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America Will 'Lose Everything' if it Continues to Back Israeli Depravity – Analyst

Israel is losing “on all fronts,” claims one expert, who warns the United States will be brought down with it if it continues to back the Zionist “ethno-nationalist” project.

As the United States has once again cast itself as the global arbiter of democracy and human rights in another sovereign country – this time Venezuela – its closest ally in the Middle East has assassinated two world leaders on foreign soil while top political figures declare the right to rape and torture prisoners of war.

“The United States has revealed itself to the world that it is a barbaric and genocidal regime,” said Professor Seyed Mohammad Marandi of the University of Tehran this week, observing the country’s ironclad defense of Israel even as Tel Aviv stokes a dangerous escalation of hostilities in the region. “The United States is destroying itself. This is a choice that they’ve made.”

Marandi joined host Rachel Bevins on Sputnik’s The Backstory program to discuss the rapid deterioration of Israel’s political and diplomatic position and its implications for the global standing of the US as the Biden administration continues to back the “[ethno-supremacist](#)” regime.

“I was expecting escalation,” said Marandi in response to Tel Aviv’s targeting of Palestinian leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran and Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr in Lebanon within the space of a few hours earlier this week. “I’ve been of the belief for the last two weeks that the Israeli regime can’t continue the war as it is, and they’re not willing to have a ceasefire. So, the only thing left would be escalation.”

“The attack on Beirut, where they bombed a residential complex, and the assassination in Tehran, as well as the bombing of a civilian target in Yemen in Hodeidah were all carried out in order to bring about escalation. And now here we are. There has been escalation.”

“I think it’s very clear that just as the Israeli regime has already lost the war, they’ve lost on the border with Lebanon, they’ve lost in Gaza and they’ve lost in the Red Sea, where the Americans have been fighting on their behalf, but to no avail,” the academic added. “They’ve lost on all fronts.”

Commentators within Israel have increasingly [acknowledged](#) the failure of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s stated goals in Gaza recently, ten months after he vowed to “destroy” Hamas. Almost one year later the Israeli military is still struggling to contain the group militarily and politically, with polls [showing](#) a majority of Palestinians support its armed resistance to Israeli occupation.

A pervasive [smear campaign](#) has accused the armed group of an antisemitic campaign against Jews, with netizens taking to social media to [mock](#) Western media’s attempts at social conditioning. Meanwhile Russia and China have hosted leaders of Hamas and other groups to attempt to reconcile Palestinian political factions and form a united front against [Zionist settler colonialism](#).

"Netanyahu is not acting in the interests of the regime," said Marandi of the controversial prime minister, who faces renewed prosecution on corruption charges if he loses his grip on power. "He's acting for his own interests, and that's why he's brought about this escalation. Netanyahu is doing it to preserve his own power, and he's sacrificing the Israeli regime for his own sake, for his own selfish interests."

"Israel is being pushed towards destruction. I don't mean that it will collapse tomorrow or next week, or six months from now. But after losing the war and after being discredited across the world because the world sees Israeli regime as genocidal, it sees how they're raping prisoners and how they are massacring children and women day and night," he claimed, referring to Israeli politicians and activists who have [defended](#) the rape of Palestinian captives on the [grounds](#) of "self defense."

"If the Americans do the stupid thing and they get involved, they will lose everything in the region. They will be expelled from Iraq, their bases in the Persian Gulf will be destroyed. And those regimes that gave those bases to the United States, they will be destroyed, too, because they'll be seen as hostile."

Recent polling shows some "notable" US allies now view the United States less favorably than in years past. "Ratings of the U.S. are... down among several key NATO allies," revealed a [study](#) by the Pew Research Center in June, which noted favorability ratings for the country have cratered in countries across the Arab world such as Turkiye and Tunisia.

A loss of economic power has accompanied the disintegration in prestige as countries across the world increasingly abandon the use of the US dollar as the de facto global reserve currency. The end of financial dominance signals that US imperialism will collapse like the British colonialism it was [inspired](#) by, and for [similar reasons](#) – consigned to the dustbin of history by its own arrogance and moral depravity.

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Lebanon Condemns Attacks on Civilians in Golan as US Fears Wider Conflict

Israel has occupied the Golan Heights, which is considered Syrian territory under international law, since 1967's Six-Day War.

BEIRUT (Sputnik) - The Lebanese government has condemned the recent [attack on the town of Majdal Shams](#) in the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights, according to a statement obtained by Sputnik Saturday.

Earlier in the day Israel's Magen David Adom ambulance service told Sputnik that 10 people had been killed in the Golan Heights as a result of shelling from across the border in Lebanon. Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari later claimed 11 had been killed, with children and teenagers among the dead from the strike on a sports field.

By early Sunday morning the Times of Israel newspaper reported the death toll had risen to 12. "The Lebanese government condemns all sorts of violence and attacks against civilians and is urging an immediate ceasefire on all fronts," the statement read.

The government added that "attacks on civilians are a gross violation of international law, contradicting the principles of humanity."

Israel has blamed Hezbollah for the incident, which has heightened tensions in the region, but the Lebanese armed group has denied involvement. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cut short a visit to the United States after news of the event, with his office claiming he would return to Tel Aviv "as quickly as possible."

Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has [claimed](#) the group will target civilian areas in response to IDF attacks against civilians in Lebanon. The news agency Reuters reported recently that 100 Lebanese civilians and 300 Hezbollah fighters have been killed by Israeli attacks.

At least 22 people in Israel's northern regions – mostly military personnel – have been killed by Hezbollah. Some 60,000 Israelis have been internally displaced by the periodic strikes, which began after the Lebanese group declared an axis of support for Palestinians shortly after Hamas' October 7 surprise attack.

The ongoing fighting has put pressure on Netanyahu to respond, but Israel is [widely considered to have lost](#) a previous war against Hezbollah in 2006. The group has [dramatically expanded its arsenal](#) of rockets and missiles since then.

The Biden administration has [reportedly cautioned Israel against escalation](#) against Hezbollah, fearing a wider regional war that could pull Iran or even the US itself directly into the fray. The IDF has struggled against the more lightly-armed Hamas in the Gaza Strip, with the group recently reemerging in northern and central regions of the enclave as Israel's military operation has moved south.

"What happened today could be the trigger we have been worried about and tried to avoid for 10 months," said one US official to the website Axios. The White House has worked to negotiate a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip to help prevent a conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, so far without success.

"We condemn this horrific attack that reportedly killed a number of teenagers and children playing soccer on a Saturday evening in the village of Majdal Shams in northern Israel," read a statement from the US National Security Council (NSC) shared with Sputnik. "Our hearts go out to the families of those who lost loved ones today, and we are praying for a speedy recovery for those who have been injured."

European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell also [condemned](#) the attack, calling for an independent investigation of the incident and urging "all parties to exercise utmost restraint and avoid further escalation" in a post on the X platform.

Israel has occupied the Golan Heights, which is considered Syrian territory under international law, since 1967's Six-Day War. Israel considers Syrian president Bashar al-Assad one of its primary adversaries in the region and has joined the United States in arming Islamist opposition fighters amid the country's years-long civil war.

Israel [frequently launches attacks](#) on the neighboring country, destroying airports and other infrastructure as it claims to target Iranian-backed militant groups.

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Trump Versus the Deep State: Would Former President Shift US Foreign Policy?

The Republican Party's apparent divisions were on full display during its recent convention in Milwaukee, with hawks like Mike Pompeo and avowed anti-interventionists like Tucker Carlson each holding court.

A sea change has taken place in the way the US electorate discusses issues of foreign policy over the last decade.

Former President Donald Trump spoke with distinctive brashness on subjects assumed to be beyond political debate in Washington, such as the United States' fraught relationship with Russia and the country's role as self-appointed "[policemen of the world](#)." On the other side of the aisle Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders enjoyed a similar populist appeal, alleging "[massive fraud](#)" in US military spending and questioning former President Barack Obama's effort to overthrow Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad.

The mandarins of the US foreign policy establishment have spent the last several years attempting to put the genie back in the bottle, returning to a time before the prerogatives of the "Deep State" were openly speculated and commented upon, but the influence of Trump's candidacy and tumultuous time in the White House is still felt years later.

As Vice President Kamala Harris solidifies her position as President Biden's Democratic heir apparent, speculation has emerged over the possible foreign policy of her administration and how it would differ from that of a second Trump term. Former Ukrainian diplomat and whistleblower Andrii Telizhenko joined [Sputnik's The Backstory program](#) this week to comment on the matter and discuss prospects for peace as fighting between Moscow and Kiev continues. "Everybody saw it coming," Telizhenko said of Biden's decision to end his candidacy for reelection Sunday amid concern over his age and mental acuity. "The deep state in the Democratic Party used him and used his problems within his family [with] his son Hunter to keep him in place, to use him and his health to keep America in place, to bring this war with Russia." "They don't need him anymore," he concluded. "That's why they made the change from one lame duck for another lame duck that is going to be fully controllable."

Harris, who previously served as California's state Attorney General before a four-year stint in the US Senate, has been noted for her [relative lack of formal foreign policy experience](#). Some commentators have looked to her advocacy on immigration policy under President Biden to attempt to [decode](#) her broader outlook on global affairs. One analyst [speculated](#) she would initially rely on Biden's foreign policy team, while others suggest she would [continue](#) her predecessor's strong support for Volodymyr Zelensky, who has ruled Ukraine without an electoral mandate since the end of term in May.

