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7/23/24 Tuesday

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Cheatle Steps Down Amid Secret Service Scrutiny After Trump Assassination Attempt

Investigations are ongoing to determine how the 20-year-old gunman was able to fire at least six shots from a nearby rooftop just 400 feet away from the former president, killing one and critically injuring two others on July 13.

Amid bipartisan criticism, Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle announced her decision to resign Tuesday after the agency failed to prevent a 20-year-old shooter from opening fire on former President Donald Trump during a campaign rally in the US state of Pennsylvania earlier this month.

During a heated congressional hearing, Cheatle admitted it was the US Secret Service's (USSS) most shocking failure since President Ronald Reagan was shot in 1981. While Cheatle appeared committed to retaining her position and promised to investigate the incident, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle called for her to step down as her testimony failed to produce confidence in her continued leadership.

Writer and journalist Dan Lazare joined Sputnik's Political Misfits program Tuesday to discuss the Secret Services' high-profile fumble, as well as US Vice President Kamala Harris' shot at the White House. Lazare suggested that agency reforms are possible and hinted that Harris is not the Democratic pick Republicans wanted to see.

"I'm sure we'll see some [Secret Service] reforms. No doubt about it. The situation in Pennsylvania was really badly handled," said Lazare. "They farmed out some responsibilities to the local police and whenever that happens you sort of create a rift, a jurisdictional rift, into which an awful lot of stuff can fall."

Democratic and Republican leaders announced Tuesday they would set up a bipartisan task force to investigate the attempt on the former president's life. The panel will consist of seven Republicans and six Democrats, House Speaker Mike Johnson stated.

"In this case it seems to be the worst thing possible that this assassin – would-be assassin – fell through the cracks in between the two jurisdictions, and that Trump came within a millimeter of being killed," Lazare added. "And Cheatle was forced to fall on her sword. But that is the way the game is played. The problem is that there are so many other foul ups that no one ever falls on their sword, everyone passes the buck to someone else. So, this is a rare case in which someone actually takes responsibility."

"And I think that Democrats and Republicans – the Democrats, especially – felt they had to line up with Republicans and demand Cheatle's head on a platter and to vow that fundamental changes would take place. Democrats don't want to look like they're setting up Trump for another hit, right? That's the last thing they want to appear to be doing."

Harris' previous campaign for the White House, which began in January 2019, failed to live up to party leaders' expectations, the Washington Post reported, citing an unnamed Democratic strategist. At the time Harris did not appear to be the most eligible Democratic candidate who could go up against Trump, Sputnik's Michelle Witte noted.

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“There was a poll recently that showed that more Republicans than Democrats wanted Biden to stay in the race. I mean, Biden was a dream candidate as far as Trump was concerned,” Lazare explained. “It would have been a breeze to win over him and Harris will be much tougher. Harris was a dreadful candidate back in 2019. She didn't even make it into 2020.”

“But running in a primary is a bit different than running in a general campaign. A primary is a beauty contest and she didn't do very well, but a campaign's a different thing. She's up against Trump and this actually may show her best side. We don't know,” he continued. “She's spoken a few times the last couple of days. I've been actually somewhat impressed with how she's come off but we'll see, and I think she'll probably do better than most people expect.”

“And certainly abortion is her issue. She's going to use that as much as she can. She's going to accuse Trump of secretly planning to impose a nationwide abortion ban. And that is a credible charge. So, I think that she will be able to hit him really hard on that,” the show’s guest added. “But there's the economy. There's war. There are a lot of other bad things.”

While US Senator JD Vance (R-OH) is thought to appeal to white working class Trump supporters – as Trump himself has become a politician who now appeals to traditional pro-business Republican Party constituencies – Vance will not be able to discuss issues including women’s rights, abortion or reproductive health to the degree Harris will, Witte argued. Those issues have proven to be a major liability to the Republican Party, losing them moderate voters.

“Inflation has really, really hurt people, and that's going to hurt Harris. So it's gonna be a very tough, very close race. I think that Trump has a real fight on his hands. And as for Vance, he has all this moral majority baggage,” Lazare explained.

“Vance is a kind of a right-wing nationalist who believes in tough love that Americans have gotta have abortion taken away from them. They're going to have their drugs taken away from them,” he added. “They've got to have online porn taken away from them so they can get down to business and a lot of the electorate is not going to like that, but some of the electorate actually may be favorably disposed. And Vance is very articulate. He's very smart. He's a good performer. So, I just wouldn't count him out.”

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Biden Booted - Cartoon

After a widely panned debate performance in June placed his mental acuity under scrutiny, the president finally bowed out from his reelection campaign.

US President Joe Biden has officially withdrawn his candidacy in the 2024 US presidential election, but after the president had repeatedly reiterated his commitment to seeking a second term, questions persist over who convinced him to finally drop out. According to a new report from Politico the president was urged to end his campaign by his two closest aides, Mike Donilon and Steve Ricchetti.

Ricchetti visited Biden at his home in Delaware Friday while Donilon met with the president Saturday, the report claimed. The two showed the president dismal fundraising and polling data, which was reportedly the primary motivator in convincing the president to drop out of the race.

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The US president made his first public appearance since the decision Tuesday after a weekend spent recovering from Covid 19 at his home in Delaware. The president said he was “feeling well” as he boarded Air Force One but did not answer questions about the presidential race. Biden was en route to the White House, and it is expected he will explain his decision to drop out during an address to the nation Wednesday.

Biden’s decision to end his campaign is the “best thing right now for the Democratic Party,” said Anton Konev, a member of the Albany County Democratic Committee in the US state of New York who spoke to Sputnik Sunday. Konev claimed the change would allow Democrats to regroup and “reunite.”

Biden endorsed his vice president, Kamala Harris, to take his place as the Democratic nominee and his campaign funds have reportedly been transferred to her campaign. Although Harris is not yet the party's official nominee, many Democratic lawmakers and elites have endorsed her candidacy and a majority of delegates to the party's convention have said they will back her.

"I am proud to have secured the broad support needed to become our party's nominee, and as a daughter of California, I am proud that my home state's delegation helped put our campaign over the top. I look forward to formally accepting the nomination soon," Harris said in a statement posted on X.

"Over the next few months, I will be traveling across the country talking to Americans about everything that is on the line. I fully intend to unite our party, unite our nation and defeat Donald Trump in November," the statement read.

Democrats reportedly plan to hold a virtual roll call vote to confirm their nominee as early as August 1 and no later than August 7, although the Democratic National Convention will not begin until August 19. Only 300 signatures will be required to qualify for a virtual ballot, and an AP survey of convention delegates from across the US found Harris had the backing of more than 1,900 delegates as of Monday night.

On Tuesday, Harris visited the key battleground state of Wisconsin and quickly went on the offensive. "I know Donald Trump's type," Harris said, recounting her days as a prosecutor who pursued fraud cases, accordingto The New York Times.

The Vice President touted the prospect of representation for younger generations of Americans as well as her promise to protect access to abortion. Age has often been considered a weakness for both Trump, 78 and Biden, 81. Harris is 59 years old, six years younger than the average US retirement age of 65.

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Unknown Source on Sea Floor is Producing ‘Large Amounts’ of Oxygen

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, around half of Earth's oxygen comes from the ocean. The production can typically be linked to oceanic plankton, drifting plants, algae and certain bacteria, with all four are capable of photosynthesis.

Scientists are searching for the explanation behind a rather strange phenomenon: at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean there are large amounts of oxygen being produced by an unknown source.

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The finding is odd, to say the least, considering that photosynthesis is impossible in such deep, dark depths.

"We have another source of oxygen on the planet, other than photosynthesis," said Andrew Sweetman, a study co-author, and a sea-floor ecologist at the Scottish Association for Marine Science in Oban, UK.

He adds that the findings could have implications for understanding how life on Earth first began, as well as the possible impact of deep-sea mining in the region.

Sweetman first observed the phenomenon in 2013 while studying the Clarion-Clipperton zone which is an area between Mexico and Hawaii. At the time Sweetman believed he had faulty equipment when it showed him oxygen was being made on the seafloor.

Donald Canfield, a biogeochemist at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense, said the observation is "fascinating," but added that it is "frustrating, because it raises a lot of questions and not very many answers".

A group of researchers, whose study was published Monday in Nature, believe electrochemical activity is being produced by polymetallic nodules made of manganese and iron. These nodules look a bit like lumps of coal and are believed to be responsible for splitting H2O molecules.

The nodules have required millions of years to form and are made of minerals which can be used to create batteries, raising the possibility that mining companies may take an interest in the discovery.

But while these minerals could help with the transition to green energy, environmental scientists and activists believe deep-sea mining could upend ecosystems in unpredictable ways and affect the ocean's ability to shield our planet from the effects of climate change. Mining that took place in the 1980s left behind an environment in which even bacteria have not been able to recover, according to marine biologists.

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Dozens of Democrats Expected to Skip Netanyahu Speech to US Congress - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - Approximately 80 Democratic lawmakers in the House of Representatives and at least six in the Senate are expected to skip Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to the US Congress, CNN reported on Wednesday, citing public statements and unnamed sources.

