though this year saw the largest number of viewers after a steady increase since 2021 when only a staggering 10.4 million chose to watch the Academy award ceremony, the Statista data showed.

The Academy has already raised \$100 million, including with the help of some major individual donors like Ukrainian-born billionaire Leonard Blavatnik, and managed to reach sponsorship

deals with global luxury brands, including the Dorchester Collection, according to the report.

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Canada Defense Minister to Visit US to Discuss NORAD, Updated Defense Policy - Statement

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - Canadian Minister of National Defense Bill Blair will travel to the United States to meet with his counterpart Lloyd Austin and discuss the modernization of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) as well as Canada's updated defense policy, the Ministry of National Defense said on Friday.

"The Honorable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defense, will travel to Washington, DC from May 13-14, 2024. During his visit, Minister Blair will meet with United States Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III to discuss Canada's recently-released defense policy update ... as well as Canada's NORAD Modernization Plan and the Canada-U.S. defence relationship," the Ministry of National Defense said in a statement.

Throughout his stay, Blair is set to hold a bilateral meeting with Austin and deliver remarks on Canada's defense policy update at an event hosted by the Atlantic Council at the Canadian Embassy in Washington.

On April 8, the Ministry of National Defense released its defense policy update "Our North, Strong and Free: A Renewed Vision for Canada's Defense," which responds to the significant global shifts that have occurred since Canada's comprehensive defense policy was announced in 2017.

In the updated policy, the ministry determined that the most pressing task for Canada was to assert sovereignty in its northern regions and the Arctic. To do so, the Canadian government must invest C\$8.1 billion (US\$5.9 billion) over the next five years and C\$73 billion (US\$53.7 billion) over the next 20 years on defense.

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US Congressman Says Filed Impeachment Measure Against Biden for Withholding Israel Aid

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - US Congressman Cory Mills said on Friday that he filed articles of impeachment against President Joe Biden for his decision to withhold military aid from Israel over its potential military operation in Rafah.

"In violation of his oath to faithfully execute the office of President to uphold the Constitution, President Biden abused the powers of his office by soliciting a 'quid pro quo' with Israel while leveraging vital military aid for policy changes," Mills said in a statement.

Mills said he intends to bring the measure to the floor of the US House of Representatives, potentially through a so-called privileged motion.

The impeachment resolution uses approximately 95% of the same language used to try to impeach former President Donald Trump for allegedly engaging in a quid pro quo regarding Ukraine aid, Mills said.

US House Speaker Mike Johnson is evaluating the filing, which has the support of some other House Republicans, Mills added.

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US, China Discuss Climate Policies, Agree on Further Engagements - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The United States and China have discussed their climate policies during the Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s meeting earlier this week in Washington and agreed on further engagements regarding climate issues, the US State Department said in a readout on Friday.

"They exchanged experiences and challenges with respect to their respective climate policies and actions, with a view to responding meaningfully to the climate crisis and beyond," the readout said.

The meeting took place on May 8-9, and was co-led by Senior Advisor to the President for International Climate Policy John Podesta and Chinese Special Envoy for Climate Change Liu Zhenmin, the readout said.

"The in-depth discussions recalled the San Francisco summit between the two Presidents and focused on areas identified in the Sunnylands Statement, including energy transition, methane and other non-CO2 greenhouse gases, circular economy and resource efficiency, deforestation, and low-carbon and sustainable provinces/states and cities, as well as cooperating on multilateral issues related to promoting a successful COP 29 in Baku, Azerbaijan," the readout said.

Recalling the United States' intent to achieve 100% clean power by 2035 and the Chinese intent to phase down coal consumption during the 15th Five Year Plan and make best efforts to accelerate this work, the two countries agreed to intensify technical and policy exchanges on realizing their respective goals, the readout said.

The two countries also committed to promoting bilateral cooperation and conducting capacity building on deploying abatement technologies, the readout said.

"Both sides noted with interest the Methane Alert and Response System of the UNEP International Methane Emissions Observatory," the readout said. "They will also engage in technical cooperation and capacity-building for measurement and abatement solutions of other non-CO2 greenhouse gases, including industrial N2O as well as tropospheric ozone precursors."

