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8/29/24 Thursday

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Sullivan-Xi Meeting Won't Improve US-China Relations

> On Wednesday, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan visited China, meeting with President Xi Jinping and other high-ranking Chinese officials. The meeting is expected to be followed up with a call between Xi and US President Joe Biden in the coming weeks.

The meeting was reported as an attempt to improve relations between the world's two largest economies and militaries, but is unlikely to move the needle in any perceptible way, scholar, journalist and geopolitical analyst specializing in the Asia-Pacific KJ Noh told Sputnik's Political Misfits.

"I don't think it's really in the cards. If you look at the Chinese readouts [of the meeting], they essentially focus on the Chinese desire to get along with the United States. Their point is [that] we can't be enemies and cooperate. [The US has] to make a decision," Noh began. "They always come back to the Bali agreements, even the 'Five Nos' - no Cold War, no hot war, no regime change, no block forming, no support of secession… They want the US to affirm that. And the Chinese explicitly mentioned that in their readout. The US [readout] does not mention that."

Despite occasional public overtures by the United States, its actions have been consistently aimed at limiting China's growth and influence. The United States saw itself fit to insert itself in territorial disputes in the South China Sea. It has also supported Chinese separatists in Taiwan, held military drills in the region, flown spy planes right on China's borders, and stationed troops just a mile off of China's coast.

Then there is the economic warfare. "If you recall, when they initially rolled out these [micro]chip sanctions, [influential think tanks] crowed that they had essentially destroyed China's economy. They said they had China in a four-point chokehold and they were strangling with intent to kill, that this was a declaration of war. They never walked back those statements," explained Koh. "Jake Sullivan emphasized in the readout that the US will continue to take necessary actions to prevent advanced US technology from being used to undermine national security, that means they're going to continue the tech war against China."

Despite the United States' hand-wringing about national security and election interference, Koh suspects the real reason for the tech war, particularly on Chinese tech giants Huawei and ByteDance, is to maintain the US "monopoly control over the backbone of the internet and social media companies for geostrategic reasons."

Huawei is the world's largest supplier of telecommunication equipment that makes up the backbone of the internet, like routers and servers. ByteDance owns TikTok, one of the most popular and fastest-growing social media platforms, boasting 170 million users in the United States and more than a billion worldwide.

The upcoming call between Xi and Biden will be to let China know that if Harris wins in November, the Harris administration is "essentially going to keep our policies as is."

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“I think they want to position themselves as a better alternative than [former US President Donald] Trump who the Chinese are weary about because he’s so unpredictable despite his kind of transactional neo-mercantile approach to China,” explained Koh. “But what we do have to note is anything that Trump did in terms of escalating against China, the Biden administration has maintained and then took it up several notches. All you have to do is look at the tariffs [and] you’ll see that the Biden administration has been much, much, much worse.”

Koh speculated that Sullivan wanted to stabilize relations between the countries before the election but afterward “the escalation against China will continue.”

“Right before this meeting, there was a massive high-level delegation of DPP Taiwan separatist officials who came to the United States. Right after this meeting is over, there will be further meetings with high-level separatists. And so, there’s always this doubled-edged message that the US is sending.”

So from a Chinese perspective, there are no good choices in November, Noh contended. “I don’t think they’re making plans for either administration. The Chinese outlook is just literally the long term. They believe that if they can avoid war, and if they can avoid nuclear war, then eventually, things will stabilize and the United States will hopefully find a modus vivendi.”

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Trump Calls Harris's First Presidential Nominee Interview ‘Boring’

WASHINGTON, August 30 (Sputnik) - Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump labeled his Democratic rival Kamala Harris's first interview as ‘Boring.’

"Boring!!!," Trump posted on TruthSocial after Harris’ interview with CNN aired.

The interview featured only one foreign policy question about her stance on the Middle East conflict, with no mention of Russia or China.

It also covered domestic issues like high prices in the US and the immigration crisis. Harris used the opportunity to criticize Trump on topics such as the failure of his immigration bill and his handling of the Covid-19 crisis.

Harris and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz participated in the interview, conducted by the outlet's chief political correspondent Dana Bash.

The US presidential election is set for November 5, with Vice President Kamala Harris representing the Democratic Party and Donald Trump representing the Republican Party.

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Harris Says 'Unequivocal and Unwavering' In Her Commitment to Israel's Defense

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) — Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris stated during a CNN interview that her commitment to Israel's defense and its right to self-defense remains steadfast and unchanged.

"I'm unequivocal and unwavering in my commitment to Israel's defense and its ability to defend

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itself. And that's not going to change," Harris said on Thursday evening.
Harris said that she has remained committed to advancing efforts toward achieving a two-state solution.
In addition, Harris stated that it was crucial to finalize a deal when asked about potential foreign policy changes.