The House Democratic leaders have left it up to representatives to decide whether to attend Netanyahu's speech, with a few publicly condemning the Israeli leader, the report said.

Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, the only Palestinian American member of Congress, called Netanyahu "a war criminal committing genocide against the Palestinian people."

Two other lawmakers, Ayanna Pressley and Greg Casar, will host a Zoom news conference with a coalition of progressives to pressure the Biden administration and Congress to stop supplying arms to Israel.

The United States supplies an estimated 69% of Israel's arms.

According to Gaza's health ministry, more than 39,000 people have been confirmed killed and more than 90,000 injured in the ten months of Israel's military operations in the Palestinian

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enclave.
However, The Lancet recently issued an estimate that the death toll may increase to more than 186,000 people or about 8% of Gaza's pre-war population of 2.3 million.

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Netanyahu to Meet Separately With Biden, Harris on Thursday - White House

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris will hold separate meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday to discuss Israel's ongoing military operations in Gaza among other issues, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement on Wednesday.
"President Biden will welcome Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on July 25 to the White House. The leaders will discuss developments in Gaza and progress towards a ceasefire and hostage release deal and the United States' ironclad commitment to Israel's security, including countering Iran's threats to Israel and the broader region," the statement said. "The Vice President will also meet separately with Prime Minister Netanyahu on July 25."
Following their meeting, Biden and Netanyahu will also meet with the families of US citizens held by Hamas, the statement added.
Netanyahu arrived in Washington on Monday to hold a series of meetings. Besides incumbent Biden and Harris, he has also requested a meeting with former President Donald Trump that is expected to happen on Friday at Mar-a-Lago in Florida. The Israeli Prime Minister will also address a joint session of Congress on Wednesday afternoon.

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US to Contribute $667Mln to Support Pandemic Prevention, Response - Treasury

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - The United States will contribute up to $667 million to the Pandemic Fund to help with pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, the Treasury Department said on Wednesday.
"Today, Secretary [of the Treasury Janet] Yellen announced at the Pandemic Fund Investment Case launch event on the margins of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting that the United States is committing up to $667 million, or one third of the $2 billion resource mobilization goal, to support the Pandemic Fund through 2026, subject to Congressional appropriations and the availability of funds," the Treasury Department said in a statement.
In addition to setting a goal of raising at least $2 billion in new direct funding, the Pandemic Fund has also set the goal of raising and at least that much in co-financing and is working to develop a sustainable resource mobilization plan, the statement said.
The United States has called on all existing donors to double their initial pledges to the Pandemic Fund and called for support from new partners, including governments, the private

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sector, philanthropies and civil society, the statement said.

"[W]e all have roles to play to advance the Pandemic Fund's mission to make sure we are better prepared for the next pandemic," the statement said.

The United States expressed hope that other donors will also support the Pandemic Fund before the next pledging event on October 31 on the margins of the Joint Finance and Health Ministers Meeting in Rio de Janeiro, the statement added.

The Pandemic Fund is a multilateral financing mechanism established in 2022 to provide grants for enhancing pandemic preparedness in low- and middle-income countries, according to the World Health Organization.

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US Secret Service Urges Trump Campaign to Cease Outdoor Rallies - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - US Secret Service officials are encouraging the Trump campaign to avoid outdoor rallies and other events that draw large crowds in the wake of the recent assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump, the Washington Post reported.

Secret Service agents expressed their concerns about large outdoor rallies moving forward with the Republican presidential nominee, the report said on Tuesday, citing three people familiar with the matter.

In response, Trump's team is scouting out potential indoor venues capable of meeting his often-large crowd capacity. However, indoor rallies are often more expensive and have lower crowd capacities than outdoor venues, despite being easier to secure.

Earlier on Tuesday, Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle resigned following widespread calls to do so after the attempted assassination of Trump at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13.

In a letter sent to her staff and quoted in the report, Cheatle said she assumed full responsibility for the incident.

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US Navy Issues $153Mln Contract to Evaluate Manned Air Vehicles - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - The US Navy has awarded KBR Wyle Services a more than $153 million contract to test and evaluate manned air vehicles of the Naval Test Wing Atlantic and Pacific squadrons, the Defense Department announced.

"KBR Wyle Services [of] Lexington Park, Maryland, is awarded a $153,606,550 ... contract," the Defense Department said in a press release on Tuesday.

The contract provides for certified and qualified operational contractor support services aircrew to support mission essential testing and evaluation of all manned air vehicles under the operational responsibility of the Naval Test Wing Atlantic and Pacific squadrons, the release said.

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Most of the work on the contract will be performed at the Patuxent River, Maryland (85%), with the rest at Point Mugu, California (10%) and the Navy's China Lake testing ground in California (5%), the release added.

Work on the contract is expected to last just over five years and is to be completed in September 2029, according to the release.

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Global Electric Vehicle Leader Tesla Has Weaker Second-Quarter

NEW YORK, July 24 (Sputnik) - Global electric vehicle industry leader Tesla has reported weaker-than-expected earnings for the three months to June, after a drop in automotive sales for a second straight quarter.

Tesla reported second-quarter net income of $1.5 billion, a 45% decline compared to the year-earlier quarter's $2.7 billion. Revenue improved by 2% from $24.93 billion a year earlier but only due to the energy generation and storage business, which sells and installs big backup batteries for residential, commercial, and utility use.

Automotive sales itself dropped 7% to $19.9 billion from $21.27 billion in the same quarter a year ago.

Tesla remains the No. 1 selling electric vehicle in the United States and leads the global industry too in terms of brand representation. But it is also losing market share to a growing number of rivals at home and abroad, especially those with better innovative and styled cars.

In the just-ended quarter, Tesla offered discounts and other incentives, including subsidized financing deals, in China and the United States, to try and spur sales. Those actions further eroded the company’s profitability.

Globally, Tesla and China’s BYD dominate the electric vehicle market, becoming direct competitors in the Chinese market as well as much of the world outside the United States. Other electric vehicle startups from China, such as Nio, Li Auto, and Xpeng, are gearing up for a slice of the international market.

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Elon Musk Says Starlink Now Active in a Gaza Hospital

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - US billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk said that Starlink internet service is now active in a Gaza hospital.

"Starlink is now active in a Gaza Hospital with the support of [United Arab Emirates] and Israel," Musk said on X on Tuesday.

Earlier this month, Israel and the United Nations were discussing the deployment of Elon Musk’s SpaceX Starlink systems to bolster the security of aid workers in Gaza amid Israeli airstrikes in the enclave, where the United Nations informed Israel that it needs Starlink terminals to resume the aid distribution in the Gaza Strip.

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In response to the UN demand, Israel expressed its concern about the possibility of Hamas using Starlink terminals for its military purposes More specifically, the Israeli intelligence was concerned that Starlink systems could facilitate Hamas' attacks without being detected.

Israel has been conducting military operations in the Gaza Strip in response to an attack on its territory by Palestinian movement Hamas on October 7, 2023. The United Nations warned in June that a continued offensive and curbs on humanitarian access had further reduced the flow of relief aid to Gaza.

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Black Lives Matter Calls for Public Participation in Democrat Nomination Process

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - Black Lives Matter, in a statement, called on the Democratic Party to establish a process allowing public participation in the nomination process rather than relying solely on party delegates.

"We call on the Democratic Party to create a process that allows for public participation in the nomination process, not just a nomination by party delegates," Black Lives Matter wrote on X on Tuesday.

According to the statement, installing Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris, who is African American, as the Democratic nominee along with an unknown vice president without a public voting process would make the party seem hypocritical.

"A 24-hour process of talking to party bosses is not democratic, nor is it a process Democrats should be proud of. We do not live in a dictatorship. Delegates are not oligarchs," the statement added.

Earlier today, Harris announced that she has secured the support of enough delegates to clinch the Democratic nomination.

On Sunday, Biden announced his withdrawal from the 2024 US presidential race and endorsed Harris as his replacement.

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Google Coasts to Comfortable Second Quarter Despite Heated AI Competition

NEW YORK, July 24 (Sputnik) - Internet search engine leader Google helped its holding company Alphabet coast to comfortable second quarter earnings, outperforming Wall Street's expectations for both revenue and net profit, despite heated competition in the space of artificial intelligence and cloud computing.

"We are innovating at every layer of the AI stack," Alphabet Chief Executive Sundar Pichai said in a statement on Tuesday that was released along with the company's financial results for the April-June period.

Pichai also said the strong performance highlighted "ongoing strength in search and

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momentum in cloud."

Alphabet reported sales of nearly $85 billion for the April-June period, surpassing by about $500 million the consensus forecast of Wall Street analysts. Net profit per share was $1.89 - four cents above the average forecast.

Google and its rivals such as Microsoft and Amazon have been outspending each other in the AI race. Capital spending in the latest quarter for the search engine giant was $13.2 billion, up from $12 billion in the previous quarter to March. It was higher than what most analysts predicted, although lower than the $20 billion spent in the second quarter to June 2023.