Moreover, they anticipate conducting technical exchanges on circular economy, the readout added.

The US-China High-Level Event on Subnational Climate Action will be held May 29-30 in

Berkeley, California, according to the readout.

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Palestine Remains in Non-Member Observer Status Despite Resolution Passage - UN Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, May 10 (Sputnik) – Palestine remains a non-member observer state at the United Nations even though the UN General Assembly passed a resolution to expand its rights at the world organization, UN Secretary-General spokesperson Farhan Haq said on Friday.

"The State of Palestine was not granted a new status within the United Nations, nor has it been admitted to membership in this organization. It is also clear that it remains an observer state," Haq said during a press briefing.

Haq noted that the Secretary-General welcomes the fact that the resolution was adopted with great support from UN member states.

Earlier in the day, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution in a 143-9 vote with 25 member states abstaining, expanding the rights of Palestine in the world organization and recommending that the Security Council favorably reconsider its membership request.

The document "determines that the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations per article 4 of the Charter and should therefore be admitted to membership in the United Nations" and "recommends that the Security Council reconsider the matter favorably."

According to the resolution, the UN General Assembly decides, "on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent," to grant "additional rights and privileges" to the State of Palestine at the UN. Palestine, however, will not have the right to vote in the General Assembly or to put forward its candidature to United Nations organs.

Commenting on the resolution, Russian Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia said that full membership in the UN would put Palestine on a more equal footing with Israel in negotiations. He added that the current resolution is not perfect.

Palestine has held permanent observer status at the UN since 2012, while Israel has been a full member of the organization since 1948.

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UN Spokesman Says Guterres to Look for Ways to Move Forward on Palestine GA Resolution

UNITED NATIONS, May 10 (Sputnik) – After the UN General Assembly has passed a resolution on Palestine, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will study it to see what steps should be taken to move forward with its implementation, Spokesperson Farhan Haq said on Friday.

"Now that [resolution] is passed, we will first study the resolution, including its annexes, and see how to go forward with that," Haq said during a press briefing.

Earlier in the day, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution in a 143-9 vote, with 25 member states abstaining, expanding the rights of Palestine in the world organization and recommending that the Security Council favorably reconsider its membership request, a Sputnik correspondent reported.

The document "determines that the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations in accordance with article 4 of the Charter and should therefore be admitted to membership in the United Nations" and "recommends that the Security Council reconsider the matter favorably."

According to the resolution, the UN General Assembly decides, "on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent," to grant "additional rights and privileges" to the State of Palestine at the UN. The rights will go into effect as of the 79th session of the General Assembly.

During his speech at the UN General Assembly, Gilad Erdan shredded a copy of the charter in a symbolic protest against the body considering a draft resolution that would grant Palestine more rights at the organization.

Commenting on the resolution, Russian Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia said that full membership of Palestine at the United Nations would put it on a more equal footing with Israel and strengthen its position at negotiations.

Palestine has held permanent observer status at the UN since 2012, while Israel has been a full member of the organization since 1948.

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FBI Investigates Biden's Iran Envoy Over Handling of Classified Information - Reports

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The FBI has initiated an investigation into US Special Representative for Iran Rob Malley possibly transferring classified information to his email account and potentially exposing it to foreign actors, Politico reported on Friday.

Investigators are probing whether Malley improperly handled classified information by transferring it to his email or to foreign officials, with the Department of Justice yet to decide on filing potential charges, the report said.

Last year, the FBI started investigating Malley on matters concerning his handling of classified information. The FBI's statement to Sputnik then said that the agency cannot confirm or deny that they are investigating Malley.

In June of 2023, Malley said he was placed on leave while his security clearance was under investigation without specifying a timeframe.

Axios previously reported that White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan expressed concerns to Israeli counterparts that Israel has been leaking information to the press about the indirect talks between the United States and Iran.

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

UN on Israeli Envoy's Paper Shredder Stunt: All Members Expected to Respect Charter

UNITED NATIONS, May 10 (Sputnik) – UN Secretary-General spokesman Farhan Haq said on Friday that even though Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan shredded a copy of the Charter, it remains intact as long as the UN continues to exist, and all member states are expected to fulfill their obligation to respect the founding document.