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Harris Vows to Get Border Security Bill to Her Desk, Promises to Sign It if Elected

WASHINGTON, August 30 (Sputnik) - US Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris pledged to ensure border security legislation reaches her desk and promised to sign it.
In a CNN interview, Harris stated that a bipartisan effort, including input from key congressmen, led to the crafting of a bill that she supports.
“And Donald Trump got word of this bill that would have contributed to securing our border and because he believes it would not have helped him politically, he told his folks in Congress, ‘Don’t put it forward.” He killed the bill, a border security bill that would have put 1,500 more agents on the border,” Harris said. “I will make sure that it comes to my desk and I will sign it.”

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Harris In CNN Interview Says She Is 'Unequivocal And Unwavering' In Her Commitment to Israel's Defense And Its Ability to Defend Itself

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Trump Says Biggest Issue US, World Face is Preventing the Use of Nuclear Weapons

WASHINGTON, August 30 (Sputnik) - Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said during a town hall event in the state of Wisconsin that the biggest challenge the United States and the international community face is preventing a nuclear war in the near future.
"In my opinion, the biggest problem our country has, the biggest problem the world has, is nuclear weapons," Trump said on Thursday. "They are a destructive force, the likes of which nobody has ever seen before, and we have to make sure they're never used."
Trump said he'd be able to help maintain stability around the world by keeping lines of communication open, adding "I could do it with telephone calls, by being smart."
Trump mentioned that the United States and Russia are the biggest nuclear powers, but expects that China will catch up in about five years as it builds up its nuclear arsenal.
Trump is expected to enter arms control talks with Russia if he returns to the White House after the November election.

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State of Florida Executes Inmate Loran Cole For Murdering College Student - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 30 (Sputnik) - The state of Florida executed Loran Cole for killing John Edwards, an 18-year-old Florida State University student, in 1994, the Tallahassee Democrat newspaper reported.

The report said Thursday that Cole was declared dead at 6:15 p.m. Eastern Time and he had no last words.

Earlier in the day, the US Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Cole's defense team to block the execution.

Cole's legal team sought to block his execution over alleged abuse he went through at a notorious boys reform school, and also because he had Parkinson's disease.

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US, Russian Deputy Envoys Argue at UN Security Council Over Efforts to Bring Peace to Gaza

UNITED NATIONS, August 30 (Sputnik) - The deputy representatives of the US and Russian missions to the United Nations engaged in an argument at the UN Security Council meeting over which of their countries is doing a better job at trying to resolve the conflict in Gaza, a Sputnik correspondent reported.

"I don’t need to sit here and explain to you why the US did what it did with regard to these resolutions. You know quite well and I think everybody in this room does," US Deputy Envoy Robert Wood said in response to his Russian counterpart Dmitry Polyanskiy.

The Russian diplomat remarked earlier that the United States has been blocking a ceasefire in Gaza by supporting Israel and vetoing UN Security Council resolutions concerning the Palestinian enclave.

Wood pointed out that the United States is now focusing on its efforts together with Egypt and Qatar to implement a framework that was agreed to by the Israeli government and Hamas.

Wood also emphasized that Hamas has been changing its position on the proposed ceasefire and hostage release deal.

"So my recommendations to you and your government would be, if you are going to contribute something positively, then contribute it. If not, you should be quiet," Wood said.

Polyanskiy replied that that Wood should keep his recommendations about him or the Russian government to himself and the United States should stop getting in the way of the UN Security Council discussing the Palestinian dossier.

The United States bears the responsibility of what is happening now in Gaza, where more than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed since October 7, 2023, Poyanskiy said.

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New Reuters, WSJ Polls Show Harris Leading Trump in US Election Race

WASHINGTON, August 30 (Sputnik) - New polls released by Reuters and the Wall Street Journal show Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris leading her Republican rival Donald Trump in the race to the White House.

A new Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Thursday showed that Harris has widened her lead over Trump 45% to 41% among registered US voters.

The Reuters poll, which has a 2-point margin of error, marks an increase for Harris, who had a 1-point lead over Trump in a poll from July.

The new Wall Street Journal poll showed Harris taking a narrow lead over Trump 48% to 47% in a head-to-head face-off between the two candidates. This poll had a 2.5-point margin of error.

The US presidential election will take place on November 5.

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Trump Defends Photo at Arlington National Cemetery, Says Soldier's Family Asked For It

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump pushed back against public criticism over a photo he took earlier this week with a family at the grave site of a US Marine at the Arlington National Cemetery.