Google did particularly well in cloud services for the current quarter, with revenue in the space exceeding $10 billion for the first time for a quarter. In the prior three-month period to March, it reported $8 billion for cloud services.

The second-quarter performance restored some cheer for investors in Alphabet, who were downcast earlier in the day by news its proposed $23 billion takeover of cloud services operator Wiz had been aborted by the smaller firm's decision to end the deal.

Wiz's products - which include software to prevent, actively detect and respond to crises in the cloud space - would have helped Google be more competitive against the likes of Microsoft and Amazon.

The global cloud computing market size was worth an estimated $600 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow by more than 20% a year between now and 2030.

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Bolivia's Potosi Governor Praises Russian Humanitarian Visit, Hopes for Continued Support

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - The visit by Russia's Unity Foundation and cosmonaut Sergey Kud-Sverchkov had a highly positive impact, Bolivia's Potosi Governor Jhonny Mamani told Sputnik.

Russia's Unity Foundation held a series of humanitarian events to support cancer patients in Bolivia from July 13-21, which were led by the foundation's President Alena Kuzmenko and Kud-Sverchkov and space researcher Anastasia Stepanova.

"In truth, as the Autonomous Departmental Government of Potosí, we are very pleased, happy, and satisfied with the visit we had from the UNITY Foundation, in which we had a very positive impact on the therapy we had with the brothers from the Daniel Bracamonte Hospital, more specifically with the children who suffer from cancer," Mamani said. "This visit by the cosmonaut Serguei Kud-Sverchkov has had a very positive impact."

Mamani pointed out that they hope to coordinate more activities in the future and to be able to have bilateral relations with the Russian side and with the UNITY Foundation for the benefit of children and adults who suffer from cancer.

Ivan Zambrana, the head of Bolivia's Space agency, told Sputnik that it was a pleasure to receive Kud-Sverchkov and the Russian delegation, and shared that he hopes there will be more such visits.

"All of them, without a doubt, are special people with the gift of communication and the ability to create an atmosphere of friendship and trust," he said. "Without a doubt, we will never forget

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this visit, which we hope will be repeated soon."

Zambrana added that the Russian humanitarian mission visit to children with cancer, organized by the Unity Foundation, was undoubtedly of great importance as it provided the patients with a distraction from the harsh realities they faced.

"It inspired them to dream, like any other child, of space exploration and other triumphs of the human spirit," he said. "The visit showed them that, despite geographical and cultural distances, the nobility of spirit of our friends from Russia generously endowed them with joy even within the walls of their hospitals."

During the 12-day visit, The Russian delegation held meetings and art therapy classes with oncology patients and cancer survivors in the cities of Santa Cruz, La Paz, Oruro, and Potosi,

In four hospitals, the oncology patients -together with Kud-Sverchkov and space researcher Anastasia Stepanova- painted their dreams on metallic pieces of paper that look like the surface of 2 Marathon satellites, as part of the the Dream Satellite art project. Next year, in collaboration with Roscosmos, a manned Soyuz rocket covered with the children's painted dreams will go to the ISS with cosmonaut Kud-Sverchkov on board.

The Unity team also gave lectures at local universities on topics such as global charity initiatives, the importance of psychological support for cancer patients, human space flights, and space research.

The humanitarian mission was conducted with support from the Russian Gorchakov Fund, the Russian space agency Roscosmos, other space companies such as Agat, Gonets, and TsNIIMash, as well as the governors of Potosi and Oruro provinces in Bolivia.

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Hackers Leak Internal Documents Stolen From Major US Contractor Leidos in 2022 - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - Unidentified hackers have leaked a batch of documents stolen from Leidos Holdings Inc. - one of the largest providers of IT services to the US government, Bloomberg reported, citing a person in the know.

Leidos is currently investigating the incident after having learned about it recently, the report said on Tuesday.

The company believes that the documents were stolen back in 2022 in a breach of a Diligent Corp. system that it used to host information gathered in internal investigations.

Leidos is known for providing IT services to the departments of Defense, Homeland Security, NASA and other US and foreign government agencies and companies.

The Defense Department told Sputnik in a statement that it had no information to provide on the incident.

In May, the US Air Force awarded Leidos with a $750 million contract to provide it with information technology (IT) and telecommunication services.

In June, the Defense Department named Leidos one of the five companies that were awarded a total of $1.5 billion to perform cybersecurity, IT and information enterprise services.

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US Detains Tens of Thousands More Illegals Than It Acknowledged - Official Report

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - The US government regularly undercounts by tens of thousands the number of illegal immigrants it holds for indefinite periods of time in detention facilities, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) announced in a new report.

"In its public reports, ICE (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement) understates the total number of people it detains," the report said on Tuesday.

In its calculations, ICE excludes people who were first booked into certain temporary facilities before being transferred to immigration detention facilities for their time in detention, the GAO pointed out.

"This exclusion amounts to tens of thousands of people," the report said.

The number of arrests varied from calendar years 2019 through 2022 but increased overall, from 133,541 arrests for 2019 to 154,204 arrests for 2022. However, since 2019, removals have declined significantly from 276,122 for 2019 to 81,547 for 2022, the GAO said.

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China Has Outstripped US in Diplomatic Presence Across Indian Ocean - Lawmakers

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - China is outpacing the United States in its influence and diplomatic representation in all the island nations of the Indian Ocean and it is vital that Washington direct enough resources to catch up, US Congressmen Ami Bera said in a congressional hearing on the region.

"China's diplomatic presence in all six island nations of the Indian Ocean outpaces our own and we have got to catch up,' Representative Ami Bera from California told a hearing of the US House Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday.

During the hearing, Congresswoman Young Kim also told the hearing that China was rapidly increasing its diplomatic, financial and strategic presence across the entire region.

"The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is making key inroads into choke points on the Indian Ocean," Kim said. "I am particularly concerned about the Maldives and its growing relationship with the CCP."

The Maldives were now $1.4 billion in debt to China and the two countries signed an additional 20 bilateral agreements in January during Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu's visit to Beijing, Kim added.

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US Must Join India to Block China's Influence in Choice of Next Dalai Lama - Diplomat

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WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - The United States must work closely with India to ensure that the choice of a successor to the 89-year-old Dalai Lama is not subject to "undue pressure" from the People's Republic of China, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu told Congress in testimony on Tuesday.

"It is imperative that we work closely with India to ensure the issue of the Dalai Lama's succession is not subject to undue pressure from Beijing," Lu told a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC).

The Dalai Lama is unique among world spiritual and national leaders in that he is believed to be the latest in a long line of reincarnated figures. After he dies, his successor is always sought out a few years later by Tibetan priests as a reincarnated young child.

"What may happen to the succession of the Dalai Lama is incredibly important," Lu said.

China views the current 14th Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, as a dangerous separatist seeking to remove Tibet from China. The Dalai Lama, who has won the Nobel Peace Prize, denies the charges and remains in exile in northeast India after fleeing Tibet as a young man in 1959.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) -

US ELECTION RACE

* Vice President Kamala Harris said on Tuesday that she has secured the support of enough delegates to clinch the Democratic presidential nomination.
* US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries endorsed Harris' 2024 presidential campaign, following President Joe Biden's withdrawal from the race.

MIDDLE EAST

* US President Joe Biden is scheduled to hold a bilateral discussion with Isareli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on July 25, the White House said in a statement on Tuesday.
* Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said he changed the date of the meeting with Netanyahu at the Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida to July 26th at Netanyahu's request.

FRANCE

* French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday that he does not intend to appoint a new prime minister and change the government at least until mid-August.
* The left-wing New Popular Front bloc, which won the French parliamentary elections, has nominated a single candidate, Lucie Castets, for the post of prime minister.

RUSSIA-CHINA COOPERATION

* Beijing welcomes the participation of Russian enterprises in the modernization of China,

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Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang said at the opening ceremony of the VI China-Russia Energy Business Forum in Moscow on Tuesday.
* China is ready to develop cooperation with Russia in the energy sector, as well as maintain the stability of energy production chains, Chinese President Xi Jinping said.
* Russian companies are ready to participate in issues of ensuring energy security and energy consumption in China and hopes the country will increase its direct investments in the energy sector, Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin said.

US SECRET SERVICE DIRECTOR RESIGNS
* US Secret Service Director (USSS) Kimberly Cheatle has stepped down from her position following widespread calls for her resignation over the attempted assassination of Republican nominee Donald Trump.
* Cheatle's resignation is a step toward accountability but a comprehensive review of the USSS security failures that led to an assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump is necessary to prevent future incidents, US House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer said.

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE
* Hungary will not approve the allocation of $7 billion for weapons to Ukraine through the European Peace Facility until Kiev resolves the issue of oil transit from Russia, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said on Tuesday.
* The European Commission has received a letter from Hungary and Slovakia on Ukraine's decision to block the passage of Russian oil through the Druzhba pipeline, European Commission trade and agriculture spokesman Olof Gill said.
* The transit of energy resources via Ukraine has long become a "manipulation button" for the Kiev regime; its actions were encouraged from the West, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.
* An oil refinery in Russia's Tuapse continues to operate after the recent attack by Ukrainian drones, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said.

