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8/9/24 Friday

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'Targeted Harassment': Scott Ritter Blasts Raid on His Home as US Gov 'Fishing Expedition'

The former USMC intelligence officer's home was raided Wednesday over allegations he had violated the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), which requires anyone who acts on behalf of a foreign nation to register as such to the US government. However, individuals accused of such a violation are typically notified by letter, not a raid.

The recent raid carried out on the New York home of former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter was another chapter in the US government's harassment campaign against him and his family, he told Sputnik.

"It's a fishing expedition. It's harassment," Ritter told Radio Sputnik's Critical Hour on Thursday, noting that the US government's end goal is to discredit him in the eyes of the public as he continually works to shed light on US policy.

Within the more than two dozen boxes that were carried out of Ritter's home were documents that substantiated his findings that Iraq never had weapons of mass destruction, a key claim that encouraged the US to undertake its invasion of the Middle Eastern nation in 2003.

"This is the archive that backs up my allegations, my assertions that Iraq didn't have weapons of mass destruction, that the US policies ... that accused Iraq of such were premised on a lie. It's an archive that I was relying upon to write a book that's in draft form right now, and they seized that archive," Ritter told show hosts Dr. Wilmer Leon and Garland Nixon, adding that the confiscation of those documents were out of the scope of the search warrant.

"This is not about FARA. It literally isn't. This is targeted harassment. This is a frontal assault on free speech and free press."

Touching on how the legal system has outlined that sharing a viewpoint with a foreign government does not equate the status of foreign agent, Ritter recalled he had told one of the agents on the scene that his "main premise is stopping a nuclear war" and less about throwing his support behind another government.

"My main premise is to, you know, support diplomacy over militarism, to promote dialogue instead of confrontation, you know, and to promote arms control instead of an arms race," he said. "If this is a crime in America, then convict me and throw the key away. But it's not.

Having acted as a journalist for some 20 years now, Ritter has published works in numerous publications that include the Washington Post and the New York Times. Ritter told Nixon that he's no different than any other journalist being paid for their work.

"But they're trying to twist this into somehow saying that I am in the employ of the Russian government, and that I am acting on instructions from the Russian government. The good news is that nothing they seized will back up these assertions. The bad news is I don't think it matters," he said.

"They kept saying you're trying to shape the opinion of the American people. You're damn right I'm trying to shape the opinion of the American people. Everybody engaged in journalism is doing this. This is what you're supposed to do to empower people with knowledge and

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information, fact-based knowledge and information so they can make their own decisions. The most dangerous thing in a democracy like America is a knowledgeable citizen, a citizen empowered with information to make an informed, you know, choice on election day, not dumb sheep being herded down the path."

"This is harassment designed to silence me. It's designed to intimidate me. And for everybody listening, understand this is a frontal assault on the Constitution of the United States," Ritter stressed. "A frontal assault on free speech. A frontal assault on the free press."

"Free speech isn't free if when you execute your right to speak freely, you get raided by the FBI. And a free press cannot exist if, carrying out your journalistic duties, you are accused because of the position you take of, you know, working for an entity because these positions have to clash with the official policy objectives of the United States."

Asked if the raid was tied to the June seizure of his passport or a recent event he attended in New York to discuss his latest work and efforts to encourage an ease of tension between the US and Russia, the former intelligence officer admitted "they're all connected."

Ritter detailed he had planned additional trips to Russia later this year that would help to gain information that would help "empower the American audience about, you know, the reality of Russia and the danger of American policy."

"The United States government did not want any of these trips to happen. They seized my passport and now they're just extending the harassment," he said. "They fear what I'm doing, and they fear what we are doing and this is what happens when governments get afraid of their own citizens. Citizens who, again, I remind everybody, are simply executing their rights of free speech and, as a journalist, my participation in the free press."

"I never want to be a foreign agent. I'm not acting as one and I don't want to act as one. I will never represent another country. I represent America, only America," he continued. "I believe in the potential of my country to be that which we, you know, purport to be, what we want to be, and I recognize that we're not there and one of the reasons we're not there is because of the policies of my government."

"And, therefore, as an American citizen, it is my duty to speak out and shine a light on where I think my government is going wrong so that we, the people, can take corrective action and get the government back on track because the government serves us, we don't serve the government."

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US Hypocrisy on Full Display as Gov Makes 'Dubious' FARA Claims Against Scott Ritter

Under the orders of the US Justice Department, the home of former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter was raided this week under allegations of violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act. More than two dozen boxes were pulled from his home, including an archive that backed Ritter's allegations that there were never any WMDs in Iraq in 2003.

The US' latest effort to target Scott Ritter have fully put on display the government's hypocrisy as it picks and chooses when to stay its hand and when to weaponize the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) against Americans, US attorney John Jackman told Sputnik.

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The Wednesday raid took place at Ritter's home in New York as investigators have sought to argue that the former weapons inspector's journalistic work is being framed at the direction of the Russian government. However, the claims could not be further from the truth.

"FARA, kind of by its very nature, is enforced ambiguously, which leads to very unequal levels of enforcement and basically, you know, there's potential for it to be weaponized against political speech that the United States, especially our foreign policy establishment, finds problematic," Jackman told Radio Sputnik's Fault Lines on Friday.

Potential FARA offenders are flagged by the US government if they fall under certain specifications, such as an individual who is documented as having been directed at the sole discretion of a foreign principal. That said, there are exemptions that protect "bonafide" media services, which Jackman noted its exact definition is "somewhat ambiguous."

"I'm looking at the totality of those factors together and these accusations of him acting as a foreign agent and, just on its face, the claims are extremely dubious and uncredible in my view," Jackman told hosts Jamarl Thomas and Melik Abdul.

"I think this comes down to where they can kind of find these ambiguities in foreign agent laws since it's been enacted and then also sort of play upon some of the jingoism and fear that the government is really trying to stoke, especially toward Russia but also toward countries in the Middle East as well, which Scott Ritter has been sympathetic to."

Jackman, who also serves as the regular co-host of DD Geopolitics, contrasted the government's accusations against Ritter to that of the relationship between the Israeli lobby in the US and Congress. "The hypocrisy is so profound," he said.

"The Israeli lobby being able to literally buy [congressional] seats, yet the United States treats all the deference that our media, that our politicians give to Israel, literally the exact propaganda lines that the Israeli government will say to justify, you know, the war and occupation going in Gaza, in the West Bank," Jackman told Thomas.

"Yet, when it comes to talking about the interests of, you know, other countries or even the sovereign interests of the people in the United States, right, to make sure that our tax dollars are being used in an accountable way that's going to the infrastructure of this country, rather than going to continue to fuel war and foreign aid in, you know, the tens and hundreds of billions of dollar to countries, like, Ukraine and Israel and Taiwan, for example. So, the hypocrisy to me is just very evident," the attorney emphasized.

The Wednesday raid also came the same week court documents revealed Hunter Biden took in million from Romanian businessman Gabriel Popoviciu in exchange for attempting to exert his influence on the US government during his father's vice presidency. Additionally, former Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway registered as a foreign agent who would be lobbying on behalf of pro-Ukrainian interests.

Unlike in the Biden findings, where evidence shows an agent-principal relationship had been established between the two parties, that isn't the case for Ritter. "This is one of the meaningful differences with Scott," Jackman said.

"At every turn you know Scott is, what he's talking about when it comes to his commentary on foreign policy and the work that he's doing, for example, to organize this anti-war rally and draw attention to the specter of nuclear war has been done under his own volition," he noted. "Due to his own, you know, freedom of thought and freedom of speech which actually, you know, is very

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tough to do in this country because it cuts against a lot of financial interests that he could potentially be taking advantage of, right?"
"It would be a lot easier in this country, for example, to take advantage of a Ukrainian interest who's willing to pay you to go on the airwaves and spout Ukrainian propaganda. It would be a lot easier to get that into the mainstream than it would to, you know, take the other side of it in this country, which requires just kind of by its very nature - and you all know - a lot of independence."

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'This is Targeted Harassment': Scott Ritter Speaks Out After Police Raid His Home

Former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter spoke on the recent raid conducted on his New York home and condemned the act as 'targeted harassment' by the US government.

"This is not about [the Foreign Agents Restriction Act]. It literally isn't. This is targeted harassment. This is a frontal assault on free speech and free press," Ritter told Radio Sputnik's Critical Hour. "This is harassment designed to silence me. It's designed to intimidate me.

Ritter's home was raided under a search warrant alleging a violation of the Foreign Agents Restriction Act.

"This Foreign Agent Registration Act is a joke, as I told the FBI," Ritter said, adding he "never" wants to serve as a foreign agent.

"I will never represent another country. I represent America, only America," he underscored. "This is what happens when governments get afraid of their own citizens."

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US hypocrisy on full display as gov makes 'dubious' FARA claims against Scott Ritter

US efforts to target former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter have laid bare the nation's hypocrisy when it comes to its use of the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

"Just on its face, the claims are extremely dubious and uncredible in my view," John Jackman, a US attorney told Radio Sputnik's Fault Lines.

Contrasting the Ritter case to court filings showing that Hunter Biden took millions in exchange for attempting to influence US policy, Jackman stressed that the hypocrisy is "just very evident."

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"At every turn you know Scott is, what he's talking about when it comes to his commentary on foreign policy and the work that he's doing, for example, to organize this anti-war rally and draw attention to the specter of nuclear war has been done under his own volition," the attorney emphasized.

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Waiting game on Iran's response to Israeli aggression hints 'big strike' may be imminent

As the world awaits Iran's response to the killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh, the waiting itself suggests the retaliation will come in the form of a "big strike."

"The longer they take, it seems to me - again, we're all guessing, we're all speculating, I don't know what's happening ... but it seems to me the longer they take that just means they're more seriously preparing," Jim Kavanagh, an independent journalist, told Radio Sputnik's Critical Hour. "It looks to me like it's going to be a big strike."