Republicans frequently allege President Biden's support for Kiev is influenced by his son's financial ties to the country as a former member on the board of the troubled Ukrainian energy company Burisma. Others [suggest](#) he is simply too old to manage the task of overseeing complex matters of foreign policy.

Biden is often considered a [neoconservative](#), a term used to describe a muscular US foreign policy that has traditionally found favor in both major political parties in the United States. His promise to [restore](#) a more traditional approach to international affairs is perhaps best exemplified by his reliance on figures like Secretary of State Antony Blinken and former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland.

Nuland has served, in one position or another, in the administration of every US president since Bill Clinton – with the exception of Trump’s four years in the White House. Nuland provoked the ire of the Russian government and other observers for her open support of unrest in Ukraine that led to the forced resignation of former President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014.

Telizhenko suggested Trump may be more likely to chart a different course on US foreign policy through his relationships with foreign leaders like Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

“He’s more likely independent on the situation,” Telizhenko claimed of the former president.

“From what I see, he has a clear path on a peace deal and I think that was why Prime Minister Orban from Hungary was traveling the world. He had Trump’s peace plan in his pocket and that’s why he had meetings with President Putin, Xi Jinping of China, and then he basically came back to Washington [and] met Trump almost right away after the NATO convention and spoke to Zelensky on this trip.”

“I think that’s what Trump was trying to push through Orban at this moment, to get everybody on the world stage, [to] get their thoughts and get things [rolling],” he said.

But Telizhenko warned Trump would face opposition against any attempt to change course on Ukraine from people surrounding former Secretary of State and CIA Director Mike Pompeo. “I see that tension happening right now,” he claimed, warning neoconservative interests within the Republican Party would lobby for a militarist foreign policy.

The apparent division within the Republican Party was on full display during its recent convention in Milwaukee, with hawkish figures like Pompeo as well as avowed anti-interventionists like commentator [Tucker Carlson](#) each holding court. Carlson raised eyebrows during his previous tenure at Fox News by alleging covert US influence in [Ukraine’s 2014 regime change](#), breaking a powerful taboo by openly discussing the methods of CIA-backed “color revolutions.”

Telizhenko claimed the future of Ukraine should be decided by Ukrainians alone, without the interference of those who wish to use Kiev as a “[battering ram](#)” against America’s perceived adversaries.

“I want a peace deal in Ukraine,” he insisted. “I want a change of government. I want a NATO-free Ukraine. And that’s what I think a lot of people even in the United States are looking for because that’s the only way out for the Ukrainian situation right now.”

“We have to decide what to do next, not somebody in Washington or Brussels, and I hope Trump understands that.”

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Harris to Uphold Russophobic US Dogma as World Seeks Multipolar Order – Analyst

A formidable confluence of military, intelligence and financial interests alternatively referred to as “the Deep State” or “the Blob” has historically remained hostile towards the Eurasian world power irrespective of which president occupies the Oval Office.

Much speculation has emerged over Vice President Kamala Harris' approach to US foreign policy in the days since the former California Attorney General was announced as Joe Biden's chosen successor Sunday.

Harris, who served in the US Senate from 2017 until 2021, has taken on a relatively low profile. Observers have speculated she has been deliberately tasked with selling controversial policies to the public during her time as Biden's second in command, as when she was [dispatched](#) to Guatemala in 2021 to warn prospective migrants against coming to the United States.

"Frankly, we don't know what she's going to do on the international scene. There's nothing that she has said or done that gives us any indication of what her stance is on anything," claimed commentator Michael Maloof.

The former senior security analyst at the US Department of Defense joined [Sputnik's Fault Lines program Wednesday](#) to contemplate the possible foreign policy of a Harris administration as much of the world seeks development independent of the United States and the Western liberal world order.

Host Jamarl Thomas suggested Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address before a joint session of Congress Wednesday could be an early indicator of Harris' approach to the politics of international affairs, if not the substance. Harris has made headlines by refusing to attend Netanyahu's speech as [polling](#) shows Democratic Party voters increasingly sympathize with Palestinians in the long running conflict between Israelis and the indigenous inhabitants of the Levant.

But Harris has agreed to meet with the controversial Israeli leader during his time in Washington, leading Thomas to suggest her apparent dispute with Netanyahu is "an optics issue" rather than a difference of policy.

"I agree," responded Maloof. "She doesn't want to be associated with him publicly... That's why she's not showing up at the joint session."

The analyst claimed Harris, who is some 22 years younger than President Biden, may be naturally inclined toward younger Americans' sympathy for the Palestinian cause but would be constrained by the actions of her predecessor. Maloof suggested it would be especially difficult for the politician to chart a new course on relations with Russia, which remains locked in a US-backed proxy war with Ukraine.

"I'm afraid that if they continue the policy toward Russia, as they are right now, that when [Anatoly] Antonov, the current Russian ambassador, leaves, that he will not be replaced. I think [Russia will] downgrade relations," said Maloof. "We're making it much more difficult to renew any relations."

"We're almost on the verge of a war because of a hoax," he added, referring to the conspiracy theory that Trump colluded with Russia during the 2016 US presidential election. "That's basically what this amounts to and our relationships in the world are now complicated as a consequence."

"I've never seen within three and a half years how we have bungled things so poorly on the international scene when we have all these very smart, educated people at the helm, supposedly, and we're going in the direction we're going. It's unbelievable."

In the 1990s the United States emerged as the world's lone superpower after the fall of the Soviet Union, possessing greater political, cultural, and economic influence than any other nation. But as 21st century US militarism has led to [the deaths of some 4.5 million people](#),

countries of the Global South have increasingly rallied behind Moscow and Beijing to seek alternatives to Western hegemony, demonstrated by the emergence of institutions like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS economic bloc.

Russia and China have also played a greater role in global diplomacy over the last decade, with [both countries](#) hosting [important reconciliation talks](#) between Palestinian political factions this year. Beijing turned heads last March when it announced it had brokered [a surprise deal between longtime rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia](#), while Russia has made important inroads in Africa offering security assistance to counter jihadist groups, which are often backed by US Gulf allies.

“Because of this multipolar order concept we are seeing more of a shift by countries who have been subject historically to colonization,” Maloof posited. “They are rebelling and [among] the few countries that have not been involved in colonization were Russia and China. That’s why you’re seeing the Global South – Africa, Latin America, Asia – generally gravitating toward this Eurasian concept, toward BRICS, the SCO.”

“[BRICS] is becoming, by the way, not just an economic institution, but it could become the defense institution against NATO because [NATO wants to expand to the Pacific](#),” he added. The controversial military alliance has strengthened ties with traditional Western allies like Colombia, Japan, and Australia as [NATO leaders paint Moscow and Beijing as the primary threats](#) to the US-led world order.

Maloof said Harris would be unlikely to overcome the influence of the United States’ foreign policy establishment if she sought to renew ties with Russia. The formidable confluence of military, intelligence and financial interests – alternatively referred to as [“the Deep State” or “the Blob”](#) – has historically remained hostile towards the Eurasian world power irrespective of which president occupies the Oval Office.

“Irrespective of which president it is, there’s going to be this contentious relationship that we have with Russia,” claimed the analyst. “I think that Kamala will be an extension and because she doesn’t have that foreign policy footprint, I think she’s much more likely to toe the traditional US Democrat or Republican line.”

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Same as the Old Boss: Harris Expected to Continue Neoconservative Foreign Policy

The former California senator and state attorney general has been a strong backer of US militarism, according to one analyst.

“We must stand with Israel,” [declared](#) then-Senator Kamala Harris to healthy applause at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee’s 2017 policy conference. “Our defense relationship is critical to both nations. Which is why I support the United States’ commitment to provide Israel with \$38 billion in military assistance over the next decade.”

US backing for its Middle Eastern ally has become increasingly controversial as the official death toll during its months-long military operation in the Gaza Strip [approaches](#) 40,000.

Democratic activists mounted a [campaign](#) to win hundreds of thousands of “uncommitted” votes during the party’s primary earlier this year as a protest against President Biden’s backing of

Israel, while some conservative figures such as commentator Tucker Carlson have also [questioned](#) continued US support.

But the US-Israel relationship remains an article of faith for the vast majority of lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, notes CovertAction Magazine editor Jeremy Kuzmarov. The author appeared on [Sputnik's The Backstory program](#) this week to discuss Harris' record of support for the country and the newly minted Democratic presidential candidate's broader foreign policy vision.

"This is part of the pattern where they're actually subverting democracy," said Kuzmarov of the controversial process by which the Democratic Party has affirmed Harris as its candidate, "because it's been known for a long time that Joe Biden was in poor health and becoming senile and yet he continued to stay in the race."

"What he could have done was dropped out in December [or] January, and that would allow for an open primary process," he claimed. "Then people could actually choose a candidate they want. It would be probably a popular candidate with a very strong chance of defeating Donald Trump. But what we've seen in the past few years is that the hierarchy in the Democratic Party don't want an open primary. They don't value democracy despite their rhetoric."

The Democratic Party's presidential nominating process was rocked for two successive cycles by Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders' insurgent candidacy in 2016 and 2020. The self-avowed democratic socialist has been openly critical of the party's direction since the 1990s, during which it has charted an increasingly business-friendly, economic neoliberal course.

Critics claim a 2010 Supreme Court [decision](#) overturning much of the United States' campaign finance law has made parties even more dependent on the support of wealthy donors and corporate interests. Democratic leaders have responded by backing fiscal conservative candidates at both the state and national level.