Earlier in the day, Erdan shredded a copy of the charter during his speech at the UN General Assembly in a symbolic protest against the body considering a draft resolution that would grant Palestine more rights at the organization. The assembly later adopted the resolution in a 143-9 vote with 25 member states abstaining. It also recommended that the Security Council favorably reconsider Palestine's membership request.

"The charter is something that will stay with us, and it's the founding document of this organization, and as long as this organization exists, the Charter exists," Haq told reporters.

"This is an organization that is premised on respect for the UN Charter and all of the member states have pledged to uphold the UN Charter and we expect them to fulfill that obligation."

Haq noted that while UN bodies usually do not comment on remarks made by some ambassadors, "the theatrics both in the past and the present are things that are part and parcel of the presentations the member states make."

Commenting on the resolution, Russian Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia said that full membership in the UN would put Palestine on a more equal footing with Israel in negotiations. He added, however, that the resolution is not perfect.

Palestine has held permanent observer status at the UN since 2012, while Israel has been a full member of the organization since 1948.

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New \$400Mln Ukraine Aid Package Includes Patriot Munitions, HIMARS - Blinken

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - A new \$400 million US aid package for Ukraine includes munitions for Patriot air defense systems and additional High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Friday.

The package also includes munitions for National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS), Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and 155mm artillery rounds, Blinken said in a statement.

Additionally, the package features TOW and Javelin Missiles, precision aerial munitions, Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles, armored personnel carriers, coastal and riverine patrol boats, small arms ammunition and grenades, the statement said.

The package comes following the passage of a multi-billion-dollar Ukraine aid bill by the US Congress last month.

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Canada Sanctions Four Individuals Tied to Hamas, Iran's 'Axis of Resistance' – Ministry

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) – The Canadian government has imposed sanctions on four individuals with ties to Hamas and who are said to be part of Iran's "Axis of Resistance", Global Affairs Canada (GAC) said on Friday.

The measures were imposed under the Special Economic Measures Regulations. Sanctioned individuals are inadmissible to Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Their property in the country may be seized, restrained, or forfeited.

"Effective immediately, Canada is imposing sanctions against four additional individuals in response to the terrorist attack by Hamas in Israel that began on October 7, 2023, and the threat that Hamas and its affiliates pose to regional security," GAC said in a statement.

Accordingly, Canada sanctioned Khaled Qaddoumi (Hamas), Ali Morshed Shirazi (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps [IRGC] Al-Quds Force), Mostafa Mohammad Khani (IRGC Al-Quds Force), and Ali Ahmad Faizullahi (IRGC Al-Quds Force).

Ottawa sanctioned the individuals due to their affiliation with Iran's "Axis of Resistance" and for having provided support through military training and resources to strengthen Hamas's capabilities, GAC said.

Canada listed Hamas as a "terrorist organization" under the Criminal Code in November 2002. Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade – part of the "Axis of Resistance" – are also listed.

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US Govt. Open Probe Into Gun Shots Fired at Border Patrol Agents in Texas From Mexico

EL PASO, May 10 (Sputnik) - The US government is investigating an incident that involved gunmen in Mexico and US Border Patrol agents exchanging gunfire along the Texas-Mexico border earlier this week, the US authorities told Sputnik on Friday.

"On May 8, 2024, Border Patrol agents assigned to the El Paso Sector were involved in a use of force incident while responding to reports of shots fired near the border in Ysleta, Texas," US Customs and Border Protection said in a statement to Sputnik. "There are no reported injuries at this time. The incident is under review by Customs and Border Protection's Office of Professional Responsibility."

An FBI spokesperson added that the FBI El Paso Violent Crime Task Force and the FBI Evidence Recovery Team were deployed to collect evidence at the crime scene.

"The FBI El Paso's Violent Crime Task Force is working closely with the US Custom and Border Protection's Office of Professional Responsibility on this assault on a federal officer investigation. As this is an ongoing investigation, no further details may be given at this time,"

the FBI told Sputnik.

In late April, US Border Patrol agents in El Paso came under fire from the Mexican side near the same area where Wednesday's incident took place.