Kavanagh noted that while a settlement for the conflict needed to be "stable and secure for at least another 10 years," it wasn't likely to come about without a "decisive battle."

"[It's] going to involve all of the Axis of Resistance, not just Iran and the Houthis and Hezbollah, etc., the entire Axis of Resistance and the United States and Israel, and we're going to see nuclear weapons used by Israel," he said. "Guarantee it."

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Some 40% of Major Manufacturing Investments Announced by Biden Delayed - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 12 (Sputnik) – About 40% of major manufacturing investments that were announced in the first year of US President Joe Biden's much-touted Inflation Reduction Act and Chips and Science Act have been delayed, the Financial Times reported on Monday, citing its own analysis and interviews with companies and local and state governments.

Of the 114 projects worth more than $100 million and totaling $227.9 billion, the newspaper found that a total of $84 billion worth of initiatives have been delayed for at least two months if not several years, or put on pause for an indefinite period.

For example, projects like Enel's $1 billion solar panel factory in Oklahoma, LG Energy Solution's $2.3 billion battery storage facility in Arizona, and Albemarle's $1.3 billion lithium refinery in South Carolina have been put on hold.

Companies cited poor market conditions, slowing demand, and policy uncertainty in an election year. Biden approved the Inflation Reduction Act and the Chips Act in August 2022 to revive manufacturing in the Rust Belt and combat China's dominance in clean energy technology.

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Reagan's Joke About Bombing Russia Was to Make Fun of Liberal Media - Ex-US Official

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - The 1984 controversial joke by US President Ronald Reagan about bombing Russia was intended to mock the liberal media, but his real goal was to end the Cold War with the Soviet Union, former Assistant Treasury Secretary Paul Craig Roberts told Sputnik.

"Reagan was just making fun of the media. It has no historical significance," Roberts, who served as a senior Treasury official in the Reagan administration, said. "Reagan's goal was to end the Cold War, not to bomb Russia."

On August 11, 1984, Reagan, while doing a mic check, joked: "My fellow Americans, I am pleased to tell you today that I have signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes."

"This is just nonsense," Roberts stated. "While waiting to do a radio broadcast, Reagan amused his aides and the press by making fun of the liberals' portrayal of him as a hard-liner against the Soviets. In other words, Reagan was acting the image of himself as portrayed by the liberal media. Instead of seeing the joke on themselves, the liberal media said, 'See, we told you. Reagan is dangerous!'"

The Soviet Union condemned the joke, saying it reflected Reagan's low level of humor and thinking, as well as his "obsession."

On August 15, a "symmetrical response" came from the USSR's Far Eastern Command, when an operator sent the coded message, "We now embark on military action against US forces." The message was decoded by Japanese and American intelligence and briefly prompted an increase in their alert status in the region.

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Israel-Palestine Ceasefire to Pave Way for Two-State Solution - Venezuelan Deputy UN Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, August 11 (Sputnik), Lenka White - A ceasefire between Israel and Palestine would not only allow for expanded humanitarian aid deliveries but would also pave the way for a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict, Venezuela's Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations Joaquin Perez Ayestaran said in an interview.

“We are confident that the minute a ceasefire is reached and that lasts and is respected, then this will serve the purpose of creating the conditions not only for bringing in humanitarian aid at scale, but also for initiating a political process that will ultimately realize the two-state solution,“ Perez Ayestaran told Sputnik.

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ООН, 11 авг - РИА Новости. Установление режима прекращения огня в секторе Газа поможет запустить политический процесс двугосударственного решения палестино-израильского вопроса, сообщил в интервью РИА Новости зампостпреда Венесуэлы в ООН Хоакин Перес.

"Мы уверены, что как только будет достигнуто соглашение о прекращении огня, которое будет соблюдаться, то это послужит созданию условий не только для увеличения масштабов гуманитарной помощи, но и для инициирования политического процесса, который в конечном итоге приведет к реализации решения о сосуществовании двух государств", – сказал Перес.

Израиль 7 октября 2023 года подвергся беспрецедентной по масштабу ракетной атаке из сектора Газа. После этого бойцы палестинского движения ХАМАС проникли в приграничные районы, открыв огонь по военным и гражданским, захватили более 200 заложников. По данным властей, погибли около 1,2 тысячи человек.

Армия обороны Израиля начала операцию "Железные мечи" в секторе Газа, включающую удары по гражданским объектам. Израиль объявил о полной блокаде анклава: были остановлены поставки воды, электричества, топлива, продуктов и лекарств. Число погибших при израильских ударах по сектору Газа с 7 октября превысило 39,6 тысячи человек, более 91,5 тысячи пострадали.

Сектор Газа фактически оказался разделён на южную и северную части, Израиль проводит наземную операцию в Рафахе, который считается последним оплотом ХАМАС.

МИД РФ призвал стороны прекратить боевые действия. Согласно позиции Москвы, урегулирование возможно лишь на основе утверждённой СБ ООН формулы с созданием палестинского государства в границах 1967 года со столицей в Восточном Иерусалиме.

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Reagan's 1984 Joke on Bombing Russia Should Have Never Been Made - Ex-CIA Analysts

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - US President Ronald Reagan's recorded comments to National Public Radio (NPR) engineers that he would order the bombing of Russia made 40 years ago this Sunday were never meant to be taken seriously but should have never been made at all, two former veteran CIA senior analysts told Sputnik.

NEED TO BE CAREFUL

"It was never meant to be anything but a joke: But politicians are better to be careful as anything they say is likely to be somewhat incoherent and will inevitably be misinterpreted no matter what the intention was," former CIA senior analyst and station chief Philip Giraldi, founder and chair of the Council for the National Interest, said.

Giraldi agreed with reports that Reagan had not realized the microphone was still recording his comments at the time, although they were never broadcast.

"I think it was actually a joke and the mic was believed to be turned off," he said.

Giraldi confirmed that there was no sense in the US intelligence community or the Reagan administration at the time that any such attack was being contemplated at all.

"I was in Istanbul at the time and don't recall any particular chatter about it in either the

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embassy or station," he said.

However, the old story had important lessons for political leaders today, Giraldi advised.

"I guess the lesson to be learned in the current context is that we would be a lot better off if our so-called leaders would just keep their mouths shut as anything they say is likely to be somewhat incoherent and will inevitably be misinterpreted no matter what the intention was," he said.

PRIVATE JOKE

Former senior CIA analyst Raymond McGovern, who personally briefed four US presidents — including Reagan — on the Soviet Union and Russia, is skeptical about Reagan having any intention for the story to circulate at all for any reason.

"Did he really mean it to go out live? I don't think so," he said.

There was no evidence anywhere that Reagan at the time knew the microphone was live or that he ever intended his remarks to circulate at all, McGovern pointed out.

Reagan made his comment "We begin bombing in five minutes" as the last sentence of a controversial, off-the-record joke that he gave while preparing for a scheduled radio address from his vacation home in California.

The Soviet Union criticized the joke, as did Reagan's opponent in the 1984 presidential election, former Vice President Walter Mondale. Mondale was defeated by Reagan in a landslide.

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Venezuela Willing to Engage With US, Including on Bitcoin - Deputy Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, August 11 (Sputnik), Lenka White - Caracas is open to cooperation with the US in any area which would be in the interest of its citizens, including on bitcoin, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Joaquin Perez Ayestaran said in an interview.

“We're more than willing to cooperate and to engage with each and every country in the world, including the US, in order to ensure the well-being of our people … If this [bitcoin] is an area that together we identify as one in which we can move together, we will of course pursue it,” Perez Ayestaran told Sputnik.

Venezuela is willing and ready to engage in any commercial or economic trade which would be in the interest of its citizens, he added.

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Венесуэла готова взаимодействовать с США ради благополучия своего народа – миссия в ООН

ООН, 11 авг - РИА Новости. Венесуэла "более чем готова" взаимодействовать со всеми странами, включая США, для того, чтобы обеспечить благополучие собственного народа, сообщил в интервью РИА Новости зампостпреда страны в ООН Хоакин Перес.

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"Мы более чем готовы сотрудничать и взаимодействовать с каждой страной мира, включая США, чтобы обеспечить благополучие нашего народа", – сказал Перес.
Венесуэльский лидер Николас Мадуро ранее заявлял о готовности возобновить диалог с США и призвал Вашингтон отказаться от угроз Каракасу и следовать пунктам соглашений, достигнутых в Катаре в 2023 году - в сопровождение своих слов он впервые опубликовал подписанный там меморандум о взаимопонимании.

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Dollar's Dominance Allows for Subordination of Countries - Deputy Envoy to Sputnik

UNITED NATIONS, August 11 (Sputnik), Lenka White - The dollar's dominance of the world financial system pushes countries' economies into subordination and deprives them of fiscal sovereignty, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Joaquin Perez Ayestaran said in an interview.
"We feel that there is one particular currency that has been dominating the financial system for some time, and it has allowed for the subordination of some countries, not only in terms of the economy, but also in terms of sovereignty, and fiscal sovereignty," Perez Ayestaran told Sputnik.
Venezuela believes that countries should be able to trade in their own currencies and wants to have a multi-currency system, he added.

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Venezuela Calls for Diversifying Currencies for Freedom, Sanction Relief - Deputy UN Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, August 11 (Sputnik), Lenka White - Venezuela believes it's time to diversify trade currencies for freedom and to avoid the impacts of sanctions, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Joaquin Perez Ayestaran told Sputnik.
"We do believe that the time has come to diversify the basket of currencies in which we conduct legal trade in our nations, it will liberate us and it will also serve as a way to overcome the negative impacts of unilateral coercive measures that affect many of our countries, including some that are part of BRICS," Perez Ayestaran said.
He added that countries have been forced to subordinate themselves due to one particular currency dominating the world.