"They want to hand select corporate-type candidates and an open primary would lead to the likelihood that somebody with the views of a Bernie Sanders would emerge – the popular candidate," said Kuzmarov. "Your audience, I'm sure, will recall what happened the last two cycles is that the primary was clearly rigged against Bernie Sanders who, whatever his flaws, represented a more progressive, democratic candidate who was promoting policies that would challenge corporate power and that were popular among huge sectors of the electorate, including things like Medicare for All."

"But the Democratic hierarchy are tied to large corporate interests, and they don't want a Sanders-type emerging, a genuinely popular candidate... So, [Harris] may be the successor or somebody like her and there's going to be no vote, no primary."

Kuzmarov compared the Democrats' modern day primary process to the party establishment's selection of Harry Truman as former President Franklin Roosevelt's running mate in the 1944 election. Party leaders insisted on the Cold Warrior Truman over Roosevelt's previous vice president, [the more progressive Henry Wallace](#). Truman would become president when Roosevelt died less than three months after his inauguration the following year.

The Democratic Party's neoliberal turn has coincided with an assertive US foreign policy, with Kuzmarov arguing both major parties are "pretty much aligned" on policy regarding Israel, which he claimed "carries out a lot of the US dirty work in the Middle East."

"She's tied with the kind of Biden-Clinton wing of the party, which is the pro-empire, pro-war wing of the party," he said of Harris. "When she was a candidate in the last primary, there was one peace candidate Tulsi Gabbard, who was very progressive in her foreign policy views, and Kamala Harris used red-baiting tactics against Tulsi Gabbard and accused her of being a Putin lover, an Assad lover and that kind of thing when Gabbard was advocating for peace and diplomacy."

"That's right out of the playbook of Joseph McCarthy and the cold warriors of the 1950s," Kuzmarov argued. "So I think that's where Harris stands. I mean, she's backed the Biden policy with regard to Ukraine, where they've provided billions in weaponry... The US is building new military bases in the Philippines as part of the strategy of confronting China. And Harris was the point man to negotiate with Ferdinand Marcos Jr., son of a horrific dictator, to get these new bases."

"We shouldn't forget that this is taxpayer dollars, billions of our taxpayer dollars are going into these militaristic and imperialistic foreign policies. And that's not money that's going into where it's needed here at home, including Sanders' plan for Medicare for all, which is what many Americans want. So Harris is not a progressive in any way, she's a militarist."

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US Intelligence Tipped Austria Off About Suspect Planning to Attack Taylor Swift – Reports

WASHINGTON, August 8 (Sputnik) – The United States provided Austria with information that helped the country's law enforcement agencies identify and arrest a potential suspect in the plot to attack American singer Taylor Swift during her concert tour, NBC reported on Thursday.

The suspect was a 19-year-old man who planned to carry out a suicide attack during Swift's concert in Vienna, the report said.

The suspect, who reportedly pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, was among two men arrested by Austrian authorities earlier this week while the search for additional suspects continues, according to the report.

The Austrian Interior Ministry said on Wednesday that a 19-year-old Austrian national, suspected of planning a terrorist attack during a major event in Vienna, had been detained in the city of Ternitz. The police made more arrests later on Wednesday as part of an investigation into the case.

Organizers canceled Swift's Vienna concerts, which were scheduled to take place on August 8, 9, and 10 at the Ernst-Happel-Stadion as part of the Eras Tour. Each concert was expected to gather up to 65,000 visitors and 15,000 to 20,000 Swift fans beyond the stadium.

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US Comments on Kursk 'Outrageous,' No Criticism of Kiev or Condolences to Victims- Antonov

WASHINGTON, August 8 (Sputnik) - US officials' public statements on Ukraine's attempted offensive in Russia's Kursk region lack both criticism of Kiev and condolences to the victims, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov said in a statement.

"The public statements of the American authorities in response to the provocative act of the Kiev thugs on Russian territory are truly outrageous," Antonov said on Wednesday. "Once again, the officials did not voice any words of criticism towards their clients or express condolences to the victims of the tragedy."

Antonov stressed that Ukrainian actions are an obvious terrorist act.

"No one hides the fact that American weapons became the weapon used to kill ordinary Russians," he said. "Attacks on schools, hospitals, ambulances and residential buildings in Russia cannot be recognized as a right to self-defense."

Antonov went on to say that It is obvious that the provocations in the Kursk region are directly related to the deplorable situation of the Ukrainian Armed Forces at the front.

"No matter how hard they try to stop our troops in Kiev, they will systematically and progressively move forward, liberating Russian lands," he said.

"I would like to stress that Russian borders are sacred. None of the terrorists will escape retribution. Washington must stop supplying weapons to Kiev and "punish" the neo-Nazis from the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armored vehicles, attacked Russian state border protection units in the region. As of Wednesday, up to 260 Ukrainian troops and 50 armored vehicles have been destroyed, the ministry said.

The National Guard, the Border Guard and the Defense Ministry stepped up their military presence in the Kursk and Belgorod regions to repel potential Ukrainian attacks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Kiev of launching a large-scale provocation. He said Ukrainian troops were shelling the Russian regions indiscriminately, firing at civilian infrastructure and ambulances.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Ukraine shelling Russia's Kursk Region is yet another terrorist attack aimed against civilians.

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"Уотергейт" стал катализатором поляризации демократов и республиканцев в США – эксперты

ВАШИНГТОН, 8 авг - РИА Новости. Уотергейтский скандал, в ходе которого было установлено, что занимавший в то время пост президента США Ричард Никсон пытался скрыть попытку прослушки оппонентов и в результате был вынужден уйти в отставку, изначально был символом сотрудничества республиканцев с демократами, но в ретроспективе привел к двухпартийной поляризации, заявили РИА Новости американские эксперты.

Восьмого августа исполняется 50 лет со знаменитой речи республиканца Никсона, в которой он заявил, что со следующего дня уходит в отставку. В противном случае ему

грозил импичмент, о чем его предупредили однопартийцы из конгресса, которые публично его критиковали и не собирались блокировать инициативу по его отставке. Считалось, что поляризация между партиями тогда была менее острой, чем сейчас, например, видный чиновник той эпохи Элиот Ричардсон отмечал, что "большинство людей на самом деле не понимают, что администрация Никсона была левее администрации (умеренного демократа Билла) Клинтона".

Решению об отставке предшествовало целых два года разбирательств о том, кто был заказчиком попытки взлома и установки "жучков" в офисе Демократической партии в вашингтонском комплексе "Уотергейт" в июле 1972 года, откуда скандал и получил свое название. Никсон изначально отрицал, что был в курсе шпионской операции, и смог переизбраться на второй срок в ноябре 1972 года. Но ближе к августу 1974 года Никсону, после долгих препирательств и нежелания помогать следствию, пришлось в соответствии с решением Верховного суда сдать аудиозапись разговора из Белого дома, из которой следовало, что он с самого начала был осведомлен о попытках скрыть инцидент с прослушкой.

"Да, разделение властей "работало", помогая обуздать неконтролируемое президентство. То же самое сделали межпартийное сотрудничество и конституционализм... Но восхождение (республиканского президента Рональда) Рейгана было признаком того, что межпартийное сотрудничество разваливается и что республиканцы начали сожалеть о своем сотрудничестве шестью или семью годами ранее. К тому времени, когда разразился "Ирангейт", от прежней солидарности не осталось и следа", - заявил РИА Новости историк конституции США Дэн Лазар.

А с ростом влияния исполнявшего обязанности спикера нижней палаты Ньюта Гингрича в 1990-х, которому многие приписывают обострение поляризации республиканцев и демократов, "Капитолий превратился в поле битвы", отметил эксперт.

"Самодовольство, последовавшие за отставкой Никсона, оказалось совершенно необоснованным, поскольку худшее было еще впереди. Это не значит, что конгресс не должен был выгнать Никсона. Но победа конгресса посеяла семена его самоуничтожения", - подчеркнул Лазар.

Бывший аналитик ЦРУ Рэй Макговерн, который работал с Никсоном и его преемником Джеральдом Фордом, Рейганом и Джорджем Бушем-старшим, заявил РИА Новости, что отставка Рейгана привела "только к худшему", а именно таким людям, как "Форд и (бывшие министры обороны – ред.) Дик Чейни и Дональд Рамсфельд".

БАЙДЕНГЕЙТ И ТРАМПГЕЙТ?

"Уотергейт" со временем стал именем нарицательным. Даже спустя 50 лет мировая пресса называет каждый новый скандал, связанный с утечкой сенсационной информации, с использованием суффикса "-гейт", например, "Моникагейт", когда в 1998 году Клинтона обвиняли в даче ложных показаний по поводу характера внебрачных отношений с Моникой Левински. Другим известным примером является "Емейлгейт", связанный с супругой Клинтона Хиллари, которая в бытность госсекретарем США использовала личный сервер для служебной переписки в нарушение правил безопасности.

А полковник морской пехоты США в отставке Дональд Вандергрифф в комментарии РИА Новости провел параллели с недавней ситуацией вокруг президента США Джо Байдена, которого его же однопартийцы критиковали и призывали не избираться на второй срок

после провала на дебатах с его республиканским оппонентом и бывшим президентом Дональдом Трампом.

"По крайней мере, тогда СМИ сделали свою работу. Сегодня большинство мейнстрим-медиа являются орудием Демократической партии. Соккрытие неспособности Байдена руководить страной на протяжении последних четырех лет - это скандал посерьезнее "Уотергейта", - заявил эксперт.