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US to Finalize Details of Orderly Troops Withdrawal From Niger 'In Coming Days' - Official

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The United States will finalize the details of the planned orderly withdrawal of its forces from Niger in the coming days, a US defense official told Sputnik on Friday.

"We've already announced the intent to withdraw from Niger. We expect meetings in the coming days to work through the logistics of how to conduct that withdrawal in an orderly manner," the official said.

There are an estimated 1,100 US personnel in Niger. Their pullout was initiated in March after a Nigerien military spokesperson said the country's transitional government, which took power in a coup in July 2023, had terminated the military agreement with the United States with immediate effect, citing the interests of the Nigerien people.

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Canada to Contribute C\$76Mln to German-Led Ukraine Air Defense Initiative - Blair

(Updates with background in paras 4-5)

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - Canada will contribute C\$76 million (US\$55.6 million) to the German-led Immediate Action on Air Defense for Ukraine, Canadian Minister of National Defense Bill Blair said on Friday.

"Today, I'm very pleased to announce that Canada will contribute C\$76 million to Germany's Immediate Action on Air Defense Initiative," Blair said during a joint press conference with his German counterpart Boris Pistorius.

The announcement was made after the two officials signed a letter of intent on the allocation of funds to purchase air defense capabilities for Ukraine.

In late April, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that Germany'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 collective 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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US House Democrats Express Concerns About Biden Withholding Arms From Israel - Letter

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - A group of 26 US House Democrats sent a letter to White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Friday, expressing concerns about President Joe Biden's decision to withhold some weapons from Israel if it launches a military operation in the Gaza Strip city of Rafah.

"We are deeply concerned about the message the Administration is sending to Hamas and other Iranian-backed terrorist proxies by withholding weapons shipments to Israel, during a critical moment in the negotiations," the letter said.

The letter was signed by House Democrats including Jared Moskowitz, Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Josh Gottheimer.

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.

The letter requests a classified briefing about Biden's decision to better understand how and when the congressionally authorized aid will be delivered to Israel.

The United States has a duty to arm Israel, as well as to continue delivering humanitarian aid to civilians in the Gaza Strip, the letter said.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a large-scale attack on Israel, killing nearly 1,200 Israeli civilians and military personnel and abducting some 240 others. Israel subsequently launched a military operation in the Gaza Strip, which has resulted in more than 34,800 deaths in the Palestinian enclave, according to local authorities.

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US Needs to End 2017 Tax Breaks for Wealthy, Scale Back Corporate Tax Breaks - White House

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The US government should end the 2017 tax breaks for the rich and reduce the number of permanent tax breaks for corporations in the United States, White House National Economic Advisor Lael Brainard said on Friday.

"This week, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) confirmed that the full extension of Trump's tax package would add nearly \$5 trillion to our national debt over the next decade, while disproportionately benefitting the highest-income taxpayers," Brainard said during the Hamilton

Project event. "So it is clear we need to end the 2017 tax breaks for the wealthy and scale back costly permanent corporate tax breaks."

Brainard also said that the Biden administration is committed to ensuring that the more than 95% of US households earning less than \$400,000 do not pay any more in taxes.

The forthcoming tax debate should be used as an opportunity to meet the US national needs by raising revenue overall by asking the wealthy and large corporations to pay their fair share, Brainard said.

"Finally, our tax system should avoid an international race to the bottom on tax," Brainard added.

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Biden Authorizes Drawdown of \$400 Million In Defense Articles For Ukraine - Memorandum

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) — US President Joe Biden on Friday authorized the drawdown of up to \$400 million in defense articles for Ukraine, according to a memorandum released by the White House.

"I hereby delegate to the Secretary of State the authority under section 506(a)(1) of the FAA to direct the drawdown of up to \$400 million in defense articles and services of the Department of Defense, and military education and training, to provide assistance to Ukraine and to make the determinations required under such section to direct such a drawdown," Biden said in the memorandum.

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Pistorius Suggests Canada, Germany, Norway Launch Strategic Maritime Partnership

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius proposed on Friday that Canada, Germany, and Norway launch a trilateral strategic maritime partnership with a focus on the security of sea lines of communication in the North Atlantic and the Arctic.