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Венесуэла выступает за диверсификацию корзины валют "Группы друзей" – миссия в ООН

ООН, 11 авг - РИА Новости. Венесуэла выступает за диверсификацию корзины валют стран-участниц Группы друзей в поддержку устава ООН, убеждена, что это

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поспособствует преодолению негативных последствий санкций, сообщил в интервью РИА Новости зампостпреда страны в ООН Хоакин Перес.

"Мы считаем, что пришло время диверсифицировать корзину валют, в которой мы ведем законную торговлю в наших странах (страны-участники Группы друзей в поддержку устава ООН - ред.). Это освободит нас, а также послужит способом преодоления негативных последствий односторонних принудительных мер, которые затрагивают многие из наших стран, включая некоторые из стран БРИКС", – сказал Перес.

По его словам, "одна конкретная валюта", которая в течение долгого времени доминировала в финансовой системе, подчинила себе некоторые страны не только с точки зрения экономики, но и с точки зрения суверенитета, в том числе фискального.

Группа друзей в защиту устава Всемирной организации была создана три года назад при активном участии России. Сейчас в нее входят почти 20 государств, среди которых Алжир, Белоруссия, Венесуэла, Иран, КНР, КНДР, Палестина и Сирия. Группа выступает за противодействие односторонним принудительным мерам, а также за защиту суверенитета и территориальной целостности стран-участниц в соответствии с принципами международного права.

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Venezuela Calls for Currency Diversification for sake of Freedom, Sanction Relief - Deputy un Envoy to Sputnik

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Global South Countries Interested in Joining Venezuela’s Group of Friends -Deputy UN Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, August 11 (Sputnik), Lenka White - States in the global south have shown an interest in joining the Group of Friends alliance, Venezuela's Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations Joaquin Perez Ayestaran told Sputnik.

“Countries from the global south are very much committed to the UN Charter [are showing an interest in joining the Group of Friends],” Perez Ayestaran said.

The Group of Friends in Defense of the United Nations Charter was established on July 6, 2021, in New York. It currently includes 18 member states, such as Russia, Syria, Iran, and China.

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Глобальный Юг интересуется членством в Группе друзей в защиту устава ООН – Венесуэла

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ООН, 11 авг - РИА Новости. Страны глобального Юга проявляют интерес к присоединению к Группе друзей в защиту устава ООН, организация открыта для новых членов, заявил в интервью РИА Новости зампостпреда Венесуэлы в ООН Хоакин Перес.

По словам венесуэльского дипломата, группа "открыта для всех", кто готов применять устав ООН в качестве компаса для ведения международной политики, придерживаться его и уважать его "букву и дух".

"Таковы условия для того, чтобы стать членом организации, и мы хотели бы, чтобы как можно больше стран присоединились к нам… Поэтому мы более чем рады видеть, что в последнее время есть страны, которые проявляют интерес к присоединению (к Группе - ред.)", - сказал Перес.

Венесуэла, отметил он, приглашает их к участию в группе и наблюдением за ее работой.

На вопрос о том, какие именно страны интересуются вступлением в группу, Перес ответил: "страны глобального Юга, которые очень привержены уставу ООН".

Группа друзей в защиту устава Всемирной организации была создана три года назад при активном участии России. Сейчас в нее входят почти 20 государств, среди которых Алжир, Белоруссия, Венесуэла, Иран, КНР, КНДР, Палестина и Сирия. Группа выступает за противодействие односторонним принудительным мерам, а также за защиту суверенитета и территориальной целостности стран-участниц в соответствии с принципами международного права.

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US Congressman Massie Says Americans Must Urge Biden to Avoid War With Iran

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - US Congressman Thomas Massie believes that Americans must urge US President Joe Biden and his administration to avoid sparking a serious conflict with Iran amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

"Biden and the deep state are just itching to get us into a serious conflict with Iran. We have to tell them no," Massie said on X.

The US has bolstered its military presence in the Middle East, including deploying additional F-22 Raptor jets, amid tensions between Iran and Israel.

On Thursday, a senior administration official said that the consequences of a direct Iranian attack on Israel would be significant.

However, Massie included a meme in his statement, which joked that the US must finish dealing with its involvement in the Ukraine conflict before engaging in a conflict with Iran.

"You have to finish your Ukraine before you can have any Iran," the meme says.

Last month, a commission on the US National Defense Strategy established by the Congress found that the US risked losing in the event of multiple conflicts with peer and near-peer adversaries.

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Energy Fuels Transport of Uranium Through Navajo Land Raised Significant Concerns - Tribe

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The decision by Energy Fuels Resource to transport uranium ore through the Navajo Nation reservation raised significant concerns about the health risks it created for the tribal community, Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director Justin Ahasteen told Sputnik.

Last week, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren announced that he deployed Navajo police to stop Energy Fuels Resource from illegally transporting uranium across the tribe's reservation due to the tribe's public health concerns.

"Energy Fuels Resource, Inc. began transporting uranium ore from Pinyon Plain Mine on July 30th, passing through several tribal communities on its way to White Mesa Mill in Utah," Ahasteen said on Friday. "This has raised significant concerns about the health and safety of these communities."

The ban enters into force on August 12.

Nygren has been actively collaborating with the Navajo Nation Council and other stakeholders to demand that President Joe Biden and US federal agencies take action to stop these transports, Ahasteen added.

The Navajo Nation, the largest Native American tribe in the United States, is concerned that as the United States seeks to revive its domestic nuclear fuel industry following a ban on US imports of Russian uranium, increased transportation of uranium ore through their land will expose their tribal members to health risks.

Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs was able to negotiate a short-term agreement with Energy Fuels Resource recently to temporarily halt the transportation of uranium ore through Navajo land, according to Ahasteen.

Ahasteen added that Navajo officials have pending meeting requests with members of the Biden administration to discuss this issue.

The Navajo Nation is expected to formalize regulations next week on the transport of uranium ore through its reservation, Ahasteen said.

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Navajo Expects Guidelines For Uranium Transportation on Its Land to Be Finalized Next Week

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The Navajo Nation expects new guidelines to regulate the transportation of uranium ore through its reservation to be formalized into law next week, Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director Justin Ahasteen told Sputnik.

Last week, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren announced that he deployed Navajo police to stop Energy Fuels Resource from illegally transporting uranium across the tribe's reservation due to the tribe's public health concerns.

"We are currently in the process of developing comprehensive transportation guidelines, which we expect to be formalized into Navajo law by next week," Ahasteen said on Friday. "These regulations will include notification requirements and civil penalties for any violations."

The ban enters into force on August 12.

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Ahasteen added that Navajo officials have pending meeting requests with both the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Transportation to address these critical issues. They also have yet to meet with White House officials as well to discuss this matter, Ahasteen mentioned.

The Navajo Nation, the largest Native American tribe in the United States, is concerned that as the United States seeks to revive its domestic nuclear fuel industry following a ban on US imports of Russian uranium, increased transportation of uranium ore through their land will expose their tribal members to health risks.

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Индейцы США ожидают, что на следующей неделе будут готовы правила транспортировки урана

ВАШИНГТОН, 10 авг - РИА Новости. Индейцы американского племени навахо заявили РИА Новости, что правила по перевозке урана по их резервации будут готовы на следующей неделе на фоне их беспокойств о влиянии транспортировки на здоровье жителей.

В мае индейцы навахо выступили против планов увеличить производство урана на заселяемых территориях и его перевозку с целью замещения российских поставок из-за запрета на импорт этого металла из РФ. Им пришлось прибегнуть к помощи полиции, чтобы остановить перевозку.

"В настоящее время мы разрабатываем комплексные правила транспортировки, которые, как мы ожидаем, будут официально закреплены в законе навахо к следующей недели… Эти правила будут включать требования об уведомлении и гражданско-правовые санкции за любые нарушения", - заявил РИА Новости исполнительный директор представительства в Вашингтоне резервации Навахо-Нейшен Джастин Ахастин.

Крупнейшее американское племя продолжает ожидать встречи с Агентством по охране окружающей среды США, министерством транспорта и Белым домом для обсуждения сложившейся ситуации, добавил Ахастин.

Ранее американские СМИ сообщали о планах американских производителей урана начать транспортировку урановой руды по дорогам общего пользования из шахты в штате Аризона вблизи Гранд-Каньона в перерабатывающее предприятие на юге штата Юта через земли, где проживают индейцы навахо, а также об уже начавшейся добыче в самой Юте спустя почти 10 лет после остановки.

Закон о запрете на импорт урана из России был подписан президентом США Джо Байденом в мае. Он вступает в силу 11 августа. Вместе с тем администрация США отмечала, что в индивидуальном порядке могут быть выданы разрешения на импорт урана из России, если не будет других подходящих источников урана или если такой импорт будет в национальных интересах страны.

В мае США приобрели у России обогащенного урана на 209,5 миллиона долларов, что стало максимальным значением с марта прошлого года, подсчитало РИА Новости по

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данным американского статбюро.

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Navajo Tribe Says Short-Term Deal Reached to Halt Uranium Transport on Its Land Amid Talks

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs recently negotiated a short-term agreement with Energy Fuels Resource to temporarily halt the firm from hauling uranium ore through the Navajo Nation reservation in the United States, Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director Justin Ahasteen told Sputnik.

Last week, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren announced that he deployed Navajo police to stop Energy Fuels Resource from illegally transporting uranium across the tribe's reservation due to the tribe's public health concerns.

"I can confirm that Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs has successfully negotiated a short-term agreement with Energy Fuels Resource, Inc., pausing the transport of uranium," Ahasteen said on Friday. "This pause is intended to allow for a thorough discussion and planning process with the Navajo Nation."

The ban enters into force on August 12.

The Navajo Nation, the largest Native American tribe in the United States, is concerned that as the United States seeks to revive its domestic nuclear fuel industry following a ban on US imports of Russian uranium, increased transportation of uranium ore through their land will expose their tribal members to health risks.