Trump visited Arlington National Cemetery on Monday to pay tribute to the 13 US service members killed in the terrorist attack in Kabul in August 2021. During the ceremony, Trump laid a wreath together with the families of each of the fallen soldiers in an act of solemn remembrance.

"Joe Biden killed their children by incompetence...and not one general or incompetent bureaucrat was fired for the most embarrassing moment in the history of our country, and then they accused me of having a picture taken at the tombstone with a family because they love the president, they love me and I love them," Trump said on Thursday.

Trump also said the family of the Sgt. Darin Taylor Hoover, who was killed in the Abbey Gate terrorist attack, had asked to take a photo with him at the tombstone of the US service member.

Republicans in Congress have accused the Biden administration of fleeing Afghanistan, as well as leaving behind thousands of Afghans who had been collaborating with the US military against the Taliban for 20 years.

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Russia Concerned About Possible Cessation of UN Work in Gaza - Deputy Envoy

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UNITED NATIONS, August 30 (Sputnik) - Russia is deeply concerned about the possibility that the United Nations may cease its operations in the Gaza Strip and is urging the UN Security Council to prevent such an outcome, Russian Deputy Ambassador to the world body Dmitry Polyanskiy said.

"We are exceedingly concerned at the emergence of information about a possible cessation to the work of the United Nations in the Gaza Strip. We believe that the Security Council needs to spare no effort to preclude this, to prevent this from happening, and certain Israeli politicians have clearly shown an interest in this taking place," Polyanskiy said during a UN Security Council meeting on Thursday.

On Wednesday, the UN World Food Program said that it is pausing the movement of its employees in Gaza as a result of an attack by Israeli forces on its staff a day earlier.

WFP confirmed that its team was attacked in a clearly marked vehicle by Israeli troops near a checkpoint at the Wadi Gaza bridge.

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Harris Doubles Down on Combatting Climate Change After Changing Stance on Fracking

WASHINGTON, August 30 (Sputnik) – In her interview for CNN, Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris has once again reassured voters that she remains committed to cutting emissions and fighting climate change after recently backpedaling on her tough stance against fracking.

“I think the most important and most significant aspect of my policy perspective and decisions is my values have not changed,” she said in the interview. “You mentioned the Green New Deal. I have always believed – and I have worked on it – that the climate crisis is real, that it is an urgent matter to which we should apply metrics that include holding ourselves to deadlines around time.”

Before taking office as vice president and becoming Joe Biden's running mate, in September 2019, Harris made it clear that she supported a complete ban on fracking.

“There’s no question I’m in favor of banning fracking and starting with what we can do on Day 1 around public lands,” Harris said during a CNN town hall.

But Harris and the Democrats now face the difficult task of winning Pennsylvania, one of the key US states where there is no clear leader yet and where the issue of fracking is particularly relevant.

It is this simple fact that most likely forced Harris to change her position on this issue, which resulted in her campaign publishing a statement in late July saying that she does not support a ban on fracking.

Trump is at the same time using this topic to gain additional support in Pennsylvania, claiming that Harris will ban fracking and this will negatively affect the economy and the standard of living of the state's residents.

In his presidential term, Trump encouraged massive development of US oil and natural gas reserves, especially through fracking techniques, also known as hydraulic fracturing processes,

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that were widely criticized by environmentalists.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, August 30 (Sputnik) –
KURSK REGION
* Many EU countries at the foreign ministers meeting supported the attack of Ukraine on Russia's Kursk Region, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on Thursday.
* The Russian armed forces have eliminated up to 7,450 Ukrainian servicepeople, 74 tanks and 36 infantry fighting vehicles during military operations in the border areas of the Kursk Region, the Russian Defense Ministry said.
* The Kiev regime's invasion of the Kursk Region is a kind of response to Russian President Vladimir Putin's peace initiative, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Sputnik.
MIDDLE EAST
* UN humanitarian workers starting the polio vaccination campaign will be protected by a three-day humanitarian pause, with a possibility of having a fourth day if needed, the World Health Organization's Representative for the Occupied Palestinian Territory Rik Peeperkorn said on Thursday.
* EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said that he had instructed to start a technical process of preparing sanctions against Israeli ministers for extremist actions and statements.
* The United States was not informed in advance about Israel's "counterterrorism operation" in the West Bank, Pentagon Deputy Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said.
CONFLICT IN UKRAINE
* Ukraine must not strike civilian targets in Russia using F-16 fighter jets, Dutch Defense Minister Ruben Brekelmans said.
* Russia considers the statement by the commander of the Dutch Armed Forces about the absence of restrictions on the use of F-16 fighter jets by Kiev "subject to the laws of war" as confirmation of the double standards of the West, Russian Ambassador to the Netherlands Vladimir Tarabrin told Sputnik.
* Hungary does not prevent the EU from conducting a training mission of the Ukrainian military on the territory of the union, but will not allow it to be transferred to the territory of Ukraine, since the appearance of a large number of NATO military there, even for the purpose of training, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said.
* Several foreign ministers of the European Union countries at a meeting in Brussels stated that they had no mandate to allow the armed forces of Ukraine to strike with the transfer to the country deep into Russian territory, this is a matter of bilateral relations that should be resolved without Brussels, Szijjarto said.
* The EU's transfer of 1.4 billion euros ($1.55 billion) from revenues from frozen Russian assets to Kiev is theft that will have legal consequences, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.
CHINA-US TALKS