FROZEN RUSSIAN ASSETS
* The United States has directed all financial institutions holding Russian sovereign assets to provide a notice about such assets no later than August 2, according to reporting instructions published by the Treasury Department on Tuesday.
* Russia will explore the possibility of legal prosecution of those who are involved in the decision to confiscate Russian assets, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

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Congressman Ogles Introduces Resolution to Impeach Harris for Handling of US Border

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US Congressman Andy Ogles introduced articles of

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impeachment against US Vice President Kamala Harris for her handling of the border crisis and her role in covering up President Joe Biden's lack of fitness to serve.

"Time and again, Kamala Harris has refused to uphold her oath to the US Constitution, and she must be impeached. Her breathtaking incompetence as Border Czar has allowed a crisis of drugs, rape, and murder to flood the streets of America," the Daily Caller reported Ogles as saying.

Moreover, Harris breached the public's trust by failing to invoke the 25th Amendment after it became clear that Biden was mentally and physically unfit to serve as president, Ogles reportedly said.

The resolution calls to impeach Harris for high crimes and misdemeanors.

US Congresswoman Elise Stefanik also introduced a resolution on Tuesday to condemn Harris' handling of the border crisis.

"House Republicans will vote on my resolution to condemn Kamala Harris' failure as Joe Biden's border czar. Kamala Harris' failed leadership led to the most catastrophic open border crisis in history," Stefanik said in a statement.

Stefanik's resolution condemns Harris' failure to secure the United States' borders, affirms that the American people deserve elected officials who will execute policies to fix the border crisis and states that the continuation of the Biden administration's border policies would be disastrous for the United States.

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US, EU Close to Deal on Dividing $50Bln Loan to Ukraine - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 24 (Sputnik) - The United States and the European Union are close to finalizing a deal on splitting up contributions to a $50 billion loan to Ukraine, Politico reported on Tuesday.

Washington and Brussels would provide $20 billion each to the loan, while Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom provide the remaining $10 billion, the report said, citing two officials familiar with the proceedings.

The agreement would put the group on track to get Ukraine the loan by the end of the year, the report said.

An outline of the deal will be discussed at a Group of Seven finance ministers meeting on Wednesday, the report said.

In June, G7 leaders agreed to give a $50 billion loan to Ukraine using funds generated from frozen Russian assets.

However, the deal could face delays if the US Congress views the agreement as risking US taxpayer money, the report said.

The US wants reassurances that the assets will remain frozen until Russia compensates, the report said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that the seizure of Russian assets by Western countries will not go unpunished.

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Vice President Harris Leads Former President Trump In US Election Poll - Reuters/Ipsos

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Vice President Kamala Harris is leading former President Donald Trump by 2 precentage points in the 2024 US presidential race, a Reuters/Ipsos poll showed Tuesday.

It was one of the first polls taken since Harris agreed to incumbent President Joe Biden's decision to make her his replacement as their Democratic Party's candidate in the November election.

The poll found that 44 percent of respondents support Harris, while 42 percent back Trump.

The outcome reverses the two-point deficit Biden faced against Trump in another Reuers/Ipsos poll last week, just before he exited the presidential race.

But some skeptics pointed to so-called flaws in the Reuters-Ipsos poll, noting that it surveyed 426 Democrats versus 376 Republicans - a bias in Harris' favor. The margin of error for the poll is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Biden quit the 2024 presidential race after a disastrous televised debate with Trump that led to pressure within his Democratic party for him to make way for another candidate.

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Biden Admin. Seeks $812Mln to Boost Diplomatic Presence in Central, South Asia - Lu

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration is seeking more than $806 million in funding for fiscal year 2025 to boost the US diplomatic presence across South and Central Asia, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu said in a congressional hearing on Tuesday.

"The president is requesting $585.7 million for South Asia," Lu told the US House Foreign Affairs Committee. "In Central Asia we are requesting $220.7 million."

Lu explained that the funding will be used to bolster the participation of nations in the region in the Indo-Pacific Quad grouping of the United States, Japan, Australia and India.

"They will help provide [fiscal transparency and] debt management to help countries in the region minimize their vulnerability to People's Republic of China coercive debt," Lu said.

The funding would also enable the US government to maintain robust levels of assistance to support the independence and territorial integrity of its partner nations in Central Asia, including aid for their border security and counterterrorism programs, Lu added.

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Some 400 US Jews Refuse to Leave Congress in Protest of Netanyahu Arrival - Advocacy Group

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Some 400 demonstrators have gathered in Congress and are refusing to leave in a protest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's arrival in the United States and of the Biden administration supplying weapons to Israel for its military operations in Gaza, the US advocacy group Jewish Voice for Peace said on Tuesday.

"Four-hundred American Jews mark Netanyahu's arrival by refusing to leave Congress until our government listens to the will of the people and STOPS ARMING ISRAEL!" the advocacy group said in a thread posted on the social media platform X.

The post includes a picture of hundreds of protesters sitting on the floor in the Capitol building with banners saying "Jews to Biden: Stop Arming Israel," "Ceasefire Now," and "Let Gaza Live."

"One day before Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu addresses a joint session of Congress and days before his meeting with President Joe Biden, we're here to demand an arms embargo NOW. We refuse to have our tax dollars continue to fund genocide," the advocacy group said.

Netanyahu arrived in Washington on Monday to hold a series of meetings, including with Biden on Thursday and his opponent Donald Trump on Friday, as well as to address a joint session of Congress on Wednesday night.

Earlier in the month, Israel and Hamas resumed talks on a ceasefire in Gaza in exchange for the return of Israeli hostages. The talks have been frozen since May when Biden announced a plan for a ceasefire deal in Gaza and an exchange of hostages.

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US Geological Survey Says No Injuries After 'Hydrothermal Explosion' at Yellowstone

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Nobody has been injured as a result of a hydrothermal explosion at Yellowstone National Park, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said on Tuesday.

"At around 10:00 a.m. MST on July 23, 2024, a small hydrothermal explosion occurred in Yellowstone National Park in the Biscuit Basin thermal area, about 2.1 miles (3.5 km) northwest of Old Faithful. Numerous videos of the event were recorded by visitors. The boardwalk was damaged, but there were no reports of injury," the USGS Yellowstone Volcano Observatory said in a statement.

Footage of the incident showed tourists running away from the explosion, which appeared to send large amounts of steam, water and debris into the air.

Parking lots and boardwalks in Biscuit Basin are closed for visitor safety, the statement said.

Yellowstone National Park geologists are investigating the event, the statement said. The explosion does not reflect activity within Yellowstone's volcanic system and is not a sign of impending volcanic eruptions, the statement added.

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Oil Price Sinks Further On Mideast Ceasefire Talk, US Crude Nears $75

NEW YORK, July 23 (Sputnik) - Oil prices plumbed new six-week lows Tuesday, sending US crude to mid-$70-per-barrel levels, as the prospect of an Israel-Hamas ceasefire in the Middle East eased the geopolitical risk premium in a market already disappointed with summer fuel consumption in the United States.

Efforts by Egypt and Qatar to broker a ceasefire in the Gaza war have gained momentum over the past month, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu telling families of hostages held by Hamas that a deal to secure their release could be near. Netanyahu is expected to meet US President Joe Biden at the White House on Thursday.

Good news for Middle East peace, however, means the opposite for the oil market, with crude prices having gained a premium from the proximity of the war zone to some of the world's biggest oil producers, which include Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates.

Reduced geopolitical risk aside, the bullish case for oil has also been dented by poor fuel consumption data reported by the Energy Information Administration (IEA) a month after the start of the summer season in the United States, the world's largest oil consumer.

That, along with weaker demand in China, which ranks just behind the US in fuel consumption, has stalled this year's rally in oil.

US West Texas Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude's most actively traded contract, September, settled Tuesday's session at $76.96 per barrel — down $1.44, or 1.7%. WTI lost 4% over the course of two prior weeks and is down a further 3.5% this week. In the latest session, it fell to $76.41, a low not seen since early June.

UK-origin Brent crude for September settled at $81.01 per barrel, down $1.39, or 1.7%. The global crude benchmark fell 4.5% over two prior weeks and is down 1.5% this week. On Tuesday, it hit a six-week low of $80.53.

While the oil market seemed to be on the ropes now, it could rebound if the EIA reports better US fuel consumption in the near term.

The agency's dataset for the week ended July 19 is due on Wednesday. In the prior week to July 12, the EIA reported a build of 3.328 million barrels in gasoline stockpiles versus a forecast decline of 1.7 million barrels instead. Gasoline is the primary motor fuel in the United States and makes up the largest component of the country's energy mix.

In distillates, the EIA reported a build of 3.454 million barrels for the week to July 12, against an expected 500,000-barrel drop. Distillates are primarily processed into the diesel required by trucks, buses, and ships, and also go into making airplane fuel.

Also weighing on oil had been data showing China's refinery output falling 3.7% in June from a year earlier.

China's economy also grew by just 4.7% in the second quarter of this year, its slowest growth since the first quarter of 2023, well below the forecast of 5.1%.