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Индейцы США заявили о достижении краткосрочного договора о прекращении перевозки урана

ВАШИНГТОН, 10 авг - РИА Новости. Индейцы американского племени навахо заявили РИА Новости, что было достигнуто краткосрочное соглашение о прекращении перевозки урана по их резервации с целью замещения российских поставок после введения запрета на импорт металла из России.

Ранее крупнейшему индейскому племени в США пришлось привлекать полицию, чтобы помешать перевозке урана по их территории.

"Я могу подтвердить, что губернатор Аризоны Кэти Хоббс успешно заключила краткосрочное соглашение с компанией Energy Fuels Resource, приостанавливающее транспортировку урана. Эта пауза призвана обеспечить возможность для тщательного обсуждения и планирования процесса с нацией навахо", - заявил РИА Новости исполнительный директор представительства в Вашингтоне резервации Навахо-Нейшен Джастин Ахастин.

Закон о запрете на импорт урана из России был подписан президентом США Джо Байденом в мае. Он вступает в силу 11 августа. Вместе с тем администрация США

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отмечала, что в индивидуальном порядке могут быть выданы разрешения на импорт урана из России, если не будет других подходящих источников урана или если такой импорт будет в национальных интересах страны.

В мае США приобрели у России обогащенного урана на 209,5 миллиона долларов, что стало максимальным значением с марта прошлого года, подсчитало РИА Новости по данным американского статбюро.

Американские СМИ сообщали о планах американских производителей урана начать транспортировку урановой руды по дорогам общего пользования из шахты в штате Аризона вблизи Гранд-Каньона в перерабатывающее предприятие на юге штата Юта через земли, где проживают индейцы Навахо, а также об уже начавшейся добыче в самой Юте спустя почти 10 лет после остановки.

В Москве не раз заявляли, что Россия справится с санкционным давлением, которое Запад начал оказывать на РФ несколько лет назад и продолжает усиливать. В Москве отмечали, что Западу не хватает мужества признать провал антироссийских санкций. В самих западных странах не раз звучали мнения, что санкции неэффективны. Президент Владимир Путин отмечал, что политика сдерживания и ослабления России — это долгосрочная стратегия Запада, а санкции нанесли серьезный удар по всей мировой экономике. По его словам, основная цель Запада — ухудшить жизнь миллионов человек.

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Venezuela Stands by Its Electoral System Amid International Criticism - Deputy Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, August 10 (Sputnik), Lenka White - Caracas is pleased with its electoral system despite condemnation from certain countries, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Joaquin Perez Ayestaran told Sputnik.

“Despite the condemnations from some countries, which are the usual suspects, we are very proud of our electoral system,” Perez Ayestaran said.

Moreover, Venezuela trusts its people, who have already decided their future, he added.

Venezuelans voted in a presidential election on July 28, which was won by incumbent President Nicolas Maduro with over 51% of the vote. The opposition claimed a landslide victory, citing tally sheets they obtained from polling centers nationwide. This led to mass opposition protests. Over 2,000 people were detained on accusations of causing damage to state infrastructure, incitement of hatred, and terrorism.

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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Navajo Tribe Tells Sputnik Short-Term Deal Reached to Halt Uranium Transport on Its Land Amid Talks with administration

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Венесуэла гордится своей избирательной системой – миссия при ООН

ООН, 10 авг - РИА Новости. Венесуэла гордится своей избирательной системой, считает её одной из самых совершенных и успешных во всем мире, сообщил в интервью РИА Новости зампостпреда страны при ООН Хоакин Перес.

"Мы очень гордимся нашей избирательной системой. Мы очень уверены в народе Венесуэлы, который уже воспользовался своим избирательным правом и определился со своим будущим", – сказал Перес, отметив, что махинации Запада не сказались на достоинстве избирательной кампании.

Он отметил, что избирательная система в Венесуэле - "одна из самых совершенных и успешных во всем мире".

Президентские выборы в Венесуэле прошли 28 июля, Национальный избирательный совет провозгласил их победителем Николаса Мадуро. На следующий день в стране разгорелись протесты несогласных с результатами этих выборов, в Каракасе и других городах произошли ожесточенные столкновения между силовиками и манифестантами, по итогам которых были задержаны свыше 2 тысяч человек.

Вашингтон, не дожидаясь результатов подсчета и последующего аудита голосов, призвал мировое сообщество признать лидера оппозиции Эдмундо Гонсалеса победителем президентских выборов в Венесуэле, "учитывая явные доказательства". Законодатели США и ЕС, курирующие вопросы международных отношений, в пятницу пригрозили президенту Венесуэлы Николасу Мадуро "ответственностью", если тот добровольно не откажется от полномочий главы государства после прошедших выборов, назвав результаты голосования сфабрикованными.

В Москве после оглашения официальных результатов выборов заявили, что венесуэльская оппозиция должна признать поражение. Кроме того, пресс-секретарь президента РФ Дмитрий Песков предостерег третьи страны от поддержки попыток раскачать ситуацию внутри Венесуэлы.

После выборов 2018 года, на которых также победил Мадуро, и его инаугурации в Венесуэле уже проходили массовые протесты. Тогда глава подконтрольной оппозиции Национальной ассамблеи Хуан Гуаидо незаконно провозгласил себя временным главой государства. Ряд стран Запада во главе с США заявили о признании Гуаидо. В свою очередь Мадуро назвал главу парламента марионеткой США. Россия, Китай, Турция и ряд других стран поддержали Мадуро как легитимного президента. Оппозиция Венесуэлы в конце декабря 2022 года проголосовала за ликвидацию "временного правительства" Гуаидо. Лидеры оппозиции заявляли, что отставка "временного правительства" назрела, поскольку структура ослабла и не выполняет своих задач. Через несколько дней Гуаидо покинул пост спикера оппозиционного парламента.

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Venezuela Will Contribute to BRICS With Its Largest Oil Reserves in World -Deputy UN Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, August 10 (Sputnik), Lenka White - Venezuela would make a great addition to the BRICS alliance because it possesses the largest oil reserves in the world, Venezuela's Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations Joaquin Perez Ayestaran said in an interview.
"We believe Venezuela will be a great addition to BRICS, we have the largest certified reserves of oil in the world that will also add to the basket of products that BRICS as a whole can offer," Perez Ayestaran told Sputnik.

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Venezuela Will Contribute to BRICS With Its Largest Oil Reserves in World, BRICS' Products Will Expand - Deputy UN Envoy to Sputnik

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Venezuela Hopes Announcement on Joining BRICS Will Come in October - Deputy UN Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, August 10 (Sputnik), Lenka White - Venezuela hopes the decision on its joining BRICS will be announced at the group's next summit in the Russian city of Kazan in October, Venezuela's Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations Joaquin Perez Ayestaran told Sputnik.
"I would hope that in Kazan during the next summit, the decision can be officially announced in a positive manner. It will very much be a welcome development in Venezuela," Perez Ayestaran said. "But if not, we are still there with our offer and our commitment to be an active player in this new world."

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В миссии Венесуэлы в ООН надеются на позитивное решение о членстве в БРИКС на саммите в РФ

ООН, 10 авг - РИА Новости. Зампостпреда Венесуэлы при ООН Хоакин Перес в интервью РИА Новости выразил надежду, что решение о членстве Каракаса в БРИКС может быть достигнуто уже на предстоящем саммите организации в Казани.
"Что касается сроков (вступления Венесуэлы в БРИКС - ред.), я хотел бы надеяться, что в Казани на следующем саммите решение будет официально объявлено в позитивном ключе", – сказал Перес.
По его словам, в Венесуэле такое решение бы очень приветствовали, а если все же

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договоренности достичь не удастся, Каракас по-прежнему готов быть "активным игроком этого нового мира".

Глава МИД Венесуэлы Иван Хиль ранее сообщал, что президент страны Николас Мадуро получил приглашение на саммит БРИКС, который пройдет в России. Посол РФ в Каракасе Сергей Мелик-Багдасаров заявлял позднее РИА Новости, что Москва, учитывая твердое желание Венесуэлы присоединиться к группе БРИКС, ожидает на октябрьском саммите организации в Казани делегацию "должного уровня"

План председательства России в БРИКС в 2024 году включает свыше 250 мероприятий в 11 регионах России, организаторами которых выступают представители федеральных и региональных органов исполнительной власти, общественные организации и бизнес-сообщества. Ключевым мероприятием станет XIV Саммит БРИКС, который пройдет в Казани 22-24 октября.

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BRICS at Forefront of New Multipolar World, Venezuela Wants to Contribute -Deputy UN Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, August 10 (Sputnik), Lenka White - The BRICS alliance is leading the new composition of the multipolar world and Venezuela wishes to contribute to it, Venezuela's Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations Joaquin Perez Ayestaran told Sputnik.

“BRICS is at the forefront of this new multipolar world that has emerged and Venezuela wants to contribute to the consolidation of this new world,” Perez Ayestaran said.

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Венесуэла станет "отличным дополнением" к БРИКС – миссия при ООН

ООН, 10 авг - РИА Новости. БРИКС находится на переднем крае многополярного мира, и Каракас станет "отличным дополнением" к организации, в том числе за счет своих нефтяных запасов, сообщил в интервью РИА Новости зампостпреда Венесуэлы при ООН Хоакин Перес.

"Мы считаем, что многополярный мир уже возник. И сейчас он укрепляется, и БРИКС находится на переднем крае этого нового многополярного мира... и Венесуэла хочет внести свой вклад в укрепление этого нового мира", – сказал Перес.

По его словам, Венесуэла станет "отличным дополнением" к БРИКС, в том числе ввиду больших нефтяных запасов.

Ранее президент страны Николас Мадуро сообщал, что Каракас готов сотрудничать со странами БРИКС по месторождениям нефти и газа, отметив, что Венесуэла "сделала ставку" на сотрудничество с организацией.