"I hand it over to my Canadian colleague [Defense Minister] Bill [Blair] a joint letter signed by our Norwegian colleague and myself with a proposal - let us initiate a trilateral strategic maritime partnership with a focus on securing sea lines of communication through the North Atlantic and the Arctic," Pistorius said during a joint press conference with Blair in Canada.

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biden authorizes drawdown of \$400 million in defense articles for ukraine - memorandum

Sputnik

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Canada to Contribute C\$76Mln to German-Led Ukraine Air Defense Initiative - Blair

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - Canada will contribute C\$76 million (\$55.6 million) to the German-led Immediate Action on Air Defense for Ukraine, Canadian Minister of National Defense Bill Blair said on Friday.

"Today, I'm very pleased to announce that Canada will contribute C\$76 million to Germany's Immediate Action on Air Defense Initiative," Blair said during a joint press conference with his German counterpart, Boris Pistorius.

The announcement was made after the two signed a letter of intent on the allocation of funds to purchase air defense capabilities for Ukraine.

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UNGA Grants Palestine New Rights, Asks UNSC to Reconsider Membership Bid

UNITED NATIONS, May 10 (Sputnik) - The UN General Assembly on Friday adopted a resolution expanding the rights of Palestine in the world organization and recommending that the Security Council favorably reconsider its request for membership, a Sputnik correspondent reported.

The resolution was adopted in a 143-9 vote, with 25 member states abstaining.

The document "determines that the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations in accordance with article 4 of the Charter and should therefore be admitted to membership in the United Nations."

It "recommends that the Security Council reconsider the matter favorably."

According to the resolution, the UN General Assembly decides, "on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent," to grant "additional rights and privileges" to the State of Palestine at the UN. The rights will go into effect as of the 79th session of the General Assembly.

Palestine will receive the right to make statements on behalf of groups of countries, the right to full participation in UN conferences, in international conferences and meetings convened under the auspices of the General Assembly or under the auspices of other UN bodies.

Palestine will also have the right to make proposals and amendments, including on behalf of groups of countries, the right to be a co-author of proposals and amendments, including on behalf of groups of states, and the right to speak in explanations of voting on behalf of groups.

In addition, Palestine will receive the right to put forward procedural proposals, including points

of order. Moreover, it will also be able to put forward requests to put certain proposals to a vote. At the same time, the resolution stipulates that "the State of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer State, does not have the right to vote in the General Assembly or to put forward its candidature to United Nations organs."

In April, the United States vetoed an Algerian resolution at the UN Security Council recommending that the General Assembly admit Palestine to the UN. The United Kingdom and Switzerland abstained. The remaining members of the UN Security Council voted in favor.

The admission of any "peace-loving" state to membership in the UN requires a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council, according to the UN Charter.

Palestine has held permanent observer status at the UN since 2012, while Israel has been a full member of the organization since 1948.

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White House to Quadruple Tariffs on Chinese Electric Vehicles – Reports

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) – The Biden administration plans to announce next week that it will increase tariffs from 25% to nearly 100% on Chinese electric vehicles, The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday, citing unnamed sources.

Tariffs on other clean energy goods from China, such as critical minerals, solar goods, and batteries, will also face higher tariffs, the sources said.

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Full UN Membership Would Strengthen Palestine's Position at Talks With Israel - Nebenzia

UNITED NATIONS, May 10 (Sputnik) - Full membership of Palestine at the United Nations would put it on a more equal footing with Israel and strengthen its position at negotiations, Russian Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia said on Friday.

"We are convinced that full fledged membership of Palestine, of the UN would help provide an equal initial negotiating position with Israel who received this fully fledged status more than 75 years ago," Nebenzia said to UN General Assembly members prior to the vote on expanding Palestine's rights at the UN.

The draft resolution is not perfect but it does not set a precedent and Russia will vote in favor to support all the Palestinians and stop their suffering, he added.

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un general assembly recommends that security council reconsider 'favorably' Palestine's application for full UN membership - sputnik correspondent

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State Department Says US Sees Increase in Cyber Activity From Russia

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The State Department claimed on Friday that there is an increase in cyber activity emanating from Russia and it expects it to continue.

"We are seeing an increase in the frequency and type of activity coming out from Russia. This, I think, aligns with its full-scale invasion and illegal war in Ukraine," Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy Jennifer Bachus told a press briefing. "I think we can expect that this will continue to happen."