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US Senate Receives Notice of Senator Menendez's Resignation - Welch

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US Senator Bob Menendez has notified the Senate that he intends to resign following his conviction on federal bribery and corruption charges, Senator Peter Welch said on Tuesday.

"Today, we have before the Senate a communication regarding the resignation of Senator Menendez. Without objection, the letter will be printed in the record and spread upon the journal," Welch said.

Menendez reportedly intends to step down effective on August 20.

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US Directs Financial Entities to Disclose if They Hold Russian Assets by Aug. 2 - Treasury

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The United States has directed all financial institutions holding Russian sovereign assets to provide a notice about such assets no later than August 2, according to reporting instructions published by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) on Tuesday.

"Pursuant to section 104(a) of the REPO for Ukrainians Act, all financial institutions at which Russian sovereign assets are located, and that know or should know of such assets, must provide notice of such assets to OFAC no later than August 2, 2024 or within ten days of the detection of such assets," the Treasury Department said in a press release.

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Trump Says 'Absolutely' Willing to Debate US Vice President Harris

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he is willing to debate Vice President Kamala Harris, after she replaced President Joe Biden as the Democratic Party's presumptive nominee.

"Oh yes, absolutely, I'd want to," Trump said on a press call, in response to a question about whether he is willing to debate Harris. "I think it's important."

Harris is not the best possible candidate for the Democratic Party, Trump said.

On Sunday, Biden announced his withdrawal from the 2024 US presidential race and endorsed Harris as his replacement.

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Trump Says Harris Would Make US Border Crisis 'Exponentially Worse' if Elected President

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US Vice President Kamala Harris would make the United States' border crisis exponentially worse if elected president in November, former US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday.

"If she becomes president, Kamala Harris will make the invasion exponentially worse," Trump said during a press call.

Trump said that he would terminate every open-borders policy of the Biden administration on day one of his administration.

National Border Patrol Council President Paul Perez also said that the situation at the border would become "even more ridiculous" if Harris becomes president.

On Sunday, US President Joe Biden announced his withdrawal from the 2024 presidential race and endorsed Harris as his replacement.

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US VP Harris Says Has Secured Support of Enough Delegates to Get Democratic Nomination

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US Vice President Kamala Harris on Tuesday announced that she has secured the support of enough delegates to clinch the Democratic nomination.

"I am told as of this morning that we have earned the support of enough delegates to secure the Democratic nomination," Harris said during a rally in Milwaukee.

Harris added that she would spend the coming weeks uniting the Democratic Party to ensure readiness for victory in November.

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Harris Says She Knows 'Trump's Type' Referring to Her Past As A Courtroom Prosecutor

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris on Tuesday said that she knows Donald Trump's type, referencing her experience as a prosecutor and Attorney General of California, where she dealt with various perpetrators and fraudsters.

"Before I was elected United States Senator, I was elected Attorney General of the State of California, and I was a courtroom prosecutor before then, and in those roles, I took on perpetrators of all kinds, predators who abused women, fraudsters who ripped off consumers, cheaters who broke the rules for their own gain, so hear me when I say I know Donald Trump's type," Harris said during a rally in Milwaukee.

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US Working on More Steps on Georgia, Including Suspension of Assistance - State Dept

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The United States is working on additional measures regarding Georgia, including the possible suspension of assistance programs and cancellation of political engagements, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Josh Huck said on Tuesday.
"We are working closely with interagency colleagues on additional steps, including potential redirection or suspension of assistance programs and the cancellation of political engagements," Huck said during a congressional hearing.

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UPDATE: US Invites Sudan's Rival Forces to Ceasefire Talks in Switzerland – Blinken

(Updates with additional details in para 4, background in para 5)
WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) – The United States has invited the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to take part in ceasefire talks that are expected to begin August 14 in Switzerland, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement on Tuesday.
“Building from the earlier Jeddah processes co-facilitated with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United States has invited the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to participate in ceasefire talks mediated by the United States to begin on August 14, 2024, in Switzerland,” the statement said.

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Saudi Arabia will be co-hosting the talks which will also include the African Union, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Nations as observers, according to the statement.

Later in the day, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said that Washington has not yet received any response from the parties, but remains hopeful that they will agree to sit down at the negotiation table to bring hostilities to an end.

On April 15, 2023, clashes broke out between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The parties to the conflict have since introduced several temporary nationwide ceasefires, but none has helped settle the conflict.

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us working additional steps on georgia, including potential suspension of aid programs, cancellation of political engagements - state department

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UPDATE-Harris Not Solid, Has Record of Decisions Based on Political Trends - Ex-DOJ Prosecutor

(Adds comment from US Republican congressional candidate Kathleen Winn in paras 3-5)

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) -Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris is not a solid candidate and has a record of making decisions in public office that seem to follow political trends, former Justice Department prosecutor Ronald Sievert told Sputnik on Tuesday.

"As for her record as a DA...It sounds spotty, with her embracing two different extremes at different times - from strong against drugs and crime to weak," Sievert said. "I don't know the facts behind the cases and policies but my guess is she was reacting to political trends at the time."

US Republican congressional candidate Kathleen Winn also told Sputnik that Harris' record as an attorney general was questionable.

"I knew [Harris] her when she was the attorney general because I worked for our Attorney General in Arizona at the same time, and she didn't do good things for the police, everything that she's supported is against the Constitution and the goodwill of the American people," Winn said.

Everything that Harris has done has been detrimental to the United States and to Americans, Winn added.

Sievert pointed out that Harris failed to address the crisis on the US southern border after President Joe Biden put her in the lead role to resolve the issue.

"She has let in 15 million illegals including thousands of criminals and hundreds on the terror watch list," Sievert said. "She has wanted to defund the police and abolish ICE [US Immigration and Customs Enforcement]. She is not solid."

Sievert expects Republicans will now start to expose Harris' failures and educate the US public

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about them.

On Sunday, President Joe Biden announced that he dropped out of the 2024 US election after he decided it was in the best interest of the Democratic party and the United States. He endorsed Harris to be the Democratic party's nominee for US president, which she accepted.

The Democratic frontrunner is expected to secure her spot as the party's nominee during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago from August 19-22, but there's a possibility it could happen sooner in a virtual roll call due to legal issues.

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Trump Says Switched Meeting at Mar-a-Lago to Friday at Netanyahu's Request

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he changed the date of the meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida to July 26th at the latter's request.

"At the request of Bibi Netanyahu, we have switched this meeting to Friday, July 26th at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida," Trump said on his social media platform Truth Social.

On Monday, Netanyahu arrived in Washington for meetings with US President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and congressional leaders.

Netanyahu is scheduled to address a joint session of Congress on Wednesday.

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Harris Not Solid, Has Record of Decisions Based on Political Trends - Ex-DOJ Prosecutor

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Biden To Hold Bilateral Meeting With Netanyahu On Thursday Afternoon - White House

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden is scheduled to hold a bilateral discussion with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday, the White House said in a statement.
"The President will hold a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel," the statement said on Tuesday.

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Pentagon Says Ready to Support Any Duly Elected US President

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The Defense Department is ready to support any duly elected president of the United States, Pentagon spokesperson Pat Ryder said on Tuesday.
"The Pentagon, of course, will always support the commander-in-chief, as elected by the people of the United States," Ryder said during a press briefing.
Ryde made the comment in response to a question about whether the Defense Department is prepared to potentially operate under its first female commander-in-chief.
US Vice President Kamala Harris would be the first female president in the history of the United States if elected in November.
Harris replaced President Joe Biden as the Democratic Party's presumptive nominee, after Biden announced an end to his reelection bid on Sunday.

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Biden Makes First Appearance Since Withdrawing From Race, Recovering From Covid

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden has made his first public appearance since pulling out of the presidential race last week and recovering from COVID-19, TV footage showed on Tuesday.
"I'm feeling well," Biden told reporters as he boarded Air Force One at Dover airport.

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Biden was en route to the White House, where he is expected to arrive later this afternoon.

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US Rejects Giving Time to Houthis to Investigate Before Releasing Detainees - Diplomat

UNITED NATIONS, July 23 (Sputnik) - The United States rejects the notion that Yemen's Ansar Allah movement, whose members are also known as Houthis, should be provided time to conduct investigations before releasing detainees they hold, US Ambassador Robert Wood said on Tuesday.

"We reject the notion that the Houthi should be given time to conduct so-called investigations before releasing people that have been illegally detained," Wood said during a UN Security Council meeting on Yemen.

Wood pointed out that the Ansar Allah movement is not a government and has no capacity to investigate anything.

On June 10, Ansar Allah said they had detained an unspecified number of individuals for their links to the US Central Intelligence Agency and for allegedly carrying out intelligence and sabotage activities in Yemen.

In addition, Ansar Allah accused the detainees of using their positions at the US embassy to carry out "subversive activities."

After the US embassy left the city of Sanaa, the individuals continued to carry out their subversive programs under the cover of international organizations, according to Ansar Allah.

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US Expects Quad Leaders' Summit to Be Held This Year, Biden to Attend - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The United States expects the Quad summit to take place later in 2024 and all leaders, including US President Joe Biden, will attend the gathering, Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Nancy Jackson announced.