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Venezuela Discussing Sanctions Free Economic Zone With Group of Allies - Deputy UN Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, August 10 (Sputnik), Lenka White -Venezuela would like to implement a sanctions-free zone among allied members to ease the lives of citizens, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Joaquin Perez Ayestaran told Sputnik.

"We have this idea of having some sort of sanctions-free zone, which is more pragmatic, action-oriented beyond these courses at the UN but [aiming] to have a result on the day-to-day basis of our citizens," Perez Ayestaran said.

The zone aims to allow doing business with one another without being restricted by the impact of sanctions and is being discussed among the Group of Friends on a political level but also separately more on the action-oriented side, he added.

The Group of Friends in Defense of the United Nations Charter was established on July 6, 2021, in New York. It currently includes 18 member states, such as Russia, Syria, Iran, and China.

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Венесуэла обсуждает с союзниками установление зоны вне санкций – зампостпреда при ООН

ООН, 10 авг - РИА Новости. Зампостпреда Венесуэлы при ООН Хоакин Перес сообщил РИА Новости, что Каракас обсуждает с союзниками установление зоны, свободной от санкций, выразил уверенность, что это не займет много времени.

С соответствующей инициативой Венесуэла выступила еще в мае. Как сообщал РИА Новости тогдашний постпред страны во всемирной организации Самуэль Монкада, Каракас предложил странам-участницам Группы друзей в защиту устава ООН и другим государствам принять соглашение о "зоне экономической свободы", на территории которой не будут действовать ограничительные меры колониальных стран.

По словам Переса, по данной инициативе "продолжаются дискуссии". Сейчас же Венесуэла рассматривает варианты, как заручиться поддержкой идеи, чтобы воплотить ее в жизнь.

"Я думаю, что это займет некоторое время, но не слишком много. Потому что мы постепенно работаем в этом направлении", – подчеркнул венесуэльский дипломат.

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US Navy OKs $220Mln Boost to Lockheed For Launch Pads in Missile Program - Pentagon

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WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The US Navy has approved a $220 million contract extension to Lockheed Martin Space to continue its work to support missile and launching platform production for the Conventional Prompt Strike program, the Department of Defense announced in a press release.

"Lockheed Martin Space [of] Littleton, Colorado is awarded a ...contract modification ...$220 million ...[to] support program management, engineering development, systems integration, long lead material, and special tooling," the release said on Friday.

The work will be carried out to support missile and launching platform production for the Conventional Prompt Strike, the Defense Department explained.

Most of the work on the project will be carried out in Denver, Colorado (52%) and Huntsville, Alabama (36%); Sunnyvale as well as at other locations across the continental United States, it said.

Work on the project is scheduled to take four years and is expected to be completed on July 31, 2028, the Defense Department said.

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US Air Force Gives Boeing $2.5Bln Contract Boost on E-7 Early Warning Work - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The US Air Force has approved a more than $2.5 billion contract extension to Boeing Military Aircraft for additional rapid prototyping work on E-7 Wedgetail early warning and control aircraft, the Department of Defense announced in a press release.

"Boeing Defense, Space, and Security, Boeing Military Aircraft, Tukwila, Washington, has been awarded a $2,560,846,860 modification ...contract ...for E-7A Rapid Prototyping," the release stated on Friday.

Work on the contract will be performed in Tukwila, Washington over the next five years and is expected to be completed by August 28, 2029, the Defense Department said.

Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, Massachusetts will oversee the work as its contracting activity, it said.

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US Air Force Gives Boeing $2.5Bln Contract Boost on E-7 Early Warning Work - Pentagon

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Lockheed Martin Developing F-35 Infrared Ship Search Radar for US Allies - Pentagon

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WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The US Navy has given Lockheed Martin a more than $611 million contract extension on its work to develop Multi-Ship Infrared Search and Track Radar Warning Receiver F-35 hardware for Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Norway, Italy, Denmark and the Netherlands. the Department of Defense announced in a press release.

"Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company [of] Fort Worth, Texas is awarded a $611,270,079 modification ...contract ...to procure development of Multi-Ship Infrared Search and Track Increment 2 hardware and Band 5 Radar Warning Receiver hardware," the release stated on Friday.

The project is being carried out to support laboratory development on the technology for Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Norway, Italy, Denmark and the Netherlands, for their F-35A/B/C aircraft, the Defense Department said.

Work will be performed in Fort Worth, Texas (60%); Nashua, New Hampshire (16%) and other locations across the continental United States over the next two years and is expected to be completed in June 2026, the Defense Department said.

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Blinken Tells Israeli Defense Chief That Escalation in No Party's Interest - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a recent telephone call with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant emphasized that an escalation in the ongoing Mideast crisis is in no party's interest, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a press release.

"Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken spoke with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant today," Miller said in the release on Friday. "The Secretary and Defense Minister discussed ongoing efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region. The Secretary reaffirmed the United States' ironclad commitment to Israel's security and discussed how escalation is in no party's interest."

Blinken also underscored the urgent need to reach a Gaza ceasefire deal and a diplomatic resolution to calm tensions with the Lebanese movement Hezbollah.

A senior US administration official told reporters earlier this week that Gaza deal negotiations are expected to resume between Hamas and Israel next week.

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US Authorities Investigating Suspicious Package Near White House - Secret Service

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - US emergency vehicles arrived at the White House and blocked off multiple entrances while they investigated a suspicious package nearby, a US Secret Service spokesperson said in a statement to Sputnik.

"It is a routine closure to investigate a suspicious item," the spokesperson said on Friday regarding the emergency.

The spokesperson added that an update will be provided if they discover a public safety

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concern.
No high-level US officials are at the White House, President Joe Biden is in Delaware and Vice President Kamala Harris is in Arizona.

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Biden Officials Still Seeking Next Defense Department Space Policy Chief - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The Begin administration has yet to find a qualified expert willing to direct its space policy office strategy in the Pentagon, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Amanda Doryth acknowledged in a press release.
"John Hill, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for space and missile defense ...will serve as Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy as of August 10," Dory said in the release on Friday.
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Professor of Nuclear Security and Political Science Vipin Narang has held the post on an acting basis from March 2022 to the present but is returning to his previous post in September, Dory said.
"From March 2022 to August 2024, Dr. Narang effectively and skillfully supported the Department's strategic capabilities for integrated deterrence: space, nuclear weapons, missile defense, and countering weapons of mass destruction, first as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space policy and then as the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense," she said.
Later, a report citing a Defense Department spokesperson stated that the Pentagon currently had no announcement to make regarding the appointment of the next Acting Assistant Secretary for Space Policy.

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Russia Seeking Consular Access, Talks With Extradited Citizen Petrov - Consul General

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The Consulate General of the Russian Federation is seeking consular access and a telephone conversation with Russian-German national Arthur Petrov, who was extradited to the United States on charges of illegally exporting sensitive technology to Russia, the Consul General told Sputnik.
"We are asking [the US Justice Department] for a telephone contact, and in which detention center he is being held. First and foremost is the telephone conversation. Concurrently, we are requesting a consular visit," the Consul General said on Friday.
The Consul General said that Petrov's extradition took place on Thursday, based on a notification they received.
Petrov was arrested in Cyprus on August 26, 2023, at the request of the United States. The US charged Petrov with illegally exporting large quantities of US-made microelectronics with military

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applications to Russia.

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Trump's Plane Makes Unexpected Landing After Mechanical Issue - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump's plane made an unexpected landing in Billings, Montana due to mechanical issues, local NBC affiliate KTVH reported.

Trump's plane landed in Billings ahead of a campaign rally in Bozeman, Montana on Friday evening, the report said.

The report includes footage of Trump's plane landing and taxiing at the Billings airport, which is approximately 140 miles from Bozeman.

Trump is expected to fly to Bozeman on a separate plane, the report added.

Trump said in a video posted to social media platform Truth that he landed in Montana, calling the state a "really beautiful place," but not mentioning the unexpected landing in Billings.

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US Man Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison In Connection to January 6 Riot - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - A US federal judge has sentenced California resident David Dempsey, 37, for assaulting law enforcement officers with a dangerous weapon at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, the US Justice Department said in a press release.

"A California man was sentenced to prison today after previously pleading guilty to assaulting law enforcement with a dangerous weapon during the January 6, 2021, breach of the US Capitol," the release said on Friday. "His actions and the actions of others disrupted a joint session of the US Congress convened to ascertain and count the electoral votes related to the 2020 presidential election."

The release added that Dempsey was sentenced to 240 months in prison, 36 months of supervised release, and ordered to pay $2,000 in restitution.

Dempsey's prison sentence is the second longest among the January 6 cases. Former Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio received the longest prison sentence after a US judge gave him 22 years for seditious conspiracy and other charges despite not being in Washington during the Capitol riot.

The release said, citing court documents, that Dempsey assaulted police officers with metal and wooden poles, pepper sprayed officers, threw water bottles at them, and also physically kicked them.

The release noted that since January 6, 2021, more than 1,488 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 US states for crimes related to the Capitol riot, and nearly 550 of those individuals have been charged with the felony of assaulting or impeding US law enforcement.

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Iran Hopes Response to Haniyeh Killing Will Not Harm Potential Gaza Ceasefire - Mission

UNITED NATIONS, August 10 (Sputnik) - Iran hopes that its response to Israel's assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran will not impact a potential ceasefire in Gaza, Iran's mission to the United Nations said in a statement.

"Our priority is to establish a lasting ceasefire in Gaza; any agreement accepted by Hamas will also be recognized by us. The Israeli regime has violated our national security and sovereignty through its recent act of terrorism. We have the legitimate right to self-defense — a matter totally unrelated to the Gaza ceasefire. However, we hope that our response will be timed and conducted in a manner not to the detriment of the potential ceasefire," the statement said on Friday.