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* US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday discussed the Taiwan issue, the Ukraine conflict and the situation in the South China Sea, the White House said.
* China and the United States have failed to make progress in discussing a resolution to the Ukrainian crisis during negotiations in Beijing, Sullivan said.
* The United States does not intend to start a new Cold War and does not want a conflict with China, Sullivan said.
* The US adheres to double standards on nuclear proliferation, which threatens global strategic stability, Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Wu Qian said, commenting on Washington's new nuclear strategy.

POLITICAL SITUATION IN MOLDOVA

* The Central Election Commission of Moldova refused on Thursday to register an initiative group to collect signatures in support of the representative of the opposition bloc Pobeda, Vasile Bolea.
* The Supreme Judicial Chamber of Moldova upheld on Thursday the ban for the Pobeda bloc from participating in presidential elections.
* Bolea said that he intends to re-submit documents for registration of the initiative group to collect signatures in order to participate in the Moldovan presidential elections.

PAVEL DUROV'S ARREST

* The Swiss Justice Ministry has not received any requests from France regarding allegations of Telegram founder Pavel Durov of violence against one of his children, an official representative of the ministry told Sputnik on Thursday.
* Judicial control of Durov in France can last the entire duration of the investigation, which typically takes three or four years for criminal cases in the country, French criminal lawyer David Libeskind told RIA Novosti.
* The UAE is in contact with France and Durov's representatives amid the ongoing investigation, the UAE government told Sputnik.

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Starlink Confirms Court Froze Its Accounts in Brazil, Says Will Address Issue Legally

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - Starlink confirmed on Thursday that it received an order from a Brazilian Supreme Court Justice freezing its finances and preventing it from conducting transactions in the country, saying it would seek to address the matter legally.

"Earlier this week we received an order from Brazil's Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes that freezes Starlink's finances and prevents Starlink from conducting financial transactions in that country," the company said on X.

Starlink said the order was based on an "unfounded determination" that it should be responsible for the fines levied "unconstitutionally" against X.

"It was issued in secret and without affording Starlink any of the due process of law guaranteed by the Constitution of Brazil. We intend to address the matter legally," the statement added.

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US Alarmed by IDF's Repeated Fire on WFP Vehicle, Citing 'Communication Error' -US Mission

UNITED NATIONS, August 29 (Sputnik) - The US is alarmed by the recent attack on a UN humanitarian vehicle in Gaza by Israeli soldiers, which Israel attributes to a communication error among its military units, US Deputy Ambassador to the UN Robert Wood said on Thursday.

"We are alarmed by yesterday's reports that the IDF fired repeatedly on a WFP [World Food Programme] vehicle. Israel has said it is investigating this most recent incident, which their initial review has said was a result of a communication error between IDF units," Wood told the UN Security Council members during a meeting on Gaza.

He added that Washington has urged them to rectify the issues within their system, saying that these incidents remain "all too common."

On Wednesday, the WFP said in a statement that it is pausing the movement of its employees in the Gaza Strip given the attack on its staff the day earlier.

WFP confirmed that its team was attacked in a "clearly marked" vehicle as it came under IDF fire near an Israeli checkpoint at the Wadi Gaza bridge.

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US Army Awards $1.3Bln Contact to Raytheon, Lockheed Joint Venture on Javelin Production

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The US Army awarded a $1.3 billion contract to a joint venture between US defense firms Raytheon and Lockheed Martin for n the production of Javelin anti-tank weapon systems, Raytheon said on Thursday.

"The US Army awarded the Javelin Joint Venture (JJV) a follow-on fiscal year 2024 production contract for Javelin missiles and associated equipment and services with total value of $1.3 billion," Raytheon said in a press release.

This contract also includes more than 4,000 Javelins to replenish rounds sent to Ukraine, the release noted.

Moreover, the release mentioned that Lockheed and Raytheon aim to increase Javelin production to 3,960 per year by late 2026.

The United States provides Javelin systems to more than 25 international customers worldwide, according to Raytheon.