The Quad refers to the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between the United States, Australia, India and Japan.

"Yes, there is our expectation India will be the host of the Quad summit sometime later this year," Jackson said on Tuesday.

However, the participating countries have not yet announced potential specific dates, Jackson said.

Jackson expressed confidence that all of the countries' leaders would be able to participate.

"It would be organized in a way so that all the leaders can participate, and our expectation is that they would," Jackson said.

On Monday, the US State Department said that Secretary of State Antony Blinken will join next week his counterparts from Australia, India and Japan for a Quad foreign ministers meeting in

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Tokyo.
White House physician Kevin O'Connor said in a memorandum on Tuesday that Biden has fully recovered from a COVID-19 infection.

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Trump Says Will Now Meet Netanyahu At Mar-a-Lago On Thursday Instead of Wednesday

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Former President Donald Trump announced he is set to host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Palm Beach, Florida, on Thursday.
"Looking forward to welcoming Bibi Netanyahu at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, on Thursday," Trump said on Tuesday in a Truth Social post.
However, Israeli journalist Barak Ravid said that the meeting between Trump and Netanyahu is expected on Friday morning.
Earlier today, Trump said he is looking forward to welcoming Netanyahu at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida on Wednesday.

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US Has Not Yet Read Beijing Declaration Ending Palestinian Split – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) – The US has not yet read the declaration signed in Beijing by representatives of Palestinian factions, putting an end to the political rift between them, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Tuesday.
Earlier in the day, representatives of 14 Palestinian factions, including Hamas and Fatah, signed a declaration in Beijing on ending the split, strengthening Palestinian national unity, and forming a joint government in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the future.
“So, we have not yet reviewed the text of the so-called Beijing Declaration. Of course, we will do that,” Miller said during a press briefing.
The official pointed out that the US has on several occasions made clear that it does not see a future for Hamas, which it recognizes as a terrorist organization, in the governance of the enclave. However, it does want to see the Palestinian Authority rule over a unified Gaza and West Bank.
When asked whether the declaration would affect the ongoing negotiations to achieve a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, Miller said that it should in no way have an impact on the matter.
A reconciliation dialogue between various Palestinian factions took place in Beijing from July 21 to 23. The resulting document calls for the creation of a Palestinian government of national accord to control both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Mousa Abu Marzook, the deputy chairman of the Hamas political office and the head of the Hamas delegation to Beijing, said that the declaration would be a historic step on the path to reconciliation and the creation of an

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independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Soon after Hamas won the parliamentary election in Palestine in 2006 and its supporters came to power in the Gaza Strip, sharp differences arose between itself and Fatah, spilling into military actions. The differences have not been settled since then.

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biden makes first appearance since dropping out of presidential race, recovering from covid - tv footage

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trump says will meet netanyahu at mar-a-lago on Thursday, after previously saying he would meet him on Wednesday

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US Competes With Russia, China in Asia to Counter Alleged Disinformation – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) – The United States is struggling with alleged Russian and Chinese disinformation in South and Central Asia as well as to prevent terrorist groups from threatening its security in the region, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu said in a written testimony prepared for delivery to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday.

"We are engaged in an important struggle in South and Central Asia. It is the struggle to compete with the PRC, to counter Russian and PRC disinformation, and to prevent terrorist groups from threatening our security," the testimony said.

In her written testimony prepared for the same hearing, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator for Asia Änjali Kaur said that the 2025 funding will provide an opportunity for the United States to serve as a "reliable alternative" to Russia and China in Central Asia.

According to Kaur, over the past five years, USAID managed to reduce consumption of Russian media in the region by as much as 10%.

In May, US State Department Global Engagement Center Coordinator and Special Envoy James Rubin said that the US government still does not have a formal threat assessment of the information damage caused by China and Russia to its interests around the world.

Russian officials have said that the collective West is doing what they are best at - spreading disinformation and increasing anti-Russian hysteria, including to justify the unprecedented militarization of Europe, and then blaming Russia.

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Trump Says Looking Forward to Meeting Netanyahu at Mar-a-Lago Residence on July 24

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he is looking forward to welcoming Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida the following day.

"Looking forward to welcoming Bibi Netanyahu at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, tomorrow," Trump said in a Truth Social post.

Trump also said that he alone would be able to stop the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza once he is reelected while Vice President and his presumptive opponent in the 2024 election, Kamala Harris, is not capable of doing that.

Trump will meet with Netanyahu ahead of his meeting with US President Joe Biden on Thursday followed by a meeting with Harris.

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UN Chief Has Not Received Request For Meeting From Netanyahu - Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, July 23 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has not received a request for a meeting from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Tuesday.

“We have not [received a request for a meeting], and I've not seen anything to indicate that he will be coming to the United Nations,” Dujarric said during a UN briefing.

Relations between the UN and Israel have worsened tremendously since the outbreak of the war in Gaza following Hamas' October 7 attack.

Netanyahu arrived in Washington on Monday for meetings with President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and congressional leaders. He will also an address to a joint session of Congress on Wednesday.

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UN Chief Welcomes Palestinian Factions Signing Beijing Declaration - Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, July 23 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appreciates the signing of the Beijing Declaration by various Palestinian factions, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Tuesday.

"[Guterres] very much welcomed the signing of the Beijing Declaration by the Palestinian factions," Dujarric said during a press briefing.

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Dujarric reiterated the United Nations stance that all Palestinian factions should overcome their differences through a dialogue.

A reconciliation dialogue between the various Palestinian factions took place in Beijing from July 21-23 and representatives of 14 factions signed the document.

Palestinian movement Fatah Deputy Chairman Mahmoud al-Aloul said that efforts such as those made by China to reach reconciliation in Palestine were rare in the international arena.

Al-Aloulk said China represents "a beam of light" and noted that Beijing's support for Palestine has grown in recent years.

After Hamas won the parliamentary election in Palestine in 2006 and its supporters came to power in the Gaza Strip, significant differences arose with Fatah that spilled into military actions. The differences between Hamas and Fatah have not been settled since then.

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US State Dept. Approves $2.8Bln Sale of System Logistics, Support to Saudi Arabia - DSCA

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The US State Department approved a possible $.28 billion sale of System Logistics and Sustainment Support to Saudi Arabia, the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said on Tuesday.

Saudi Arabia requested to buy Joint Mission Planning Software hardware and support, cryptographic devices, spare and repair parts, accessories and other equipment and support for aircraft, DSCA said in a statement.

The proposed sale would support US foreign policy and national security objectives by improving the security of a partner country that is a force for stability and economic progress in the Gulf Region, the statement said.

The sale would not alter the basic military balance in the region or adversely impact US defense readiness, the statement added.

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US Invites Sudan's Rival Forces to Ceasefire Talks in Switzerland - Blinken

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) – The United States has invited the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to take part in ceasefire talks that are expected to begin August 14 in Switzerland, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Building from the earlier Jeddah processes co-facilitated with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United States has invited the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to participate in ceasefire talks mediated by the United States to begin on August 14, 2024, in Switzerland," the statement said.

Saudi Arabia will be co-hosting the talks which will also include the African Union, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Nations as observers, according to the statement.

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On April 15, 2023, clashes broke out between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The parties to the conflict have since introduced several temporary nationwide ceasefires, but none has helped settle the conflict.

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Situation in Yemen Could Reach 'Tipping Point' If Left Unaddressed - UN Official

UNITED NATIONS, July 23 (Sputnik) - The situation in Yemen could reach a point when it may dramatically worsen if left unaddressed, UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg said on Tuesday.

"[A]s I brief you today, the trajectory of the development in Yemen has since the beginning of the year moved in the wrong direction and, if left unaddressed, could reach a tipping point," Grundberg said during a meeting of the UN Security Council.

The new military activities by the Ansar Allah movement, whose members and supporters are also known as Houthis, are also very concerning, Grundberg said.

On Monday, Ansar Allah confirmed that it had struck targets in Israel's southern city of Eilat and attacked the US container ship Pumba in the Red Sea with ballistic missiles and drones.

Ansar Allah said in October that it would attack any ships associated with Israel, in a show of support for the Palestinian struggle for freedom. The movement said it did not want to interfere with freedom of navigation in the region and would not target ships of other countries. Some shipping companies have rerouted their vessels to avoid the Red Sea.

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Biden's COVID-19 Symptoms Resolved Without Fever During Infection - White House Physician

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden has fully recovered from COVID-19 without experiencing a fever during the infection, White House physician Kevin O'Connor said in a memorandum on Tuesday.

"The president's symptoms have resolved. Over the course of his infection, he never manifested a fever and his vital signs remained normal, to include pulse oximetry. His lungs remained clear," O'Connor said.

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Schumer, Jeffries Endorse Harris' 2024 US Presidential Campaign

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WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries on Tuesday endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris' 2024 presidential campaign, following President Joe Biden's departure from the race.

"We are here today to throw our support behind Vice President Kamala Harris," Schumer said during a press conference.

Harris is ready and able to lead the United States into the future, Jeffries said. Harris is a courageous, compassionate and common-sense leader, Jeffries added.