Last week, Palestinian movement Hamas said that an Israeli attack had killed Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh at his residence in Tehran, where he had arrived after attending the inauguration of Iran's new president. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has warned of a "harsh response" to the assassination.

"Direct and intermediary official channels to exchange messages have always existed between Iran and the United States, the details of which both parties prefer to remain untold," the statement added.

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US Stocks Close Week Little Changed After 'Black Monday 2.0'

NEW YORK, August 10 (Sputnik) - It may not be what the average market punter would have expected four days ago but US stocks finished the week barely changed on Friday as Wall Street managed to reverse the gloom and doom of "Black Monday 2.0".

The three main US stock indexes — the S&P 500, the Nasdaq Composite, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average — closed Friday's session up between 0.1 and 0.5 percent. For the week, they finished down between 0.2 and 0.6 percent.

The S&P, Nasdaq, and Dow had plummeted at the start of the week, joining world stock markets lower, 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 stocks presaged one of the darkest days in the modern investing era.

Following a partial recovery on Tuesday, Wall Street fell again at Wednesday's close amid anxiety about a potential US recession as unemployment hit 2-½ year highs in the world's largest economy.

On Thursday though, the S&P, which tracks the stocks of 500 high-performing US companies, closed up 2.3% in the biggest one-day leap since February 2023. The rally also drew a contrast to the index's 3% slump on Monday which marked its worst day since September 2022.

Despite the drama, some say they weren't surprised with Wall Street's rebound from Monday's

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calamitous start.

Going forth, analysts said August will likely remain a volatile month for not just stocks but also commodities, currencies, and bonds as traders await cues from the Federal Reserve on whether it will cut US interest rates in September for the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020.

The US central bank raised rates 11 times instead between March 2022 and June 2023 to deal with runaway inflation caused by trillions of dollars of relief spending and supply chain breakdowns triggered by the pandemic.

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Oil Markets Have First Weekly Gain in Five, Rebuilding 2024 Rally

NEW YORK, August 9 (Sputnik) - Crude prices had their first weekly gain after four straight weeks of losses as oil markets regained their footing on strong draws in US crude, the recovery of stock prices on Wall Street and fears of a wider war in the Middle East.

In four prior weeks, rising US stockpiles of gasoline and distillates raised questions about demand for fuel in the world's largest oil consumer. Weak data out of China had also weighed on oil traders worried about the world's second biggest economy.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude settled New York trading on Friday at $76.84 per barrel, up 65 cents, or 0.9%, on the day. For the week, WTI rose 4.5% after losing a cumulative 12% over four prior weeks. Year-to-date, the US crude benchmark is up around 7%, after rallying as much as 18% earlier.

UK-origin Brent crude finished Friday's New York trading up 50 cents, or 0.6% at $79.66. For the week, Brent rose 3.7%, after a near 12% deficit over four previous weeks, just like WTI.

A global benchmark for crude, Brent is up almost 4% on the year, after a prior rally of almost 20%.

The first full week of August has been an eventful one for global markets as fears of a potential US recession and contagion effects around the world pummeled stocks to currencies and bonds. On the oil front, WTI hit a six-month low as the week begun, while Brent set a new 2024 bottom of $71.69.

As the week progressed, however, crude prices regained their upward stride, with the recovery accelerating after healthy weekly consumption numbers for crude reported by the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) on Wednesday.

US 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.

The rebound in stock markets has further aided the recovery in oil. Wall Street's three key stock indexes — the S&P 500, the Nasdaq Composite and the Dow Jones Industrial Average — ended the week just slightly lower after the epic selloff at its start.

Crude prices also rose as traders speculated on the likelihood of a greater war in the oil-rich Middle East as Israel's foes, including Iran, seek to avenge the killing of senior leaders from Palestine's Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

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UPDATE - US State Department Approves $580Mln HIMARS Sale to Norway - Pentagon

(Adds details in paras 4-5)
WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - The US State Department has approved a possible $580 million sale of 16 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) and related equipment to Norway, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said on Friday.
"The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Norway of M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems and related equipment for an estimated cost of $580 million. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency delivered the required certification notifying Congress of this possible sale today," the DSCA said in a statement.
Norway has requested to buy 16 HIMARS systems, among other items, the statement added.
The proposed sale would support US foreign policy and national security objectives by improving the security of a NATO ally that is a force for stability and economic progress in Europe, the statement said.
The sale would not alter the basic military balance in the region or adversely impact US defense readiness, the statement added.

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Russian-German Man Extradited to US on Charges of Smuggling Military Tech - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - A Russian-German national accused of illegally exporting sensitive US technology to Russia was extradited to the United States from the Republic of Cyprus, the Justice Deparment said in a release on Friday.
“Arthur Petrov is charged with conspiring to smuggle microelectronics with military applications from U.S. distributors to Russia as part of an illicit Russian-based procurement network that supplies manufacturers for the Russian military," US Attorney Damian Williams said in the release.
Petrov was arrested in Cyprus on August 26, 2023 at the request of the United States. He is charged with illegally exporting large quantities of US-made microelectronics with military applications to Russia for their eventual use in military hardware.
The Justice Department said Petrov resided in both Russia and Cyprus and worked for the Russia-based company LLC Electrocom VPK (“Electrocom”), which supplies electronic components to manufacturers that produce weaponry and equipment for Russia's military.
“The defendant and his co-conspirators formed an elaborate tech-trafficking syndicate to supply microelectronics to Russia’s military-industrial complex," Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen said in the release.
Petrov faces 11 federal criminal charges in connection to his alleged role in the illicit procurement scheme, according to the US Department of Justice.

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Blinken Stresses Need for Israel-Gaza Ceasefire to Jordanian Counterpart - US State Dept.

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed the need for Israel and Hamas to reach a ceasefire deal for the Gaza Strip during a call with Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi, US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Friday.

"The Secretary and Foreign Minister Safadi discussed the joint statement by the United States, Egypt, and Qatar which called for an immediate ceasefire to provide relief to both Palestinians in Gaza and the hostages and their families. The Secretary stressed the urgent need to conclude the ceasefire deal and emphasized that no party in the region should take actions that would jeopardize a ceasefire being reached," Miller said in a statement.

Blinken also reiterated appreciation for Jordan's role in providing humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians and promoting regional peace and security, the statement said.

Blinken and Safadi discussed efforts to calm tensions in the region and prevent further escalation of the conflict, the statement added.

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US to Provide Israel with $3.5Bln to Spend on US Weapons, Equipment - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) – The Biden administration has decided to release $3.5 billion in funding for Israel to buy US-made weapons and other military equipment after months of delay as Israel is bracing for a potential retaliatory attack by Iran, CNN reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the matter.

The funding is part of the $14.1 billion foreign military assistance package that Congress approved in April.

The allocation of funding to Israel does not mean that Israel will immediately begin to receive US weapons, the delivery of which in reality could take up to several years, the report said.

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US State Department Approves $580Mln HIMARS Sale to Norway - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - The US State Department has approved a possible $580 million sale of 16 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) and related equipment to Norway, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said on Friday.

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Norway has requested to buy 16 HIMARS systems, among other items, the statement added.

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Pentagon Says No Immediate Plans for Call Between Austin, Belousov Amid Kursk Offensive

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - There are no immediate plans to schedule a call between US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov amid Ukraine's offensive in Russia's Kursk region, a US Defense Department spokesperson told Sputnik on Friday.

"There are currently none scheduled at this time," the official said when asked if a call between Austin and Belousov was expected amid the Kursk offensive.

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that Ukrainian forces had launched an offensive to seize territory in the Kursk region. The next day, Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov said the advance deep into Russian territory had been halted.

Commenting on the attacks on the Kursk region, Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Kiev of launching a large-scale provocation. He also said that Ukrainian troops had shelled the region indiscriminately, firing at civilian infrastructure and ambulances.

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Iran Has No Intention to Launch Cyber Attacks, Interfere in US Elections - Mission to UN

UNITED NATIONS, August 9 (Sputnik) - Iran has no plans to launch cyber attacks or meddle in the US elections, the Iranian mission to the United Nations told Sputnik on Friday.

"Iran's cyber capabilities are defensive and proportionate to the threats it faces. Iran has neither the intention nor plans to launch cyber attacks. The U.S. presidential election is an internal matter in which Iran does not interfere," the Iranian mission said.

Iran has been a victim of many cyber attacks targeting its infrastructure, the mission added.

Earlier in the day, US technology giant Microsoft said that Iran-linked hacker groups were allegedly attempting to interfere in the upcoming US presidential election through covert news websites, influencing popular topics and phishing.

The company said that the groups are allegedly focused on two activities: setting up covert news websites targeting voters of opposing views and launching operations that may be described as intelligence gathering.

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Defense of Russia's Klyushin Informs US Court Will Not Appeal His Case After Prisoner Swap

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - The lawyer of Russian businessman Vladislav Klyushin told Sputnik on Friday that the defense has informed the US court following the prisoner swap that the case of their client will not be appealed.

"One of the conditions of the pardon, as interpreted by the White House, is that Klyushin can no longer proceed with his appeal," Maksim Nemtsev said. "The decision to violate the grant of a pardon remains solely at the discretion of the US. Accordingly, if these conditions are met, Klyushin cannot continue his appeal. It is up to the Court of Appeals to decide whether the case remains open and whether a decision is made based on what has been presented so far."

Meanwhile, the filing by the defense to the Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in Boston said that "we respectfully inform this Honorable Court that Mr. Klyushin will not take further action on his appeal."

One of the largest prisoner swaps between Russia and the United States, as well as several other European countries, took place last week, bringing Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and former Marine Paul Whelan back to the United States.

The list of Russians who returned home included Artem Dultsev and Anna Dultseva with their minor children, as well as Pavel Rubtsov, Vadim Konoshchenok, Mikhail Mikushin, Roman Seleznev, and Vladislav Klyushin.