Президентство Трампа, который пытается избираться на второй срок в ноябре, также сравнивают с "Уотергейтом". Штурм Капитолия сторонниками Трампа 6 января 2021 года, который якобы был вызван его комментариями на митинге, был раскритикован многими его однопартийцами. Вместе с тем, попытка его импичмента провалилась в конгрессе, когда сенат, на то время контролируемый республиканцами, проголосовал против инициативы.

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ANALYSIS - Bipartisan Teamwork on Watergate Toppled Nixon But Today Congress is War Zone

WASHINGTON, August 8 (Sputnik) - Half a century ago, bipartisan cooperation in Congress brought down President Richard Nixon in the Watergate scandal but over the past 35 years, bitter feuding, distrust, and even hatred between Republicans and Democrats have turned Congress into a virtual war zone, US historians told Sputnik.

Nixon resigned on August 8, 1974: For years afterwards, his fall was hailed as a model of patriotic cooperation by elected lawmakers from both US parties in defense of the national constitution and traditional liberties, restraining the executive power of the president.

GRIDLOCK IN CONGRESS

However, the picture today is a very different and far grimmer one, constitutional historian and political commentator Dan Lazare explained on Wednesday.

"With the election of Newt Gingrich as House minority whip in 1989, Capitol Hill turned into a war zone," Lazare recalled. "After helping to constrain a lawless executive, the Constitution turned into a giant gridlock machine that allowed a determined minority to tie up the government for decades on end."

In addition, he said that while Nixon was undoubtedly a bad guy, the liberal obsession with "Tricky Dick" obscured the true significance of Watergate.

The doctrine of separation of powers worked in helping to rein in a runaway presidency, Lazare recalled.

Nevertheless, this apparently happy state of affairs only lasted about half a decade, Lazare remembered.

SCANDAL ERUPTS

"The ascent of [President Ronald] Reagan [in 1980] was a sign that bipartisanship was falling apart and that Republicans were beginning to regret their cooperation six or seven years earlier," he said.

By the time the Iran-Contra erupted in 1987, the old bipartisan solidarity was gone, Lazare

recollected.

US domestic politics has precipitously declined in morality and credibility ever since then, Lazare observed.

"The story since then has been one of stolen elections, breakdown and corrosion, and an attempted coup which is looking like it may well have been successful after all - if current [Republican presidential candidate Donald] Trump is elected," he said.

Therefore, all the complacency and self-satisfaction that followed on the heels of Nixon's resignation in 1974 has now turned out to have been completely unwarranted since far worse was to come, Lazare explained.

DESTRUCTIVE MEDIA

Historian and Retired Marine Corps Major Donald Vandergriff agreed that the condition of domestic US politics and society has declined alarmingly since the time of Nixon and Watergate.

Over the past four years, the mainstream US media has manifestly failed in their duty to cover and document the obvious and dangerous senility and incapacity for the office of current President Joe Biden, Vandergriff pointed out.

"The covering up of Biden's inability to lead the last four years is a bigger scandal than Watergate," he said.

MARKED DECLINE

Former CIA senior analyst Ray McGovern, who personally briefed four US presidents, agreed that Nixon's fall has been followed, not by any marked improvement in the integrity and capability of presidents and the senior officials who served them, but, rather, by a further marked decline.

"It led to Gerry Ford and eventually to [later Secretary of Defense and Vice President Dick] Cheney and [White House Chief of Staff and Secretary of Defense Donald] Rumsfeld. Bad enough, methinks," he said.

Especially since the mega-terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, or "9/11" killed almost 3,000 Americans in a single day, Congress has voted to give the US government unprecedented additional powers that continue to be extended to this day, further erasing the lessons of Watergate, US civil liberties experts have pointed out.

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Blinken, Guterres Discuss Support for Venezuelan-Led Process to Establish Democratic Norms

WASHINGTON, August 8 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and discussed their readiness to support a Venezuelan-led process toward re-establishing democratic norms with international partners, the US State Department said in a statement.

"Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken spoke today with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. The Secretary and the Secretary-General expressed their readiness to support an inclusive, Venezuelan-led process toward the re-establishment of democratic norms, in coordination with our international partners," the statement said on Wednesday.

According to the statement, Blinken and Guterres shared concerns about the safety of

opposition leaders after the election, condemning political violence, repression, indiscriminate arrests, and due process violations.

"The Secretary [Blinken] noted that Edmundo González Urrutia received the most votes on July 28, adding that the actas provided overwhelming evidence Gonzalez defeated Maduro," the statement added.

The presidential election in Venezuela was held on July 28, and the National Electoral Council declared Nicolas Maduro the winner. The next day, protests against the election results broke out in the country, with clashes between security forces and protesters in Caracas and other cities, who began throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at law enforcement officers. More than 250 police outposts were destroyed, multiple acts of vandalism and robbery were reported, and two servicemen were killed.

In the week following the elections, law enforcement officers detained more than 2,000 people, who were accused of destroying state infrastructure, inciting hatred, and terrorism. Violent unrest in Venezuela continued for one day after the elections, after which the government regained control of the situation on the streets. In the following days, supporters of both the president and the opposition held numerous rallies, declaring their victory, but they were peaceful and did not involve clashes.

Without waiting for the results of the vote count and subsequent audit, Washington called on the international community to recognize Gonzalez as the winner of the presidential election in Venezuela. US and EU lawmakers overseeing international relations on Friday threatened Maduro with "responsibility" if he did not voluntarily give up his powers as head of state after the election, calling the results of the vote fabricated.

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UPDATE- Biden Says He's 'Not at All' Confident Peaceful Power Transfer Will Happen if Trump Loses

(Adds additional info in paras 3-4)

WASHINGTON, August 8 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden told CBS he isn't confident a peaceful transfer of power will occur in January 2025 if Donald Trump loses the election.

"If Trump loses, I'm not confident at all," said Biden in a preview released on Wednesday.

The response came after Biden was asked if he thought a peaceful transfer of power would happen if Donald Trump lost the presidential election. Initially, Biden misspoke and said that that he wouldn't be confident about a peaceful power transfer if Trump won the election - but immediately corrected himself.

"He means what he says. We don't take him seriously. He means it: all that stuff about 'if we lose, it'll be a blood bath' . . . you can't love your country only when you win," Biden added.

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UPDATE-US Comments on Kursk 'Outrageous,' No Criticism of Kiev or Condolences to Victims- Antonov

(Adds additional info to paras 4-7)

WASHINGTON, August 8 (Sputnik) - US officials' public statements on Ukraine's attempted offensive in Russia's Kursk region lack both criticism of Kiev and condolences to the victims, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov said in a statement.

"The public statements of the American authorities in response to the provocative act of the Kiev thugs on Russian territory are truly outrageous," Antonov said on Wednesday. "Once again, the officials did not voice any words of criticism towards their clients or express condolences to the victims of the tragedy."

Antonov stressed that Ukrainian actions are an obvious terrorist act.

"No one hides the fact that American weapons became the weapon used to kill ordinary Russians," he said. "Attacks on schools, hospitals, ambulances and residential buildings in Russia cannot be recognized as a right to self-defense."

Antonov went on to say that It is obvious that the provocations in the Kursk region are directly related to the deplorable situation of the Ukrainian Armed Forces at the front.

"No matter how hard they try to stop our troops in Kiev, they will systematically and progressively move forward, liberating Russian lands," he said.

"I would like to stress that Russian borders are sacred. None of the terrorists will escape retribution. Washington must stop supplying weapons to Kiev and "punish" the neo-Nazis from the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armored vehicles, attacked Russian state border protection units in the region. As of Wednesday, up to 260 Ukrainian troops and 50 armored vehicles have been destroyed, the ministry said.

The National Guard, the Border Guard and the Defense Ministry stepped up their military presence in the Kursk and Belgorod regions to repel potential Ukrainian attacks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Kiev of launching a large-scale provocation. He said Ukrainian troops were shelling the Russian regions indiscriminately, firing at civilian infrastructure and ambulances.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Ukraine shelling Russia's Kursk Region is yet another terrorist attack aimed against civilians.

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Russia's ambassador Antonov says public comments by US officials on Kursk provocation are outrageous, lack criticism of Kiev, condolences for victims

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Only 2 Crew-9 Astronauts May Fly to ISS So Starliner Duo Can Return With Them - NASA

WASHINGTON, August 8 (Sputnik) - NASA will only send half of its scheduled Crew 9 up to the International Space Station (ISS) in September to maintain a regular level of food and supplies for the astronauts and cosmonauts there with the additional two guests of the stranded Boeing Starliner crew until February 2025, US space agency officials revealed in a media teleconference.

"Our plan is that they [astronauts Barry "Butch" Gilmore and Sunita "Suni" Williams] would return on Crew 9 with longer crew rotation times," NASA Commercial Crew Manager Steve Stich told reporters on Wednesday. "We will probably decide in the middle of August, one path or the other, to go ahead and meet the launch date for Crew 9."

However, if NASA officials determine Gilmore and Williams should not risk flying back on the still troubled Starliner, then the SpaceX Dragon spacecraft would launch with only two astronauts instead of four for the Crew 9 ISS rotation and Gilmore and Williams would take the places of the other two for their full six-month tour of duty on the ISS, Stich explained.

"I cannot give you a number right now [but] our chances of an uncrewed Starliner return have increased a little over the last week or two," NASA Space Operations Mission Directorate Associate Administrator Ken Bowersox said.