On Sunday, Biden ended his reelection bid, after some Democrats expressed concerns about his viability as a candidate in the wake of a lackluster debate performance against Republican nominee Donald Trump.

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China Urges Full Implementation of UNSC Resolutions And Support for Yemen Ceasefire -Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, July 23 (Sputnik) - Beijing has called for a full and effective implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on Yemen and for support of a ceasefire, Chinese Ambassador to the UN Fu Cong said on Tuesday.

"China calls for the full and effective implementation of the Security Council's relevant resolutions on Yemen and the promotion of an immediate ceasefire in Gaza," Fu said during the UN Security Council briefing.

Moreover, he called on all parties to avoid escalation.

On Monday, Yemen's Ansar Allah movement, also known as the Houthis, confirmed on Sunday that it had struck targets in Israel's southern city of Eilat and attacked US container ship Pumba in the Red Sea with ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV).

Yemen's Houthi movement, which controls most of the Yemeni Red Sea coast, said in October it would attack any ships associated with Israel, in a show of support for Palestine. The movement said it did not want to interfere with freedom of navigation in the region and would not target ships of other countries. Some shipping companies rerouted their vessels to avoid the Red Sea.

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US Imposes Sanctions on 3 Persons Associated With Islamic State - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The United States has imposed sanctions on three individuals belonging to a network associated with the Islamic State terror group (banned in Russia), US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Tuesday.

"The United States is designating three individuals in a network associated with expanded ISIS [Islamic State] activities in Africa," Miller said in a statement.

Miller did not provide the names of the designated persons but emphasized that they are key

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financiers and enablers of Islamic State activities across Central, Eastern and Southern Africa.
"They serve as critical links between far-flung ISIS operations, allowing ISIS leadership to leverage each affiliate's capabilities to undermine peace and security in the region," Miller said.
The State Department spokesperson also said that such Islamic State activities significantly destabilize the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa and emphasized the importance of international efforts to combat extremism.

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US Secret Service Director Resigns Over Trump Assassination Attempt - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle has stepped down from her position following widespread calls for her resignation over the attempted assassination of Republican nominee Donald Trump, NBC News reported on Tuesday, citing three sources.
Cheatle is expected to issue an official statement about her resignation later this morning, the report said, citing two law enforcement sources.
Her resignation comes after she was grilled by US House lawmakers on Monday about the agency's failure to secure Trump's July 13 rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

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Carter Center Denies Reports of Ex-President's Death, Letter Posted on Social Media False

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The Carter Center told Sputnik on Tuesday that the reports of former US President Jimmy Carter's death are not true and the letter to that effect posted on social media is false.
"There is no further comment at this time. We have only shared that the letter is false," the Carter Center said. "There has been no announcement or change to President Carter's health."

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Trump Denies Considering JPMorgan, BlackRock CEOs As Treasury Chief If Re-elected

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Former US president Donald Trump has denied considering the chief executives of JPMorgan Chase & Co and BlackRock Inc for the treasury secretary job if he returns to the White House.
"I don't know who said it, or where it came from, perhaps the Radical Left, but I never discussed, or thought of, Jamie Dimon or Larry Fink for Secretary of the Treasury," Trump posted Tuesday on his Truth Social media website.
Trump's denial came a week after Bloomberg reported that Dimon, chief executive of the

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world's largest capitalized bank, was on the former president's mind for the top finance job in his potential cabinet should the Republicans succeed in the presidential race slated for November.

"He is somebody that I would consider," Trump was quoted as telling Bloomberg in an interview.

Dimon, through a JPMorgan representative, had declined comment in the Bloomberg story itself.

BlackRock chief Fink, who heads the world's largest money manager with some $10 trillion in assets, came up as a possible Trump choice for treasury secretary in a New York Post report on Saturday.

"Sure, Trump likes to tout JPMorgan super-banker CEO Jamie Dimon as a possible Treasury secretary (more later why it ain't happening) but it's really Fink whom he likes, respects, and speaks with, I am told," The Post's business reporter Charles Gasparino said in the report.

Trump met privately last month with dozens of US CEOs, including Dimon, at a gathering intended to boost his standing with the business community, which he had a fractious relationship with during his 2016-2020 term as president. Many corporate leaders had, particularly, criticized Trump after his supporters stormed the US Capitol building in 2021, angered by his loss of the 2020 US election to Biden.

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Biden to Travel to Texas July 29 for First Time Since Contracting COVID-19 - White House

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden will visit Austin, Texas, next week, his first trip since contracting COVID-19 and announcing his withdrawal from the 2024 presidential election, the White House announced on Tuesday.

"On Monday, July 29th, the President will travel to Austin, Texas. The president will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act during a visit to the LBJ Presidential Library," the White House said in a press release.

Biden has not been seen in public since Thursday, when he hastily departed Las Vegas, Nevada, after being diagnosed with COVID-19.

The quick retreat from Las Vegas has given rise to speculations about Biden's condition.

US corporate media reported earlier on Tuesday that Biden is preparing to deliver a speech tomorrow regarding his announcement to withdraw from the election.

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White House's Says Vance Saying Biden Not Able To Serve As President 'Ridiculous'

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said that Senator JD Vance's statement that President Joe Biden cannot serve effectively if he is not running for reelection was "ridiculous."

Vance, who was chosen by former President Donald Trump as his running mate, suggested on Saturday that Biden should resign if he us unable to run for reelection.

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"I think that's ridiculous," Jean-Pierre said in an interview with ABC on Tuesday. "The President decided to not run for reelection. That's it. That's all he decided on. He wants to continue to do the work."

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Johnson Says Cheatle's Resignation as US Secret Service Director Good But Overdue

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Kimberly Cheatle's decision to resign as director of the US Secret Service is welcome but overdue, US House Speaker Mike Johnson said on Tuesday.
"Director Cheatle answered our calls to resign. Good," Johnson said via social media platform X.
However, Cheatle's resignation is overdue, Johnson said during a press briefing, adding that she should have resigned at least a week ago.
Lawmakers calling on Cheatle to resign was the "right decision," House Democratic Caucus Char Pete Aguilar also said on Tuesday.
It is important for the Secret Service to accept some responsibility for the incident, Aguilar said.
On July 13, a gunman attempted to assassinate former US President Donald Trump during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, shooting him in the ear, killing one audience member and wounding two others.
The US House of Representatives is launching a special task force to investigate the assassination attempt.

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Biden to Travel to Austin, Texas Next Week to Commemorate 60th Anniversary of Civil Rights Act-White House

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Russia's Arctic Military Capabilities Hold Potential Risk for US Security - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - Russia's ever-expanding military capabilities in the Arctic region pose potential risks for the national security of the United States and that of its allies, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Amanda Dory said on Tuesday.
"Russia has continued its expansion and modernization of Arctic military infrastructure," Dory said during an event at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. "Russia's arctic military capabilities have the potential to hold the US homeland as well as allied and partner territories at risk."
Dory did not provided any specific examples as to the kind of risks Russia allegedly poses to the US and its allies' security in the Arctic region.

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On Monday, the US Defense Department presented its 2024 Arctic Strategy driven by a host of geopolitical changes in recent years, including the conflict in Ukraine, the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO and the increased cooperation between Russia and China.

In May, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping signed a joint statement stipulating that Moscow and Beijing would support the preservation of the Arctic as a region of low military and political tensions.

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Biden Stepped Down From Being Nominee, But Job Not Done – White House

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden stepped down from the campaign because he believes it was the right thing, but a lot of work has to be done until the end of his term, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said on Tuesday.

"Obviously, he stepped down from being the nominee, but he still has the job, and we have a lot more to get done on behalf of the American people," Jean-Pierre told ABC.

Biden is going to be focused on that, she added.

When asked about the reason why Biden decided to step down, Jean-Pierre said: "He truly believed that was the right thing to do at this moment."

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Russia Rejects Use of Force to Influence Yemeni Parties - Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, July 23 (Sputnik) - Russia stands against using force to influence the Yemeni parties and advocates for ensuring the safety and security of international navigation, Russian Ambassador to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia said on Tuesday.

"Russia decisively rejects the use of force to influence the Yemeni parties," Nebenzia said during a UN Security Council meeting.

At the same time, Russia has consistently advocated the need to ensure the "safety and security of international navigation and condemn any actions that threaten the safety of ships," Nebenzia added.

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Google Loses $23Bln Takeover Bid To Fight Microsoft, Amazon In Cloud Computing

NEW YORK, July 23 (Sputnik) - Internet search engine leader Google has lost a $23 billion acquisition bid, its largest ever, that would have given its Alphabet holding company control of cloud storage services operator Wiz for greater competition with Microsoft and Amazon.

Wiz announced on Tuesday that it was walking away from the deal in a blow to Google, which

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was due to report slightly weaker earnings for the second quarter of 2024.

"Saying no to such humbling offers is tough," Wiz co-founder Assaf Rappaport said, reflecting on the company's decision, in a memo to staff that was leaked to US media.

A Wiz employee, in comments carried anonymously by CNBC, said the company's decision was partly due to US antitrust laws – which Google was already accused of running foul of and that regulators could use to block the deal.