Bachus claimed that Russia is trying to calibrate what it is doing to avoid escalatory impacts. "But nonetheless it's carrying out destabilizing intrusions into cyber networks around Europe and into the United States as well," she added.

Earlier, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that accusing Russia of hacking is one of the world's most favorite hobbies. Russian authorities have repeatedly denied involvement in cyber attacks and hacking activities and expressed their readiness to cooperate in the fight against hackers and conduct a dialogue on cybersecurity.

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US to Vote Against Expanding Rights for Palestine at UN General Assembly - Spokesperson

UNITED NATIONS, May 10 (Sputnik) - The United States will vote against the newly prepared UN General Assembly resolution to expand Palestine's rights at this body, US mission to the United Nations spokesperson Nate Evans said on Friday.

"Since the attacks of October 7, President [Joe] Biden has been clear that sustainable peace in the region can only be achieved through a two-state solution, with Israel's security guaranteed, where Israelis and Palestinians can one day live side by side with equal measures of freedom and dignity," Evans said. "It remains the United States' view that unilateral measures at the United Nations and on the ground will not advance this goal. The General Assembly resolution being debated today is no exception and so the United States will be voting 'no' and encourages other member states to do the same."

The United States also warns that it will vote against a move at the UN Security Council to reconsider Palestine's bid for full membership in the United Nations, just as it did last month, Evans added.

Under the proposed US General Assembly resolution, Palestine would have the right to make proposals and amendments, including on behalf of groups of countries; be a co-author of

proposals and amendments; and speak in explanations of voting on behalf of groups. In addition, Palestine would have the right to put forward procedural proposals, including points of order; put forward requests to put certain proposals to a vote.

In April, the United States vetoed an Algeria-proposed resolution in the UN Security Council recommending that the General Assembly admit Palestine as a full member of the United Nations. In order for a country to become a member, the UN Security Council must accept a corresponding recommendation to the UN General Assembly and then the latter must support such a decision.

Palestine has observer status at the United Nations, while Israel has been a full member of the organization since 1948.

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US Congresswoman Says Introduced Bipartisan Bill to Ban Toxic Chemicals From Cosmetics

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - Republican US Congresswoman Anna Paulina Luna said on Friday that she introduced a bipartisan bill to ban the inclusion of certain toxic chemicals from cosmetic and personal care products.

"Cosmetics and personal care products containing chemicals that are dangerous to our health are marketed and sold to millions of Americans with little to zero regulation," Luna said in a statement. "Our women and families deserve better."

The bill, dubbed the No Toxic Chemicals in Cosmetics Act, is also backed by Democratic Congresswoman Yadira Caraveo and Republican Congressman Troy Nehls. The legislation declares cosmetics and sunscreens with parabens as adulterated, the statement said.

Parabens are used in products to prevent bacterial and fungal growth, but have been linked to skin cancer and hormonal disruption, the statement said. Parabens are often found in lipstick, mascara, sunscreen and lotion, the statement said.

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US to Announce New \$400Mln Military Aid Package for Ukraine Later on Friday - Reports

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration will announce later on Friday a new military aid package for Ukraine in the amount of \$400 million that will include Patriot and Stinger missiles as well as Bradley fighting vehicles, Politico reported.

The new package will also include so-called mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles (MRAPs), Javelin anti-armor systems and additional munitions, the report said.

The package will be the third one for Ukraine announced by the Biden administration after Congress approved a bill on April 24 securing more than \$60 billion in additional funding for

Kiev.

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US Extends PDVSA Wind-Down Transaction License Until November 15 - Treasury

WASHINGTON, May 10 (Sputnik) - The United States has extended General License 8N for transactions with PetrOleos de Venezuela, SA (PdVSA), facilitating essential operations and wind-down activities, the US Department of the Treasury said in a statement on Friday.

"The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is issuing Venezuela General License 8N, 'Authorizing Transactions Involving Petroleos de Venezuela, SA (PdVSA) Necessary for the Limited Maintenance of Essential Operations in Venezuela or the Wind Down of Operations in Venezuela for Certain Entities,' the statement said.

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