The data loads in the software on the Starliner, now docked to the ISS, would have to be manually changed by the US astronauts before the spacecraft could be remotely piloted back to Earth and it could take several weeks or longer, Stich added.

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UPDATE - US Stocks End Down To Stay Vulnerable After 'Black Monday 2.0'

(Adds comment, details and context in paragraphs 7-11)

NEW YORK, August 8 (Sputnik) - US stocks ended lower on Wednesday as the market recovery from this week's global crash in equities fizzled just after a day.

Wall Street's three key stock indexes — the S&P 500, the Nasdaq Composite, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average — all closed in the red after rising between one and two percent earlier in the day.

The S&P, which tracks stocks of 500 high-performing US companies, finished down 0.7%, after rising 0.95% on Tuesday. The index lost 2.99% on Monday, for its biggest one-day loss since September 2022.

The technology-heavy Nasdaq, which comprises pricey stocks such as Amazon, Apple, Netflix, and Google, lost 1%, after the prior session's advance of 0.98%. On Monday, the Nasdaq tanked 3.4%.

The Dow, the broadest indicator for US equity markets and one that often reflects stocks of value, slid 0.6%, after Tuesday's rise of 0.76%. It tumbled 2.6% on Monday.

Stocks across the world plummeted as this week began, in an episode some have taken to calling "Black Monday 2.0" after the original Black Monday of October 19, 1987, where a global crash in equities presaged one of the darkest days in the modern investing era. This week's slump was triggered by fears of a looming US recession after unemployment in the country rose to levels not seen since the end of 2021.

In a measure of investor caution, the CBOE Volatility Index, known as Wall Street's "fear gauge", stood at nearly 28 on Wednesday after sliding to 22 a day ago. A higher reading on the index indicates more investor fear. On Monday, the gauge spiked to roughly 65.

Some say this is proof of the continued vulnerability of stocks amid elevated concerns that the United States may still face a recession months down the road.

"There's been some reassurance over the last couple of days that things have calmed down a bit," Charlie Ripley, senior investment strategist at Allianz Investment Management, said in comments carried by CNBC. "But there are still quite a few unknowns on the horizon, such as how much more unwind there is on the yen carry trade, as well as geopolitical headwinds."

Concerns over the US economy have intensified as the Federal Reserve keeps interest rates at two-decade highs, choking what critics say is growth as the central bank strives to bring inflation hovering at around 3% per annum to its long-term target of 2%.

The Fed has signaled that it may cut rates after the conclusion of its September 18 policy meeting. If it foregoes that opportunity, it will have another two chances to make amends on rates before the year ends — at the November 7 and December 18 policy meetings.

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UN Concerned Over Attack Against Russian Journalist Yevgeny Poddubny in Kursk - Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, August 7 (Sputnik) - The United Nations is concerned about the Ukrainian drone strike that injured Russian journalist Yevgeny Puddubny in Russia's Kursk region, the office of the UN Secretary General told Sputnik on Wednesday.

"We are concerned about the attack and we hope for his swift recovery," the Secretary General's Deputy Spokesman Farhan Haq said.

Earlier on Wednesday, VGTRK war correspondent Evgeny Poddubny was seriously injured after his car came under fire from Ukrainian Armed Forces in the border area of the Kursk region. The acting governor of the Kursk region said the journalist regained consciousness and is receiving treatment in hospital.

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Taylor Swift's Shows in Vienna This Week Canceled Due to Terror Threat - Organizer

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - US artist Taylor Swift's three concerts initially scheduled at Ernst Happel Stadium in Vienna this week have been canceled due to a terrorist threat, the Barracuda Music promotion company said on Wednesday.

"With confirmation from government officials of a planned terrorist attack at Ernst Happel Stadium, we have no choice but to cancel the three scheduled shows for everyone's safety," the company said.

Taylor Swift was scheduled to perform at Ernst Happel Stadium on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Earlier on Wednesday, media reported, citing local authorities, that two suspects were arrested for allegedly plotting an Islamic State (banned in Russia) terror attack at Taylor Swift's concert in Vienna this week.

The White House said it is aware of the matter but had no further comment.

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un concerned about ukrainian attack on russian journalist Evgeny Poddubny, hopes for his swift recovery - spokesperson to sputnik

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US Carrier Fleets Can't End Houth Threat to Shipping in Red Sea - Commanding Admiral

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - The US Navy's giant nuclear aircraft carrier task forces operating in the Red Sea and surrounding region are incapable of fully stopping Houthi rebel forces in Yemen from threatening international shipping and only a diplomatic solution involving the international community can solve the problem, US Fifth Fleet Commander Vice Admiral George Wikoff said on Wednesday.

"The operations we are doing will be a shock absorber," Wikoff, who also heads the Central Command (USCENTCOM) Naval Forces and Combined Maritime Forces in the region, told a meeting at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in a video presentation.

"We are trying to preserve where we are right now. ...[However] It is an unacceptable solution [and an] unacceptable stabilization."

The United States needs other members of the international community to pressure the Houthis to stop what they were doing because "right now quite frankly they are not under tremendous pressure to come through," Wikoff stated.

"Trying to apply classic deterrent policy in this particular scenario is a bit challenging. ...We

have to be careful about leading with the helmet. We have to be careful about going in with a really specific policy that will allow us to achieve effects that are beyond the military sphere. ...The solution is not going to come at the end of a weapon system - we need a solution beyond taking care of triage and current situations," he said.

US and Allied naval forces operating to protect shipping in the Red Sea region were trying to preserve some decision space for the US and Allied leadership, Wikoff explained.

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Vance Says Wants to Debate Walz So American People Can Make Informed Decision

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance said on Wednesday he wants to debate Minnesota Governor Tim Walz because he believes it is important for candidates to engage directly with American voters.

"I want to debate Governor Walz, which has nothing to do with Governor Walz, but because the American people deserve to see the people who want to be their vice president stand before them and try to persuade them," Vance said during a rally.

Vance added that one of his frustrations with Kamala Harris' presidential campaign is her reluctance to engage directly with voters.

On Tuesday, Harris told her supporters that she chose Walz as her running mate for the 2024 presidential race because he was a "battle-tested leader." President Joe Biden posted a message on X in which he hailed Harris' choice and called it a great decision, calling all Democrats to rally behind Harris and now Walz, while calling the latter a strong, principled, and effective leader.

Walz, 60, has served as Minnesota's governor since 2019 and was a congressman from 2007 to 2019.

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White House Says Aware of Reports of Alleged Terror Plot at Swift Concert in Austria

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - The United States is aware of reports about an alleged terrorist plot at Taylor Swift's concert in Vienna, Austria, but the investigation is being handled by local authorities, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Wednesday during a press briefing

"I saw the reporting. I know that local law enforcement is taking the lead here. I just don't have anything to share beyond that," Jean-Pierre said.

Two suspects were arrested on Wednesday for allegedly plotting a terror attack, the media reported earlier in the day, citing Franz Ruf, director-general for public safety in the Ministry of the Interior.

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Boeing Says Starliner Safe to Return Crew, But NASA Engineers Differ - Program Chief

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - NASA and Boeing engineers are clashing over whether the Starliner aircraft with five thruster failures and five separate helium leaks is safe to fly its two astronauts back to earth, with Boeing experts saying it is but US space agency officials being more doubtful, NASA Commercial Crew Program Manager Steve Stich said on Wednesday.

"Boeing asserted the [Starliner] vehicle can come home," Stich told reporters. "I think Boeing is looking at the flight performance [of the Starliner so far] ... the NASA community would like to understand a bit more about the root cause and the physics, and we're trying to get a grip on that."

NASA is currently looking at contingency plans to eventually fly Starliner crew astronauts Barry "Butch" Gilmore and Sunita "Suni" Williams back to earth in February 2025 on a scheduled SpaceX Dragon crewed flight and try to bring the Starliner itself back to earth by remote controlled reentry, Stich said.

"Some members of the team don't see the level of uncertainty as something we should entertain," NASA Space Operations Mission Directorate Associate Administrator Ken Bowersox said.

If the Program Control Board, which includes NASA and Boeing officials, still fails to reach agreement on whether Gilmore and Williams should or should not return home on the Starliner, the decision could be referred eventually to NASA Administrator Bill Nelson, a former astronaut and US senator, to make himself, Bowersox said.

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FBI Confirms Agents at Ex-US Military Intel Officer Scott Ritter's Home as Part of Probe

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - The FBI confirmed to Sputnik on Wednesday that federal agents are searching a home purportedly belonging to ex-US military intelligence officer and current political analyst Scott Ritter as part of an ongoing federal investigation.

"I can confirm FBI personnel are at a home on Dover Dr. in Delmar conducting law enforcement activity in connection with an ongoing federal investigation," the spokesperson said.

The FBI added that no further information is available while the investigation remains ongoing. Sputnik attempted to reach Ritter for comment, but his phone appeared to be shut off.

In June, Ritter told Sputnik that the US Department of State had forced him off a commercial aircraft and confiscated his passport as he was on his way to Russia to participate in the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum as a guest speaker.

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White House Says Was Unaware of Ukraine's Plans to Attack Kursk Before Offensive Attempt

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Wednesday during a press briefing that the Administration did not receive a notification from Ukraine about their plans to attempt an offensive in Russia's Kursk.

When asked if the White House was informed before the attack, Jean-Pierre responded, "No."