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Harris Vows to Appoint Republican to Her Cabinet If She Wins US Election - Reports

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WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris told CNN on Thursday that she would appoint a Republican to her Cabinet if she wins the US presidential election in November.

The report said Harris vowed to appoint a Republican to her Cabinet as a way of showing that she would be a US president representing "all Americans."

However, the report said Harris did not disclose who she had in mind for this role.

CNN will air its interview with Harris tonight at 9 p.m. Eastern Time.

The Trump administration will also reportedly work with US politicians of different political backgrounds, including former Democrats Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Tulsi Gabbard, who each endorsed Republican nominee Donald Trump for US president over the last several days.

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Over 50,000 X Users Report Problems With Social Media Platform - Downdetector

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - More than 50,000 X users have reported ongoing problems when trying to access the social media platform as of 4:00 p.m. ET, according to the Downdetector website.

Most of the reports are being made regarding the X mobile application (85%), whereas 4% of users have reported website issues and 11% have reported problems with the server connection.

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More Than 37,000 X Users Report Problems with Website - Downdetector

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Boeing Signs Deal With Nigeria to Develop Booming Civil Aviation Sector - Release

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - Boeing has signed an agreement with Nigeria to help the country develop its booming civil aviation market, the aerospace company announced in a release on Thursday.

"Boeing and the Federal Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace Development of Nigeria signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen the West African country's aviation sector," the release said. "Africa continues to be a promising market with its overall air-traffic growth forecasted well above the average global growth rate over the next 20 years."

In a strategic relationship with the aviation ministry and Nigerian airlines, Boeing will provide planning workshops, training, technical support and assessments to airline operators, the release said.

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"This agreement is an important step in establishing a sustainable civil aviation ecosystem in Nigeria as there is shared interest and value in driving innovation and progress," the release added.

Boeing's Commercial Market Outlook projects Africa will need 1,170 airplanes over the next two decades, according to the release.

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US Approves $224Mln Sale of Patriot Launching Stations to Netherlands - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The US State Department has approved the potential $224 million sale of two Patriot launching stations and upgrades for other launching stations the Netherlands has in its possession, the Defense Department said in a press release on Thursday.

"The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of the Netherlands of PATRIOT M903 Launching Stations New Buy and Upgrades and related equipment for an estimated cost of $224 million," the release said.

The possible transaction includes two new production Patriot launching stations and services to upgrade other Patriot launching stations for the Netherlands, the release added.

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Pentagon Says Cannot Confirm That Patriot Missile Hit Crashed Ukrainian F-16

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) – The United States cannot confirm reports that the crashed F-16 aircraft of the Ukrainian Air Force was downed by friendly fire from a Patriot missile, Pentagon deputy spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Thursday.

"I've seen the reporting. I just can't confirm it. I don't have that level of fidelity right now," Singh said during a press briefing.

Earlier on Thursday, the Ukrainian Air Force confirmed media reports that a US-made F-16 jet, which was transferred to Ukraine by its Western partners, crashed on Monday just weeks after the first batch of such aircraft was delivered to Kiev.

Ukrainian lawmaker Maryana Bezuglaya said, citing her own sources, that the F-16 jet was shot down by a Patriot missile due to lack of coordination among units of the Ukrainian armed forces. The crash killed pilot Alexey Mes.

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US Has Not Been Asked to Investigate Crash of Ukrainian F-16 Jet - Pentagon

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WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The United States has not received requests from Kiev to participate in any investigation of the crash of the Ukrainian F-16 fighter jet earlier this week, Defense Department deputy spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Thursday.

"The United States has not been asked to participate in any type of investigation to look into this incident," Singh said during a press briefing.

Earlier on Thursday, the Ukrainian Air Force confirmed media reports that a US-made F-16 jet, that was transferred to Ukraine by its Western partners, crashed on Monday just weeks after the first batch of such aircraft was delivered to Kiev.

The Economist reported earlier in August that Ukraine received the first 10 of the 79 F-16 fighter jets promised by Western countries on July 31. Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed the delivery. The Telegraph reported that Kiev was already using the jets for air defense.

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US Was Not Notified in Advance About Israel's Operations in West Bank - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The United States was not informed in advance about Israel's "counterterrorism operation" in the West Bank, Pentagon Deputy Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said on Thursday.

"We were not notified about operations in the West Bank," Singh said during a press briefing.

Earlier in the day, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) announced the completion of its "counterterrorism operation" in the Far'a area of the West Bank. The operations involved the destruction of an "armed terrorist cell inside a vehicle" and the discovery of an explosives laboratory and operations center in a local mosque, where weapons, explosive devices, and military equipment were found, according to the IDF.

Eleven people were killed and 26 others injured as a result of the Israeli military's actions in the West Bank, Palestinian news agency WAFA reported on Thursday.