Rappaport also stated his belief that Wiz could continue growing without a partner like Google. "With our exceptional team, I feel confident in making that choice," he wrote in the memo. "The market validation we have experienced following this news only reinforces our goal – creating a platform that both security and development teams love."

Industry valuers said Wiz abandoned a deal that would have nearly doubled its estimated $12 billion value. Founded just four years ago, the company hit $100 million in annual recurring revenue after 18 months and reached $350 million last year.

Google, meanwhile, faces challenges unique to its own size. Its parent Alphabet is expected to report later on Tuesday that net income fell 3% to a little below $23 billion for the April to June quarter. Analysts also noted that Alphabet's capital spending will jump from $32 billion in 2023 to an expected $50 billion this year.

Alphabet only reached profitability in cloud computing in 2023 after years of hefty investment and competition with cloud storage giants Microsoft and Amazon.

The global cloud computing market size was estimated to be worth just over $602 billion in 2023 and was expected to see a compounded annual growth rate of 21.2% from 2024 to 2030.

Wiz's products – which include software to prevent, actively detect and respond to crises in the cloud space – would have helped Google be more competitive.

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Majority of US Voters Believe Biden’s Mental Decline Threatens National Security - Poll

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - A majority of likely voters in the United States believe that US President Joe Biden’s mental decline is a national security risk, according to a Rasmussen Reports poll released Tuesday.

Sixty-one percent (61%) of voters agree that Biden’s mental decline poses a threat to the safety and security of the US, including 46% who strongly agree, the poll report said.

A significant majority of Republicans, 81%, believe that Biden’s mental decline threatens national security, compared to 62% of unaffiliated voters and 39% of Democrats, the poll report said.

In so-called “battleground” states, including Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, 65% of voters believe that Biden’s mental decline is a national security risk, the poll report said.

On Sunday, Biden announced his departure from the 2024 US presidential race, amid concerns among some Democrats about his viability as a candidate.

The poll surveyed 2,466 likely US voters and 5,605 likely voters in battleground states from July 5-12. The poll has a margin of error of plus-or-minus two percentage points for national results

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and one percentage point for battleground states, with a 95% confidence level.

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Biden Says He Will Address Nation at 8 PM ET Tomorrow on Future Plans, Completing His Job

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden announced on Tuesday that he will speak from the Oval Office at 8 PM ET tomorrow about upcoming plans and his commitment to completing his goals for the American people.
"Tomorrow evening at 8 PM ET, I will address the nation from the Oval Office on what lies ahead, and how I will finish the job for the American people," Biden wrote on X.

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biden stepped down from being nominee, but the job is not done - white house

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Biden After Cheatle's Resignation Says Awaits Review of Trump Assassination Attempt

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden on Tuesday reacted to US Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle's resignation, saying he wishes her all the best and is awaiting the results of the independent review of the assassination attempt against former President Donald Trump.
"Jill and I are grateful to Director Kim Cheatle for her decades of public service ... We especially thank her for answering the call to lead the Secret Service during our Administration and we are grateful for her service to our family," Biden said in a statement. "The independent review to get to the bottom of what happened on July 13 continues, and I look forward to assessing its conclusions. We all know what happened that day can never happen again. As we move forward, I wish Kim all the best, and I will plan to appoint a new Director soon."
Cheatle's resignation comes after she was grilled by US House lawmakers on Monday about the agency's failure to secure Trump's July 13 rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

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Comer Says Cheatle's Resignation 'Step Toward Accountability' But Full Review Needed

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The resignation of US Secret Service (USSS) Director Kimberly Cheatle is "step toward accountability," but a comprehensive review of the USSS

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security failures that led to an assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump is necessary to prevent future incidents, US House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer said.

"While Director Cheatle's resignation is a step toward accountability, we need a full review of how these security failures happened so that we can prevent them going forward," Comer said in a statement on Tuesday.

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Biden Will Deliver Speech on Wednesday on Decision to End Reelection Bid - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden will deliver a speech later this week regarding his decision to drop out of the 2024 presidential election, The Washington Post reported on Tuesday.

Biden scheduled the speech for Wednesday, the report said, citing people familiar with the plans.

On Sunday, Biden announced his withdrawal from the 2024 race and endorsed US Vice President Kamala Harris as his replacement.

Biden's departure from the race came following concerns among some Democrats about his viability as a candidate.

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biden after cheatle's resignation wishes her all the best, says looks forward to conclusions of independent review of trump assassination attempt

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biden to deliver speech on wednesday on his decision to withdraw from presidential race - washington post reporter

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US Secret Service Director Resigns Over Trump Assassination Attempt - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle has stepped down from her position following widespread calls for her resignation over the attempted assassination of Republican nominee Donald Trump, NBC News reported on Tuesday, citing three sources.

Cheatle is expected to issue an official statement about her resignation later this morning, the

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report said, citing two law enforcement sources.
Her resignation comes after she was grilled by US House lawmakers on Monday about the agency's failure to secure Trump's July 13 rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

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US House Panel Probing Trump Shooting Will Release Final Report by December 13 - Johnson

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The US House of Representatives' special task force investigating the assassination attempt against former President Donald Trump will release a final report by December 13, House Speaker Mike Johnson said on Tuesday.
"We are establishing a special task force in the House that'll be bipartisan," Johnson said during a press briefing. "A final report will be due from the committee no later than December 13."
The panel will consist of seven Republicans and six Democrats, Johnson said. The composition of the task force will be released by the end of the week, Johnson said.
The panel will investigate the assassination attempt, assess accountability efforts and work to prevent similar incidents in the future, Johnson added.

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Biden 'Intensely Focused' on Work Over Next 6 Months, Bringing Peace to Mid-East - Blinken

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden is "intensely focused" on the work that remains to be done over the next six months of his tenure in the White House, including bringing peace to the Middle East, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Tuesday.
"In speaking to him [Biden] the other day after he made his decision about not seeking re-election, what he's intensely focused on is the work that remains over these next six months to continue the efforts of the work that we've been doing, particularly trying to bring peace to the Middle East," Blinken said.

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Final Report of US House Task Force Probing Trump Assassination Will Be Due by December 13 - Johnson

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National Defense Invests $26Mln to Provide 90 LTVs for Canadian Troops in Latvia - Blair

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) – Canadian Minister of National Defense Bill Blair said on Tuesday that his department would be investing C$35.8 million ($26 million) to equip Canadian troops deployed under Operation Reassurance with 90 Light Tactical Vehicles (LTVs).

"Today, the Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence, announced that Canada is investing $35.8 million (including taxes) to deliver 90 Light Tactical Vehicles (LTVs) to Canadian Army personnel deployed in Latvia under Operation REASSURANCE," the Department of National Defense (DND) said on Tuesday.

The new fleet will allow Canadian servicemen to operate more effectively in rough terrain and in isolated locations otherwise hardly accessible to larger vehicles, DND said. The LTVs will also be used to transport combat equipment, reducing loads carried by individual soldiers, it added.

Canada finalized a contract with GM Defense Canada Company of Oshawa, Ontario, for 36 cargo and 54 personnel variants of the vehicle, DND said. The contract includes integrated logistics support and up to two years of spare parts, as well as an option to procure up to an additional 18 LTV. The first five units will be delivered by the end of July, it continued.

Operation Reassurance is Canada's largest overseas mission. Under the deployment, Ottawa contributes to the NATO Multinational Battlegroup Latvia which is set to transition from a Latvian Mechanized Infantry Brigade to a Canada-led brigade by 2026.

It is expected that the number of troops persistently deployed will have more than doubled to reach 2,200. Budget 2024 assigned C$$3.5 billion to renew and expand the mission.

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UPDATE - Canada Authorities Order Jasper Residents to Evacuate Due to Wildfire Threat - Statement

(Adds details in paras 6-8)

WASHINGTON, July 23 (Sputnik) - The Alberta Emergency Alert system issued an overnight order for the evacuation of residents of the Jasper Municipality and Jasper National Park due to an active wildfire threat.

Media have reported on Tuesday that about 4,700 residents of the town of Jasper and visitors of the Jasper National Park have been forced to flee west into British Columbia.

"There is a wildfire south of town. An evacuation order has been issued for the Town of Jasper and Jasper National Park," the Alberta Emergency Alert system said in a message via the social media platform X.

Residents are requested to follow the local authorities' directives as the evacuation is in progress, the message said.

Residents have also been advised to bring identification and important documents with them, as well as medication and emergency kits, the message added.

The evacuation order also prompted officials in British Columbia to scramble, looking to find temporary accommodations for the evacuees.

"BC will do everything we can to provide safe refuge for evacuees from Jasper, and are working

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as quickly as possible to coordinate routes and arrange host communities on our side of the border," British Columbian Minister of Emergency Management said via X.

The Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center has recorded 3,456 wildfires in the country since January and 79 new fires on Monday. Close to 2.15 million hectares (5.3 million acres) of land have been burnt.

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Since January have been recorded on a nationwide scale, having burnt close to 2.15 million hectares of land, according to data by

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