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armored vehicles, attacked Russian state border protection units in the region. As of Wednesday, up to 260 Ukrainian troops and 50 armored vehicles have been destroyed, the ministry said.

The National Guard, the Border Guard and the Defense Ministry stepped up their military presence in the Kursk and Belgorod regions to repel potential Ukrainian attacks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Kiev of launching a large-scale provocation. He said Ukrainian troops were shelling the Russian regions indiscriminately, firing at civilian infrastructure and ambulances.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Ukraine shelling Russia's Kursk Region is yet another terrorist attack aimed against civilians.

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UPDATE - Oil Prices Jump 3% On Wall Street Rebound, US Crude Draw And Middle East Tensions

(Updates with settlement prices for crude in paragraphs 2-5)

NEW YORK, August 7 (Sputnik) - Oil prices jumped 3% on Wednesday as a rally on Wall Street, strong draw data for US crude and tensions in the Middle East came together to aid a market that just days ago had given up most of its gains for 2024.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude settled at \$75.23 per barrel, up \$2.03, or 2.8%. WTI rose 0.4% in the prior session after plumbing to a near six-month low of \$71.69 on Monday.

Year-to-date, the US crude benchmark is up 5%, rebuilding after a previous rally that put it up as much as 18% for 2024.

UK-origin Brent crude settled up \$1.85, or 2.4%, at \$78.33 per barrel. Brent's low on the prior day was \$75.06, a bottom not seen since the week ended December 29.

Year-to-date, the global crude benchmark is up 1.7%, after a prior rally that put it up almost 20% for 2024.

"Stability on the stock market and the supply squeeze in oil is giving us support," Phil Flynn, energy analyst at Chicago's Price Futures Group, said, attributing the factors for Wednesday's rebound in crude.

Oil was one of the risk assets that rose on Wednesday, along with the US dollar and Treasury yields, as markets of contrasting value rose across the board as investors regained their appetite for risk.

Most markets plummeted two days ago, in an episode some have taken to calling "Black Monday 2.0" after the original Black Monday of October 19, 1987, where a global crash in

equities presaged one of the darkest days in the modern investing world.

Wednesday's run-up in oil came partly on the weekly draw for crude reported by the US Energy Information Administration (EIA).

Crude stockpiles fell by 3.728 million barrels for the week ended August 2, adding to the prior week's tumble of 3.426 million, the EIA said. US crude inventories have fallen more than 30 million barrels in all over the past six weeks, a tabulation of data from the agency showed.

Still, last week's crude draw was only an outlier in an EIA update that pointed to inventory builds in fuel components gasoline and distillates.

For gasoline, the EIA cited a gain of 1.34 million barrels during the week to August 2, after a prior weekly decline of 3.665 million barrels. 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 agency reported a build of 949,000 barrels on top of the prior weekly gain of 1.534 million barrels. Distillates are primarily processed into the diesel required by trucks, buses, and ships, and also go into making airplane fuel.

Elsewhere, oil prices gained as the Middle East bracing for the likelihood of more attacks in the region from Israel's foes responding to its killing last week of senior Hamas and Hezbollah militant leaders.

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken reminded parties to the Middle East conflict on Tuesday of the "clear consensus" that none should escalate the situation.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Kart LLC. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Pentagon Reaching out to Ukraine to Learn of Kursk Attack, No Comment if US Weapons Used

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - A Pentagon spokesperson told Sputnik on Wednesday that the Defense Department is reaching out to learn more about Ukraine's attempted offensive in Russia's Kursk region but declined to comment on whether US weapons may have been used.

"Regarding this specific operation, we are reaching out to the Ukrainian military to learn more about their objectives," the spokesperson said.

The White House later said the United States was not notified of the operation before the attack was launched.

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armored vehicles, attacked Russian state border protection units in the region. As of Wednesday, up to 260 Ukrainian troops and 50 armored vehicles have been destroyed, the ministry said.

The National Guard, the Border Guard and the Defense Ministry stepped up their military presence in the Kursk and Belgorod regions to repel potential Ukrainian attacks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Kiev of launching a large-scale provocation. He said Ukrainian troops were shelling the Russian regions indiscriminately, firing at civilian infrastructure and ambulances.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Ukraine shelling Russia's

Kursk Region is yet another terrorist attack aimed against civilians.

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US Home Loan Rates Hit 3-Month Low And Could Ease More as House Sales Plunge

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - The US rate for home loans has hit a three-month low and could ease further as house sales plunge from buyers averse to costly borrowings, banking data and media reports said.

The 30-year fixed rates for mortgages — as home loans are known in the United States — fell to 6.55% last week, reaching lows not seen since May 2023, the Mortgage Bankers Association said in data published Wednesday.

Prior to this, mortgages went as high as 7% last year as bankers responded to a near two-year rate hike spree by the Federal Reserve.

The central bank took the base rate for loans in the country from a historic low of zero to 0.25% at the outset of the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020 to a two-decade high of 5.25-5.50% by July 2023, leaving it there for the past year.

The yield on the 10-year US Treasury note, an indication of future Fed behavior, has fallen from this year's high of 4.739% to below 3.95% now, as the central bank considers cutting interest rates by September for the first time since the pandemic.

But media reports also suggest that mortgage rates could fall independently of any easing in the 10-year note's yield, due to the softness of the housing market.

About 4 million existing homes were sold in 2023, the lowest number of home sales in about 25 years. For 2024, sales were down 5.4% year-over-year at the end of June, totaling 3.89 million transactions.

"Even if Treasury yields don't fall further from their current levels, there's still quite a lot of room for mortgage rates to continue to drop," news portal Axios reported.

Home sales agents, known as realtors, however, deny any oversupply situation for houses in the United States that could trigger fire sales at ridiculously low prices.

"There is a housing shortage [but there is also] ongoing job creation in the United States," Lawrence Yun, chief economist and senior vice president of research for the National Association of Realtors, said.

There are also no indications of an imminent housing market crash, Yun asserted, adding: "I would worry if there was an oversupply and if we were in a job-cutting recession, but that's not the case today."

Quartz, another news portal, seemed to have a similar finding, reporting a 6.9% increase in mortgage applications this week — the highest since January — as mortgage rates fell.

Refinancing applications also jumped 59% from the same week a year ago as people tried to take advantage of relatively lower rates to lock in new, cheaper mortgages, Quartz reported.

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Stranded Boeing Starliner Crew May Stay on ISS Until February 2025 - NASA Officials

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - NASA is now working on a hard contingency plan to keep stranded US astronauts Barry "Butch" Gilmore and Sunita "Suni" Williams on the International Space Station (ISS) for another six months until February 2025 and then fly them back on a regular SpaceX Dragon scheduled mission, senior US space agency officials told a media teleconference on Wednesday.

"We have been working for the contingency of returning [Boeing Starliner crew Gilmore and Williams] home with Crew 9 in February," NASA Commercial Crew Program Manager Steve Stich told reporters.

NASA has already issued a task order to SpaceX, which manufactures and maintains the DragonX spacecraft regularly used to shuttle US astronauts to and from the ISS to add extra seating to allow the Crew 9 return flight to carry them back, Stich said.

"We have the option to return four astronauts, We actually put out a task order to Space X to put four seats in place [on the Dragon]," he said.

Gilmore and Williams were scheduled to stay on the ISS for two weeks and have now been there for more than two months, with another seven month stay until next February now looking possible.

NASA and Boeing engineers are still working on the problem that five of the 28 thrusters of the Boeing Starliner that carried them to the ISS in June failed during the mission and five helium leaks through degraded seals were also detected.

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Ukraine Did Not Notify US About Attempted Offensive in Kursk - State Department

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - Ukraine did not notify the United States in advance about its attempted offensive in Russia's Kursk region, US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Wednesday.

"We did not," Miller said during a press briefing when asked whether Washington had visibility before Ukraine went into Russia. "It's not unusual for the Ukrainians not to notify us on their exact tactics before they execute them."

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armored vehicles, attacked Russian state border protection units in the region. As of Wednesday, up to 260 Ukrainian troops and 50 armored vehicles have been destroyed, the ministry said.

The National Guard, the Border Guard and the Defense Ministry stepped up military presence in the Kursk and Belgorod regions to repel potential Ukrainian attacks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Kiev of launching a large-scale provocation. He said Ukrainian troops were shelling the Russian regions indiscriminately, firing at civilian infrastructure and ambulances.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Ukraine shelling Russia's

Kursk Region is yet another terrorist attack aimed against civilians.

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State Dept. Says Kiev's Kursk Attack Doesn't Violate US Policy on Strikes Deep Into Russia

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Wednesday that Ukraine did not violate the US policy prohibiting the use of its weapons for strikes deep into Russia during its attempted offensive in Russia's Kursk region.

"Nothing about our policy has changed and with the actions that they are taking today, they are not in violation of our policy," Miller said during a press briefing.

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armored vehicles, attacked Russian state border protection units in the region. As of Wednesday, up to 260 Ukrainian troops and 50 armored vehicles have been destroyed, the ministry said.

The presence of the National Guard, the Border Guard and the Defense Ministry stepped up military presence in the Kursk and Belgorod regions to repel potential Ukrainian attacks.

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State Department Defers to Pentagon on Whether US Weapons Were Used In Kursk Attack

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - The US State Department on Wednesday declined to say whether US weapons were used in an attempted incursion into Russia's Kursk region, deferring such questions to the Pentagon.

"I'll let the Pentagon speak to the question," US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said during a press briefing, when asked whether the US-provided weapons were used.