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pentagon says cannot confirm that patriot missile hit crashed ukrainian f-16

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Pentagon Says Unaware of Any Ukraine Request for Assistance After F-16 Jet Crash

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The United States is unaware of any request by Ukraine for assistance after a F-16 fighter jet crashed in the country earlier this week, Defense Department deputy spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Thursday.

"I'm not aware of any assistance or request for assistance from the Ukrainian side to us about

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this particular incident," Singh said during a press briefing.

Singh also refused to clarify how many F-16 jets Ukraine currently has and how many more will be delivered to the country.

Earlier on Thursday, the Ukrainian Air Force confirmed media reports that a US-made F-16 jet that was transferred to Ukraine by its Western partners crashed on August 26 just weeks after the first batch of such aircraft was delivered to Kiev.

The Economist reported earlier in August that Ukraine received the first 10 of the 79 F-16 fighter jets promised by Western countries on July 31. Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed the delivery. The Telegraph reported that Kiev was already using the jets for air defense.

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Apple in Talks to Invest in Tech Company OpenAI, Could Boost Value to $100Bln - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - Apple is in talks to invest in the tech company OpenAI as it seeks to strengthen its role in developing products with leading edge artificial intelligence features, The Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday, citing people familiar with the matter.

OpenAI's value would be above $100 billion if Apple chooses to invest in the tech company, the report said.

In June, Apple announced that OpenAI would be the first official partner for its work to integrate artificial intelligence into its operating system, but now it's seeking to further cement the relationship with an investment.

For the immediate future, OpenAI will help Apple improve Siri voice assistant, text proofreading and creating custom emojis.

US billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk said in June that he would ban Apple devices at his companies if they integrate OpenAI at the operating system level over concerns that former NSA chief Paul Nakasone was appointed to OpenAI's board of directors.

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Pentagon Approves Additional Military Support for Presidential Campaigns - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin approved a plan for increased support to the US Secret Service during the 2024 election campaigns, with protective measures extending through the inauguration, Pentagon Deputy Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said on Thursday.

"The Secretary of Defense approved the request and directed the commander of US Northern Command to plan and provide, and execute increased support to the United States Secret Service at various locations across the United States during the 2024 election campaigns," Singh said during a press briefing.

Singh added that the Pentagon will extend its protective support through November 5, 2024,

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and maintain it for the president-elect and vice president-elect until January 2025.

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Austin to Host Umerov on Friday, Receive Update on Kursk Region Attack - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) – US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin will meet with his Ukrainian counterpart, Rustem Umerov, on Friday and receive an update on the attack on Russia's Kursk region, Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh said.

"Tomorrow, Secretary Austin will host Ukrainian Minister of Defense Umerov here at the Pentagon," Singh told reporters on Thursday.

Austin will receive an update on the developments on the battlefield and the situation in Russia's Kursk region, Singh added.

Austin will also travel to Ramstein, Germany, next week to host an in-person meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, she added.

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US Defense Secretary Approves Request From Homeland Security for Additional Military Support for Presidential, Vice Presidential Candidates - Pentagon

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US Defense Secretary Austin to Host Ukraine's Umerov for Talks on Friday - Pentagon

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US Army Orders $1.3Bln More Javelin Anti-Tank Missiles to Refill Arsenals - Lockheed

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The US Army has ordered $1.3 billion worth more of Javelin man-portable anti-tank missiles including 4,000 to replace those already given to Ukraine, Lockheed Martin announced on Thursday.

"The US Army awarded the Javelin Joint Venture (JJV) a follow-on fiscal year 2024 production contract for Javelin missiles and associated equipment and services with [a] total value of $1.3 billion," Lockheed Martn said in a press release.

The order is the largest ever single-year Javelin production contract to date for the missile, which is jointly manufactured by Lockheed Martin and Raytheon, the release said.

"This contract provides procurement of Javelin weapon systems and production support for the US Army. Last year, the JJV began production ramp-up activities to increase Javelin All Up Round (AUR) production to 3,960 per year by late 2026," the release added.

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The Javelin is developed and produced by the JJV between Raytheon in Tucson, Arizona and Lockheed Martin in Orlando, Florida, the release noted. So far, the JJV has produced more than 50,000 Javelin missiles and more than 12,000 reusable Command Launch Units, according to the release.

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WHO Says 'Critical' to Reach 90% Polio Vaccination Coverage in Gaza - Official

UNITED NATIONS, August 28 (Sputnik) - Reaching 90% of Gaza residents for polio vaccination coverage in each of the two rounds of inoculation is "critical," World Health Organization representative for the occupied Palestinian territory Rik Peeperkorn said on Thursday.