Russian citizen Vadim Sokolov, also known as Krasikov, who had been serving a life sentence in Germany, also returned to Russia.

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us state department approves $580 million sale of himars to norway - pentagon

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Prosecutors in Trump's 2020 Election Case Get Three Weeks to Analyze SCOTUS Ruling –Filing

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) – Judge Tanya Chutkan, in Donald Trump's 2020 election interference case, has granted the prosecution's motion to extend the time period needed to analyze the Supreme Court ruling on the former president's immunity by three more weeks or till August 30, according to a court filing published on Friday.

"The Government's 210 Unopposed Motion for Extension of Time is hereby GRANTED. The joint status report previously due by August 9, 2024, is now due by August 30, 2024," the filing said.

According to the document, Chutkan has also scheduled the next hearing in the case for September 5.

On Thursday, federal prosecutors led by special counsel Jack Smith filed a motion asking the court to extend the deadline for familiarizing themselves with the July Supreme Court ruling.

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Originally, the status conference was supposed to take place on August 16.

In August 2023, Smith charged Trump with four criminal counts in the so-called election subversion case, including conspiring to defraud the United States, obstructing the congressional certification of Biden's electoral victory and conspiring to do so, and conspiring against the right of Americans to vote.

The Supreme Court ruled in July that former President Trump can claim immunity from prosecution on election subversion charges relating to his official acts as president, although he could still face prosecution for unofficial acts.

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Trade Union Warns of Halt to Rail Transport in Canada Unless Deal Reached by August 22

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) – Teamsters Canada, the country's largest transportation and supply chain union, warned on Friday that a strike action could paralyze railroad transport if an agreement is not reached by August 22.

"The earliest a work stoppage at CN [Canadian National Railway Company] and CPKC [Canadian Pacific Kansas City] can occur is August 22nd, at 00:01. The union remains focused on negotiating in good faith and reaching agreements at the bargaining table," Teamsters Canada said in a statement.

Both companies are demanding concessions that could tear families apart and jeopardize rail safety, President of Teamsters Canada Rail Conference Paul Boucher was quoted as saying. Workers will not accept moving backwards, he added.

The railroad giants want concessions regarding crew scheduling, rail safety, and fatigue management. The CPKC seeks to water down or eliminate the collective agreement of all safety-critical fatigue provisions, which would oblige train crews to stay awake longer, increasing the odds for derailments and other incidents, the statement continued.

The union will provide 72 hours' advance notice if it chooses to go ahead with a strike action. The likelihood of successful negotiations will depend on both railroad companies, the statement continued.

Teamsters Canada is the country's largest federally regulated private sector as well as transportation and supply chain union, with more than 130,000 members. The union represents close to 10,000 workers at the CN and CPKC, and over 1.2 million individuals across North America.

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US Shared Intelligence With Austria on Terrorist Threat to Taylor Swift Concert - Kirby

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - The United States shared intelligence with Austria regarding a planned terrorist attack on concerts in Vienna by US musician Taylor Swift, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Friday.

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"The United States did share information with Austrian partners to enable the disruption of a threat to the Taylor Swift concerts there in Vienna," Kirby said during a press briefing.

On Wednesday, the Austrian Interior Ministry said that a 19-year-old Austrian national was detained on suspicion of planning a terrorist attack at a major event in Vienna. The suspect confessed to the accusations, the ministry said.

Three people were detained as part of the case, the ministry said on Thursday.

Austrian media reported on Friday that an 18-year-old Iraqi man who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State terrorist group (banned in Russia) was among those detained in connection with the plot.

The Swift concerts' organizer canceled three of the musician's shows at Ernst Happel Stadium on August 8, 9, and 10, citing the planned terrorist attack.

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US to Lift Ban on Sales of Certain Offensive Weapons to Saudi Arabia - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration has decided to lift its temporary ban on certain US sales of offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia, Reuters reported on Friday, citing three sources familiar with the matter.

The sales could resume as early as next week, the report said, citing people familiar with the matter.

The Biden administration already briefed Congress this week on its decision to lift the ban, according to the report.

The Biden administration had imposed the ban over the last three years to pressure the Saudis to scale back their military operations in the Yemen conflict.

A senior US administration official told Reuters that the Saudis had met their end of the deal.

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UPDATE - US Unveils $125Mln Ukraine Aid Package, Includes Stingers, Artillery Shells - White House

(Updates to include statement from Blinken in para 4, background in para 6)

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - The United States is providing Ukraine a new $125 million aid package that includes additional Stinger missiles and artillery shells, White House National Security Communications Adviser John Kirby said on Friday.

"Included in this package are Stinger missiles, more 155 and 105 millimeter artillery ammunition, which has been instrumental, and anti-armor systems as well," Kirby told reporters.

Kirby noted that the package is valued at $125 million.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a separate statement said the package also includes air defense interceptors, munitions for rocket systems, multi-mission radars, and anti-tank weapons.

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Western countries have provided hundreds of billions of dollars worth of aid to Ukraine since the start of Russia's special military operation in February 2022. Aid shipments began in 2022 with artillery munitions and training and have escalated to include tanks, advanced air-defense systems, missiles and cluster munitions. The Kremlin has consistently warned against the West's continued arms deliveries to Ukraine, saying that they only prolong the conflict.

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Kirby Says Will Refrain From Characterizing Ukraine Incursion in Russia's Kursk Region

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - The White House said on Friday that it would refrain from characterizing Ukraine's incursion into Russia's Kursk region and reiterated it is in touch with Kiev to clarify their goals.

When asked about whether Kiev's attacks on the Kursk region go beyond what Washington has publicly allowed Ukraine to do, National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said: "We're in touch with our Ukrainian counterparts, and we are working to gain a better understanding of what they're doing, what their goals are, what their strategy is."

"I'm going to leave a little bit of space for us to have those conversations before I try to characterize what's going on," he said. "I am going to refrain from characterizing what's going on down there."

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that Ukrainian forces had launched an offensive to seize territory in the Kursk region. The next day, Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov said the advance deep into Russian territory had been halted.

Commenting on the attacks on the Kursk region, Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Kiev of launching a large-scale provocation. He also said that Ukrainian troops had shelled the region indiscriminately, firing at civilian infrastructure and ambulances.

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US Unveils $125Mln Ukraine Aid Package, Includes Stingers, Artillery Shells - White House

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UN Says Welcomes Egypt, Qatar,US Call for Israel-Hamas Ceasefire Talks to Resume in August

UNITED NATIONS, August 9 (Sputnik) - The United Nations supports the proposal put forward by Egypt, Qatar, and the US calling for Israel and Hamas to restart ceasefire talks in August, UN spokeswoman Florencia Soto said on Friday.

"Any movement that gets parties closer to a ceasefire is welcomed by us," Soto said during a UN briefing when asked about the UN's position on the proposed ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas.

However, she added that she was not aware of any talks that were currently taking place.

The European Union has joined the United States, Qatar, and Egypt in urging Israel and Hamas to agree on a ceasefire and release hostages, according to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Friday.

On Thursday, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Sisi announced that Egypt, Qatar, and the US had issued a statement urging Israel and Hamas to resume ceasefire talks on August 14-15. The leaders of the three countries expressed their readiness to present a final proposal to secure a ceasefire.

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US to Drop Investigation of IDF Human Rights Violations in West Bank – Reports

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) – The United States is set to drop its investigation into the Israeli military's human rights abuses in the West Bank and will not impose sanctions on it, Axios reported on Friday, citing senior US and Israeli officials.

The decision not to continue the probe into the crimes of the Israel Defense Forces' Netzah Yehuda battalion was announced by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during a telephone conversation with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant earlier in the day, the report said.

The decision was the result of lengthy behind-the-scenes negotiations between Blinken and Gallant, who had been making efforts to convince Washington that sanctions were not necessary because the Israeli military had been able to get the battalion to address human rights violations, according to the report.

Back in April, Blinken was reportedly planning to announce sanctions against Israel's Netzah Yehuda battalion for its violent actions in the West Bank before Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel.

Netzah Yehuda is reportedly made up of young, radical Jewish settlers who have not been accepted into other IDF units.

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Canada Sanctions 10 Individuals, 6 Entities on Anniversary of 2020 Belarus Elections

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WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) – The Canadian government on Friday imposed Belarus-related sanctions on 10 individuals and six entities, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) said on Friday.

"Effective immediately, Canada is imposing sanctions against ten individuals and six entities in response to their involvement in ongoing and systematic human rights abuses in Belarus and support for Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine," GAC said in a statement.

The restrictions target President Alexander Lukashenko's youngest son, Nikolai, among others.

The sanctions mark the fourth anniversary of what Canada says were "fraudulent 2020 elections," in Belarus, the ministry added.

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Billionaire Musk Blames US Government For Inflation as Election Nears

NEW YORK, August 9 (Sputnik) - Elon Musk, the world's second richest man, says the inflation that has choked the livelihoods of most Americans in recent years was the doing of the government and not the private sector.

"The rise in prices (inflation) is caused by government overspending, which increases the amount of money faster than the increase in goods & services output," Musk wrote on the former-Twitter-and-now-X social media platform that he controls. "That is the vast majority of the problem."

US inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), went from beneath the 2% per annum target of the Federal Reserve to a four-decade high of 9.1% by June 2022 as a result of government relief spending and breakdown of supply chains in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The CPI grew 3% per year in the latest reading taken in June this year, after the Fed hiked interest rates to two decade-highs — a phenomenon that dealt with the inflation problem while making home loans and all other borrowings for Americans costlier than ever since the early 2000 years.

The Biden administration has blamed part of the US inflation on corporate greed, saying the private sector took the advantage of raising prices more than deservedly after the pandemic and did not bring them down even after supply chains were restored.