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armored vehicles, attacked Russian state border protection units in the region. As of Wednesday, up to 260 Ukrainian troops and 50 armored vehicles have been destroyed, the ministry said.

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UPDATE: US in Communication With Ukraine on Kursk Operation – State Dept.

(Updates with details of the operation in paras 4-6)

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) — The United States is communicating with Ukraine regarding the Kursk operation, which Kiev launched earlier in the day, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Wednesday.

“We are in communication with the Ukrainians about this particular operation across the border they launched earlier today,” Miller said during a press briefing.

Miller pointed out that Ukraine independently makes decisions regarding certain operations on the battlefield.

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armored vehicles, attacked Russian state border protection units in the region. As of Wednesday, up to 260 Ukrainian troops and 50 armored vehicles have been destroyed, the ministry said.

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Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Ukraine shelling Russia's Kursk Region is yet another terrorist attack aimed against civilians.

UN spokesman Farhan Haq warned that Ukrainian actions in Kursk risked escalating the crisis. He said that the United Nations would like to see the situation de-escalated "as much as possible."

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Oil Prices Jump 3% On Wall Street Rebound, US Crude Draw, Middle East Tensions

NEW YORK, August 7 (Sputnik) - Oil prices jumped 3% on Wednesday as a rally on Wall Street, strong draw data for US crude and tensions in the Middle East came together to aid a market that just days ago had given up most of its gains for 2024.

With some two hours to the close of New York trading, US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude stood at \$75.52 per barrel, up \$2.32, or 3.2%. WTI rose 0.4% in the prior session after plumbing to a near six-month low of \$71.69 on Monday.

Year-to-date, the US crude benchmark is up 4.2%, rebuilding after a previous rally that put it up as much as 18% for 2024.

UK-origin Brent crude was up \$2.18, or 2.9%, standing at \$78.66 per barrel. Brent's low on the prior day was \$75.06, a bottom not seen since the week ended December 29.

Year-to-date, the global crude benchmark is up 1%, after a prior rally that put it up almost 20% for 2024. "Stability on the stock market and the supply squeeze in oil is giving us support," Phil Flynn, energy analyst at Chicago's Price Futures Group, said, attributing the factors for Wednesday's rebound in crude.

Oil was one of the risk assets that rose on Wednesday, along with the US dollar and Treasury yields, as markets of contrasting value rose across the board as investors regained their appetite for risk.

Most markets plummeted two days ago, in an episode some have taken to calling "Black Monday 2.0" after the original Black Monday of October 19, 1987, where a global crash in equities presaged one of the darkest days in the modern investing world.

Wednesday's run-up in oil came partly on the weekly draw for crude reported by the US Energy Information Administration (EIA).

Crude stockpiles fell by 3.728 million barrels for the week ended August 2, adding to the prior week's tumble of 3.426 million, the EIA said. US crude inventories have fallen more than 30 million barrels in all over the past six weeks, a tabulation of data from the agency showed.

Still, last week's crude draw was only an outlier in an EIA update that pointed to inventory builds in fuel components gasoline and distillates.

For gasoline, the EIA cited a gain of 1.34 million barrels during the week to August 2, after a prior weekly decline of 3.665 million barrels. 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 agency reported a build of 949,000 barrels on top of the prior weekly gain of 1.534 million barrels. Distillates are primarily processed into the diesel required by trucks, buses, and ships, and also go into making airplane fuel.

Elsewhere, oil prices gained as the Middle East bracing for the likelihood of more attacks in the region from Israel's foes responding to its killing last week of senior Hamas and Hezbollah militant leaders.

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken reminded parties to the Middle East conflict on Tuesday of the "clear consensus" that none should escalate the situation.

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Escalation Could Worsen Regional Issues as Gaza Ceasefire Deal in Final Stages- State Dept

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said Wednesday that a ceasefire deal for Gaza is in its final stages, but escalation could worsen regional issues.

"We are in the final stages, hopefully, of a ceasefire deal. And escalation has the potential to make every problem the region faces worse," Miller said during the press briefing. "And so the message that we are pressing upon everyone in the region is that no party should take any steps to escalate this conflict."

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Blair Welcomes Boeing's \$44Mln Investment Toward P-8A Poseidon Procurement - Ministry

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) – Canadian Defense Minister Bill Blair welcomes a C\$61 million (\$44.4 million) Boeing investment in Canada's aerospace sector aimed at the procurement of the country's P-8A Poseidon fleet, the Ministry of National Defense said on Wednesday.

In November 2023, Canada awarded Boeing a \$5.9 billion contract to replace the Royal Canadian Air Force's (RCAF) aging fleet of CP-140 Aurora surveillance planes with up to 16 P-8A Poseidon aircraft. The procurement deal will support 3000 jobs annually in the Canadian aerospace industry and its supply chain, while Boeing will be contributing around \$358 million to Canada's GDP yearly over the course of a decade.

"Today, the Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence, welcomed Boeing's \$61 million investment in the British Columbian aerospace sector. This investment is part of the Industrial and Technological Benefits (ITBs) included in Canada's decision to procure up to 16 P-8A Poseidon aircraft from the United States Government and Boeing through the Canadian Multi-Mission Aircraft (CMMA) project," the ministry said in a statement.

Boeing will also invest C\$13 million into an Indigenous-owned COTA Aviation, based in Parksville, B.C., the statement said. The investment will establish a hands-on aerospace manufacturing training facility aimed at increasing both the participation and representation of indigenous peoples in Canada's defense, it added.

Since 2022, Canada has increasingly sought to modernize its armed forces both for its security but also in line with its defense commitments to NATO and has deployed important financial means to support new acquisitions.

Notably, the Department of National Defense has announced the purchase of 88 F-35 fighter jets, 9 CC-330 Husky strategic tankers and transport aircraft, and 11 Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, among others.

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WHO Chief to Convene Emergency Committee to Discuss Mpox Outbreak Magnitude

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) – World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Wednesday that he would convene an emergency committee to advise him on whether the latest outbreak of Monkeypox in a central African nation represents an international emergency.

“In light of the spread of #mpox outside #DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo], and the potential for further international spread within and outside Africa, I have decided to convene an Emergency Committee under the International Health Regulations to advise me on whether the outbreak represents a public health emergency of international concern,” the Director-General said via X.

The committee will meet as soon as possible, Ghebreyesus said. It will be made of worldwide independent experts working in a range of relevant disciplines, he continued.

According to data provided by the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 15,074 Mpox cases (2,853 confirmed; 12,221 suspected) and 461 deaths have been recorded across 12 African Union member states in the past eight months. This marked a 160% increase in cases and a 19% increase in deaths in 2024 compared to the same period in 2023.

The outbreak and its exponential increase have been acknowledged by Kinshasa. In late July, Doctors Without Borders in DRC said cases were observed in 23 of the country’s 26 provinces, including in crowded displacement camps around Goma, North Kivu.

Monkeypox, also known as “mpox,” is a rare viral disease that is transmitted between people. Usually, this is a mild disease that most people recover from within a few weeks, but some may have complications. The UK Health Security Agency noted that monkeypox is not a sexually transmitted disease but can become contagious through close contact with an infected person.

The initial symptoms of monkeypox include fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, swollen lymph nodes, fever, and fatigue. A rash may develop, often starting on the face and then spreading to other parts of the body.

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US House Oversight Panel Requests Interview With Climate Advisor Podesta - Letter

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - The US House Oversight Committee sent a letter on Wednesday requesting a transcribed interview with Senior Advisor to the President for International Climate Policy John Podesta, amid transparency concerns related to the position.

In March, the panel requested information on Podesta’s takeover of responsibilities previously held by the office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate (SPEC), after John Kerry’s departure from the role.

The State Department provided information supporting concerns that the Biden administration has taken steps to avoid the Senate confirmation process and cloud transparency of the SPEC

office's activities, the letter said.

"Because we are aware of significant confusion across the Department related to your transition to your new role, we require your participation in a transcribed interview to examine your involvement in SPEC-related matters," the letter said.

The State Department informed lawmakers that Podesta's new role is not a replacement for the SPEC, the letter said. However, internal emails which contain the subject line "Podesta is new envoy" contradict the claim, the letter said.

Moreover, Kerry appears to be continuing international diplomacy as a private citizen without oversight from the State Department, the US Congress, and President Joe Biden, the letter said.

An interview with Podesta will help the panel to understand the coordination maintained with Kerry and his purported continuing work with the SPEC office, the letter said.

The panel also sent a letter to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken requesting transcribed interviews with State Department staff to conduct oversight of the SPEC office's activities.

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Saudi Arabia-Israel Normalization on Hold Until Region Stable Again – Wendy Sherman

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - The process of normalizing relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel is currently on hold, but this could change with the achievement of a ceasefire in Gaza and the return of stability to the region, former US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman said on Wednesday.

"There was a tremendous opportunity for Saudi Arabia to normalize with Israel, and an enormous amount of work went into that. I think all of that is on hold for now until we get to the ceasefire, until we get to a calmer place in the region," Sherman said during a virtual event hosted by The Washington Post.

The Jerusalem Post reported earlier this week that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seeks to postpone normalization with Saudi Arabia until after the November US elections.

Saudi Arabia and Israel were close to signing a US-brokered normalization deal in May-June, but talks stalled over the Netanyahu government's position on the creation of an independent Palestinian state, one of Riyadh's key conditions.