"It is critical that we reach 90% vaccination coverage during each round," Peeperkorn told journalists. "There will be two rounds."

Peeperkorn noted that 90% or more coverage is needed in order to stop the transmission of the disease.

The United Nations received a green light for a three-day humanitarian pause, with an extra day if needed, to carry out the vaccinations.

Last week, the United Nations said that the polio vaccination of more than 600,000 children in Gaza will begin soon, with a second round planned four weeks later.

In late July, the Gaza Health Ministry declared the Palestinian enclave a polio epidemic area, citing the months-long fighting as the main reason for the spread of the disease.

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JD Vance Urging Tech Billionaire Thiel to Help Fund Trump Campaign - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - Donald Trump's running mate Sen. JD Vance is trying to convince tech billionaire Peter Thiel to donate to the Trump campaign, the Financial Times reported on Thursday.

“I’m going to keep on talking to Peter and persuading him that, you know he’s obviously been exhausted by politics a little bit, but he’s going to be really exhausted by politics if we lose and if Kamala Harris is president,” Vance told the Financial Times.

The report mentioned that Thiel had previously stated he would not donate to any Republican politicians in this year's elections over his disappointment in Donald Trump's presidency but left open the possibility that he could change his mind.

According to Vance, Thiel is a "conservative" and must take action to support the Trump-Vance campaign.

Thiel is the co-founder of PayPal and Palantir. He has withheld his support for any candidate in this year's presidential election but he previously donated $1.25 million to the Trump campaign and Trump-affiliated groups in 2016 and backed Vance’s US Senate race in 2022.

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US ICBM Warning System Lacks Parts, Suffers Obsolete Tech Hurting Readiness - Report

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The US strategic Early Warning Radar system to monitor the threat of ballistic missile thermonuclear attack is plagued by a lack of spare parts, outdated technology, much more maintenance work than anticipated to keep its aging systems functioning and other problems, the Inspector General of the Department of Defense (DOD IG) admitted in a brief public statement issued on Thursday about a highly classified report.

"We found that Space Force took actions to sustain the Upgraded Early Warning Radar, but that a lack of spare parts, obsolescence, unscheduled system maintenance, and delayed modernization continue to be a problem," the DOD IG acknowledged in a single, brief Twitter/X statement.

The DOD IG carried out an investigation and produced a report a entited “Evaluation of Sustaining Engineering Actions for the Space Force’s Upgraded Early Warning Radar,” the office explained.

"The objective of this evaluation was to determine the extent to which the Space Force implemented sustaining engineering actions to ensure that the Upgraded Early Warning Radar (UEWR) was capable, reliable, and available to meet mission requirements while managing risks," the DOD IG said.

The UEWR's mission is to detect and track launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles, while conducting general space surveillance and satellite tracking. The system is designed to detect and track multiple targets up to 3,000 miles away, the DOD IG noted.

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Trump Says Will Lay Out Plan to Make US 'Crypto Capital of the Planet' Thursday Afternoon

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - Former President Donald Trump announced on Thursday that he will present a plan this afternoon to make the United States the leading global hub for cryptocurrency.

"This afternoon, I'm laying out my plan to ensure that the United States will be the crypto capital of the planet," former President Donald Trump said on Thursday in a video posted on X.

Trump expressed his utmost support for Bitcoin and made cryptocurrencies part of his election campaign during the Bitcoin Conference in Nashville, Tennessee in July.

At the same time, industry analysts are urging the cryptocurrency community not to make rosy plans for Trump's tenure as US president. In 2020, Trump while in the White House considered banning Bitcoin.

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US GDP Beats Estimates to Grow 3% in 2nd Quarter Raising Stakes for Federal Reserve

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The US economy grew at an annualized rate of 3% in the second quarter of 2024, the Commerce Department said on Thursday, revising upward its previous estimate of a 2.8% growth for the three months that ended in June.

Economists on Wall Street had expected real Gross Domestic Product growth for the second quarter to remain unchanged at the pace estimated in the prior reading by the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis.

In the first quarter, the economy had expanded at an annualized rate of 1.4%.

The second quarter revision could result in mixed feelings for the Federal Reserve, which is veering towards a start of US interest rate cuts in September. The central bank plans to slash rates, now at two-decade highs, on concerns that they are choking growth. But a higher GDP estimate could tell Fed policy-makers that the economy - and attendant inflation - is not softening as much as they had feared.

The GDP revision came on the back of weekly US jobless claims filings data on Thursday that showed employment steadying after a spike in layoffs last month.

"The claims data, GDP revision and trade deficit tell a single story: Demand is strong for both goods and labor. While it's encouraging to see less evidence of a recession, today's numbers potentially argue against the idea of continuous rate cuts by the Fed," David Russell, global head of market strategy at TradeStation, said in comments carried by MarketWatch.