Musk, who has openly criticized Biden's policies and is supporting Biden's arch-rival — former president Donald Trump — in November's US election, disagrees with the blame offset.

"Occasionally, there is monopolistic behavior by companies, but this is relatively rare and usually only possible if those companies have gained control of their industry regulator," wrote Musk. "Again, a government, not private sector, problem."

Musk, who pioneered electric vehicles with his Tesla car and private space travels with his X aerospace rockets, is ranked by the Bloomberg Billionaires Index as the world's second richest man with wealth of $198 billion, just behind Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, who has $200 billion.

In his X post, Musk noted that inflation was particularly bad during the COVID years, citing overruns in government spending amid a plunge in productivity as people stayed home.

This was further exacerbated by what he called "excess regulation, which prevents the market

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from solving an unmet need (eg housing in high-demand areas)."
US housing prices have hit record highs since the end of the pandemic, pushing up the cost of rentals as well for those who cannot afford homes.
Trump, a Republican, has vowed to bring inflation down if he returns to the White House, although he has not presented Americans with a clear plan on how he would do so. He faces Biden's Vice President Kamala Harris in the November 5 election, after the president dropped out of the race earlier this month.

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UN 'Closely Monitoring' Developments in Russia's Kursk Region - Spokeswoman

UNITED NATIONS, August 9 (Sputnik) - The United Nations is closely monitoring the situation in Russia's Kursk region, UN spokeswoman Florencia Soto said on Friday.
"We have been closely monitoring the developments," Soto said during a UN briefing when asked about the UN position on Ukraine sending troops into Russian territory.
The UN is gathering information but does not have a presence on the ground to verify reports, she added.
On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said Ukrainian forces had launched an offensive to seize territory in the Kursk Region. The next day, Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov said the advance deep into Russian territory had been halted.
Commenting on the Kursk Region attack, Russian President Vladimir Putin accused Kiev of launching a large-scale provocation. He also said that Ukrainian troops had shelled Russian regions indiscriminately, firing at civilian infrastructure and ambulances.

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US, Japan, South Korea Discuss Trilateral Cooperation and DPRK Activities - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - The United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea held talks to discuss trilateral security cooperation and developments related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the US State Department said in a statement on Friday.
On August 6, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Kritenbrink joined Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General for Asian and Oceanian Affairs Namazu Hiroyuki and South Korean Vice Foreign Minister for Strategy and Intelligence Cho Koo-rae for a trilateral phone call.
"The three officials discussed efforts to deepen trilateral security cooperation, bring global attention to the DPRK's malicious cyber activities, and call on the DPRK to return to dialogue rather than continue its reckless and dangerous actions that escalate tension on the Korean Peninsula," the statement said.
The officials also discussed the DPRK's deepening ties with Russia, the statement said.
The officials urged the People's Republic of China to use its influence with the DPRK to halt its

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"destabilizing" activities, the statement said.
Moreover, Kritenbrink reiterated the US' commitments to the defense of Japan and South Korea, the statement said.

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SpaceX Reschedules Starlink Satellite Launch For Tomorrow - Company

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - SpaceX has called off the launch of its Starlink Internet satellites on Friday over weather conditions and moved it to tomorrow, the company said in a statement on X on Friday.
"Standing down from today's launch of 21 satellites due to recovery weather conditions. Now targeting August 10 for next liftoff attempt," the statement said.
The planned launch is the 21st flight for the first stage booster supporting this mission, according to the company's website.

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Biden Admin Withholding Info on Pakistani National's Plot to Kill Trump - House Lawmakers

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - Republican lawmakers sent letters on Friday to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas demanding further details on a newly revealed assassination plot against former President Donald Trump that was allegedly being planned by a Pakistani national with ties to Iran.
On Tuesday, the US Department of Justice announced that it has charged Pakistani national Asif Merchant, who has ties to Iran, for allegedly plotting to assassinate former US officials, who reportedly included Trump.
"During a phone call with the Department of Justice (DOJ) on August 6, the Biden-Harris Administration refused to answer many of the Committee's questions about the assassination plot, including about Merchant's immigration status and his method of entry into the United States," the lawmakers said. "Instead, DOJ directed the Committee to court documents."
The letter was sent by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan and House Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security and Enforcement Chairman Tom McClintock.
The letter asked Mayorkas and Blinken to provide information related to Merchant's immigration history and vetting process upon US entry by August 23.

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US Intelligence Says Iran Better Positioned to Produce Nuclear Device – Reports

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WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) – US intelligence indicates that Iran is better positioned to produce a nuclear device, The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday.

A July report to Congress from the director of national intelligence stated that Iran has "undertaken activities that better position it to produce a nuclear device, if it chooses to do so," as quoted by the newspaper.

The report also omitted a longstanding statement that Iran "isn't currently undertaking the key nuclear weapons development activities necessary to produce a testable nuclear device."

However, a US official said that the intelligence community does not believe that Iran is currently working to produce a nuclear device or that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is considering resuming Iran's nuclear weapons program.

The official added that Iran's research "could shrink the knowledge gap Tehran faces in mastering the ability to build a weapon," but US intelligence continues to indicate that it would not reduce the time Iran needs to produce a weapon.

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UPDATE- US Announces New Sanctions on Individuals, Entities in Belarus - Treasury Dept.

(Updates with additional details throughout the text, modifies para 3)

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) – The United States has imposed additional sanctions on dozens of individuals and entities in Belarus for their alleged role in harmful activities and suppressing democracy in the country, the US Department of the Treasury announced on Friday.

"Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is taking action against 19 individuals, 14 entities, and one aircraft pursuant to Belarus-related Executive Order (E.O.) 14038," the department said in a press release.

The release said the sanctions target 19 Belarusian nationals and 14 entities for allegedly supporting Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, sanctions evasion, and revenue generation for Belarusian businessmen.

According to the release, the new US sanctions have affected Belarusian companies Laboratory of Additive Technologies and Ruchservomotor and their respective directors for allegedly supplying components to Russian companies producing weapons.

For the same reason, the United States has designated Belarusian manufacturing companies AlYurTekh, ALC Diskoms, MOT, Grosver Grup, Tochnaya Mekhanika, including the senior managements of these companies, the release said.

The United States also imposed sanctions on three private cargo carriers operating in Belarus, including Aviakompaniya Rada, UE RubiStar, Aviakompaniya Belkanto for allegedly providing support to Russian defense activities, the release added.

According to the release, two Belarusian logistics companies, Ruzekspeditsiya and VLATE Logistic, have also become the target of new sanctions for allegedly managing border crossing logistics and transportation services through Belarus to Russia, including the re-export of machinery.

Finally, the release added that the United States has cracked down on two Belarusian defense

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sector companies, Joint Stock Company Plant Legmash and KB Unmanned Helicopters, including Vladimir Chudakov, the latter's chief designer and director.

The US State Department has concurrently imposed visa restrictions on 19 Belarusian officials and their affiliates for playing a role in the alleged undermining of democracy in the country.

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UPDATE - Canada Sanctions 10 Individuals, 6 Entities on Anniversary of 2020 Belarus Elections

(Adds additional statement in para 4-5 background in paras 7-8)

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) – The Canadian government on Friday imposed Belarus-related sanctions on 10 individuals and six entities, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) said on Friday.

"Effective immediately, Canada is imposing sanctions against ten individuals and six entities in response to their involvement in ongoing and systematic human rights abuses in Belarus and support for Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine," GAC said in a statement.

The restrictions target President Alexander Lukashenko's youngest son, Nikolai, among others. The sanctions mark the fourth anniversary of what Canada says were "fraudulent 2020 elections," in Belarus, the ministry added.

Canada issued the sanctions in coordination with the United States, United Kingdom and European Union, according to a joint statement released by the US State Department.

"We affirm that the sanctions we have recently announced represent a coordinated, multilateral effort to advance accountability for the Lukashenka regime," the joint statement said.

Incumbent Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko secured his sixth term in office in the August 2020 election, which triggered mass opposition-led protests. The West imposed several rounds of sanctions on Belarus on accusations of election fraud and human rights violations, which Belarus denied. The sanctions were later expanded due to Minsk's support of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine

To date, Ottawa has announced fifteen rounds of sanctions against Belarus. Canadian designations have targeted 221 individuals and 77 entities.

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US Imposes Sanctions on Aircraft Linked to Lukashenko - Treasury Dept.

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) – The United States has imposed sanctions on an aircraft allegedly linked to Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko as part of a new package of restrictions on dozens of individuals and entities in the country, the US Department of the Treasury said on Friday.

According to the release, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has blocked Boeing 767-32K(ER) with EW-001PB tail number as part of the Belarusian

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presidential fleet.

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The sanctions target 19 Belarusian nationals and 14 entities, the department said.

Among others, the US imposed sanctions on Vladimir Chudakov, who is the chief designer and director of the Belarusian design bureau Bespilotnyye Vertolety.

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IMF Welcomes Ukraine's Commitment to Remaining Engaged With Creditors - Georgieva

WASHINGTON, August 9 (Sputnik) - International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said on Friday that the IMF welcomes Ukraine's commitment to remain engaged with creditors.

"Taking account of the continuing extremely challenging circumstances, I welcome the Ukrainian authorities' commitment to remain engaged with creditors, and to be ready to undertake a further restructuring as necessary to ensure debt sustainability is secured by the end of the program," Georgieva said in a statement.

Ukraine has implemented an economic reform program supported by the IMF through $15.6 billion in financing. The financing is part of a broader $122 billion support package.

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Ukrainian authorities have demonstrated their capacity to enact sound policies and pursue an ambitious reform agenda, the statement said.

The continued support of Ukraine's official creditors and donors, as well as international financial institutions, with the participation of bondholders is critical to the success of Ukraine's reform agenda, the statement said.

The IMF is directly financing terrorism by providing aid to Ukraine, IMF Executive Director for Russia Aleksei Mozhin told Sputnik in May.

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