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Ukrainian Military Attack on Kursk Region Increases Risk of Escalation - UN Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, August 7 (Sputnik) - Ukrainian actions in Kursk risk escalating the Ukrainian crisis, and the United Nations would like to see de-escalation, UN spokesman Farhan Haq said on Wednesday.

"All of the incidents raise the risk that there will be an alarming escalation of the crisis and we want to see the situation de-escalated as much as possible," Haq said during a UN briefing.

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armored vehicles, attacked Russian state border protection units in the Kursk Region. The ministry said the sabotage group was defeated and retreated to Ukraine.

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Trump Says Harris' Pick Of Walz As Running Mate 'A Really Bad Decision' for America

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - Republican former US president Donald Trump on Wednesday branded his Democrat challenger Kamala Harris' choice of Minnesota Governor Tim Walz as her running mate for the 2024 White House race as "a really bad decision" for America.

"Look at this decision — It is a really bad decision," Trump said during an appearance on the Fox network. "This is a really bad decision for the country, you know. I want ... good decisions because, ultimately, what we want is the country to do well. The country can't do well with these two people. They have very similar [qualities]."

Harris named Walz her running mate on Tuesday for the November 5 election.

Before this, many, including Republicans, had expected Harris to choose Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro—a progressive of Jewish faith and strong advocate for Israel. Republicans have since criticized Walz's selection as unfavorable to Israel.

Trump also expressed disappointment over Harris' choice due to Walz's and Harris' records on security. "I thought they would pick someone different because her record on security is horrible," Trump said.

JD Vance joined Trump in criticism, alleging on X that Walz had abandoned his military duties during the Iraq War.

"When the US Marine Corps asked me to go to Iraq to serve my country, I did it. When Tim Walz was asked by his country to go to Iraq, he dropped out of the Army and allowed his unit to go without him. I think that's shameful," Vance said.

Since becoming the Democratic standard bearer, Harris has narrowed Trump's lead over Biden in pre-election polls, even leading in some instances.

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Logistics Base in Bandiana to Enhance US Operations in Australia – Defense Minister

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) – The new logistics base in Bandiana will "greatly enhance" US military operations on the entire Australian continent, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defense Richard Marles said on Wednesday.

"The logistics base in Bandiana greatly enhances the way in which America can operate on the Australian continent," Marles said during a discussion hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

During the 34th Australia-US Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) that took place in Annapolis,

Maryland, earlier this week, the United States and Australia agreed to expand their cooperation by prepositioning US Army equipment and materiel in Bandiana as well as to establish Bandiana as a longer-term location for US troops on the continent.

In addition to Bandiana, Washington, and Canberra agreed to create a long-term operation location for bilateral force posture cooperation at the Australian Royal Air Force base in Vermont.

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JD Vance Says He, Trump Will Face Tough Questions Anywhere Unlike VP Kamala Harris

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance on Wednesday said that former President Donald Trump and he are committed to answering tough questions from all audiences, contrasting this with Vice President Kamala Harris, whom he accused of avoiding direct engagement.

"President Trump will go anywhere into hostile audiences, into friendly audiences, and answer tough questions. I will go anywhere and answer tough questions because I respect the American people enough to say that I should have to earn your vote. I shouldn't be expected to be given your vote while I hide in a basement or stand in front of a teleprompter, which is exactly what Kamala Harris has done," Vance said during a press conference.

Yesterday, Harris announced her official status as the Democratic nominee for president of the United States during a rally in Philadelphia. A report citing the Democratic National Committee (DNC) announced that US Vice President Kamala Harris formally won the Democratic Party's presidential nomination following a virtual roll call.

Since hitting the campaign trail as the Democratic nominee, Harris has also slashed Trump's lead over Biden in pre-election polls, running ahead of the Republican in some instances.

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Ukraine Should Address Kursk Offensive, US Policy Unchanged on Attacks in Russia- Kirby

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) -White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Wednesday, commenting on an attempted offensive in Russia's Kursk region, that Ukraine should address its operations.

"I'll let the Ukrainians speak to their operations one way or the other," Kirby said, referring reporters to the Ukrainian Armed forces. "I would also just add that nothing has changed about our policy with respect to enabling or encouraging strikes or attacks inside Russia."

"The last thing I would add is that we are, as you would expect, reaching out to our Ukrainian counterparts to get a little bit better understanding," he added.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that Russian forces continued to defeat Ukraine's fighters throughout the night, adding that the operation continues. The ministry added that up to 260 Ukrainian troops and 50 units of military equipment were destroyed in the

past 24 hours.

On Tuesday, the Ministry said that up to 300 Ukrainian fighters, supported by 11 tanks and more than 20 armored vehicles, attacked Russian state border protection units in the Kursk Region. The ministry added that the sabotage group was defeated and retreated to Ukraine.

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White House Says New Hamas Political Chief Sinwar Terrorist With 'Blood on His Hands'

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - Yahya Sinwar, the new political chief of Palestinian movement Hamas, is a terrorist with blood on his hands, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Wednesday.

"The man's a terrorist. He has an awful lot of blood on his hands," Kirby said during a press briefing.

On Tuesday, Hamas announced Sinwar as the replacement for assassinated political chief Ismail Haniyeh.

Sinwar was the architect of Hamas' October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, Kirby said.

Kirby added that Sinwar has always been the chief decision-maker when it comes to negotiations over the past nine months.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Tuesday that Sinwar is the "primary decider" on concluding a ceasefire deal with Israel.

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Elon Musk Says 'Open' to Interview with Kamala Harris

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) – Elon Musk suggested Wednesday that he was "open" to having a public conversation with Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris in a similar fashion to his scheduled interview with Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

"I'm open to it," Musk posted on social media, in response to another user saying that the "odds Kamala would agree to a conversation with Elon Musk" were zero.

Trump announced Tuesday on social media that he would have a "major interview with Elon Musk" next Monday night, with more details to come.

Musk said he "fully endorsed" Trump in July, after the former president was shot at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania.

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white house on kursk incursion: US will let ukrainians speak for their operations, nothing has changed with respect to policy on use of us weapons

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Wall St. Up With Global Markets for 2nd Day as 'Great Reset' Follows 'Great Selloff'

NEW YORK, August 7 (Sputnik) - US stocks rose broadly at Wednesday's open as Wall Street joined global markets in rallying for a second straight day from the worst crash in world equities since 1987.

Prices of oil to gold rose in the latest session and the US dollar and Treasury yields bumped up as well in a rare unison of fortunes for markets of contrasting value as investors across the board regained their appetite for risk.

Most markets had plummeted just two days earlier, in an episode some have taken to calling as "Black Monday 2.0" after the original Black Monday of October 19, 1987, where a global crash in equities presaged one of the darkest days for the modern investing world.

"Today is what you'd call the continuance of 'The Great Reset' after 'The Great Selloff'," said John Kilduff, a regular commentator on oil and partner at New York energy hedge fund Again Capital.

In Wednesday's trading of US stocks, Wall Street's three main indexes — the S&P 500, the Nasdaq Composite and the Dow Jones Industrial Average — were up between one and two percent each some 30 minutes into the open.

The S&P, which tracks stocks of 500 high-performing US companies, rose 1.7% after closing up almost 0.95% on Tuesday. The index had dropped 2.99% on Monday, for its biggest one-day loss since September 2022.

The technology-heavy Nasdaq, which comprises pricey stocks such as Amazon, Apple, Netflix, and Google, gained almost 2%, adding to the prior session's advance of 0.98%. On Monday, the Nasdaq tanked 3.4%.

The Dow, the broadest indicator for US equity markets and one that often reflects stocks of value, climbed 1.2%, following through with Tuesday's rise of 0.76%. It tumbled 2.6% on Monday.

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US Groceries, Fast Food Have Potentially Harmful Levels of Chemical Perchlorate - Report

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - Potentially harmful levels of the chemical perchlorate were detected in grocery and fast food items in the United States, according to findings released by Consumer Reports on Wednesday.

Scientists with Consumer Reports tested 196 samples of 63 supermarket products and 10 fast food items for perchlorate, which has been linked to serious health problems, the report said.

More than two-thirds of the samples, 67%, had detectable levels of perchlorate, the report said. Baby food, fast food and fresh produce had the highest levels of the chemical, the report added.

Perchlorate, which is used in explosives, airbags, rocket fuel and some plastics, may cause thyroid issues, the report said.

None of the tested foods had acutely dangerous levels of the chemical but did have sufficient levels to cause hazardous exposure over multiple servings, the report said.

Although perchlorate can occur naturally, most people are likely exposed to the chemical as a result of contamination from industrial activity, the report said, citing University of Massachusetts Amherst professor emeritus of biology R. Thomas Zoeller.

The report recommends that regulators revoke permission to use perchlorate in food contact materials and limit acceptable perchlorate levels in food in a way that accounts for unique risks to children.

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US Defense Chief Blocks Plea Deals for 5 Defendants Tied to September 11 Attack - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, August 7 (Sputnik) - US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin issued a memorandum blocking the possibility of plea deals for five defendants connected to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, Pentagon spokesperson Jessica Anderson said on Wednesday.

"The Secretary's memo withdrew authority for the Convening Authority to enter into pretrial agreements for all five of the defendants in the case," Anderson said in response to a question about the potential for plea deals.

Last week, the Defense Department announced that it entered into pre-trial plea agreements with three of the defendants, including Khalid Shaikh Mohammad, who allegedly masterminded the attacks.

However, Austin later revoked the plea agreements.

The White House was not aware of the plea deals until they were announced by the Pentagon, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said.