The last time the Fed cut rates was in March 2020, right after the COVID-19 outbreak. It slashed 100 basis points, or a full percentage point, to bring borrowing costs to an all-time low of between zero and 0.25%. The Fed added 525 basis points to interest rates between March 2022 and June 2023 to bring them to a two-decade high of between 5.25 and 5.50% amid inflation triggered by government pandemic relief spending and breakdown in supply chains.

The Fed is expected to announce its first post-pandemic easing at a rate decision scheduled for September 18.

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Pentagon Slaps Lockheed With $5Mln Per F-35 Withheld Until Upgrades Work - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The US Defense Department is going to hold Lockheed Martin accountable by withholding $5 million each of up to 110 F-35 fighter jets scheduled to be delivered by the end of this year until their hardware and software upgrades are fully functioning, Bloomberg reported on Thursday.

The Defense Department's F-35 program office confirmed the new policy in a statement issued to the news outlet earlier in the day.

Lockheed Martin has informed the Defense Department it plans to deliver 75 to 110 of the

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super-expensive and repeatedly delayed fifth generation combat aircraft to the US armed forces by December 31.

Lockheed Martin revealed the new policy to the public on Tuesday in a filing it made to the Securities and Exchange Commission. The troubled hardware and software upgrade package is known as TR-3.

Eighteen F-35 jets with the TR-3 upgrade package were delivered to the US armed forces by August 19.

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WHO Says There Will be 3—Day Humanitarian Pauses in Gaza For Polio Vaccinations - Official

UNITED NATIONS, August 29 (Sputnik) - UN humanitarian workers starting the polio vaccination campaign will be protected by a three-day humanitarian pause, with a possibility of having a fourth day if needed, the World Health Organization's Representative for the Occupied Palestinian Territory Rik Peeperkorn said on Thursday.

"The way we discussed and agreed is that there will be a campaign starting on the first of September in Central Gaza for three days. There will be a humanitarian pause during the vaccination for three days," Peeperkorn told journalists during a UN briefing on the health situation in Gaza. "We will evaluate, discuss… when we need another day, there is an agreement that we will get another day."

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Arlington Official 'Pushed Aside' by Trump Staffer Won't Press Charges - Army Statement

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - An Arlington National Cemetery official was pushed aside by a member of former President Donald Trump's staff during a wreath-laying ceremony but has decided not to press charges, the US Army said in a statement on Thursday.

"An [Arlington National Cemetery] employee who attempted to ensure adherence to [Army regulations and DoD policies] was abruptly pushed aside. Consistent with the decorum expected at ANC, this employee acted with professionalism and avoided further disruption. The incident was reported to the JBM-HH police department, but the employee subsequently decided not to press charges. Therefore, the Army considers this matter closed," the US Army said in a statement.

The event took place on August 26 while the Republican presidential candidate was at the cemetery to pay tribute to the 13 US service members killed in the Abbey Gate terrorist attack in Kabul in August 2021. During the ceremony, Trump laid a wreath with the families of each of the fallen soldiers in an act of solemn remembrance.

A spokesman for Trump's campaign denied the pushing allegations, instead positing that the ANC employee physically blocked a photographer from Trump's campaign from participating in the ceremony. Though federal law prohibits political events, including photography, within Army

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National Military Cemeteries, Trump's campaign has said that they were given permission to have the photographer present.

"This incident was unfortunate, and it is also unfortunate that the ANC employee and her professionalism have been unfairly attacked. ANC is a national shrine to the honored dead of the Armed Forces, and its dedicated staff will continue to ensure public ceremonies are conducted with the dignity and respect the nation's fallen deserve," added the Army in the statement.

The United States withdrew from Afghanistan in August 2021 after a rapid takeover of the country by the Taliban. The US military led the chaotic evacuation of thousands of people via the Kabul airport at Abbey Gate, where a terrorist attack killed 13 US troops and 170 Afghans.

Republicans in Congress have accused the Biden administration of fleeing Afghanistan, as well as leaving behind thousands of Afghans who had been collaborating with the US military against the Taliban for 20 years.

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US Muslim Support for Democratic Party Increases With Harris as Nominee - Polls

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - US Muslim support for the Democratic Party has increased since Kamala Harris replaced Joe Biden as the presidential nominee, although it is nearly tied with support for the Green Party, according to two polls released by the Council on American–Islamic Relations (CAIR) on Thursday.

"[Biden] dropping out increased the chances of success for the Democratic Party, at least within the Muslim community," CAIR Government Affairs Director Robert McGaw said at a press briefing.

In a nationwide poll of US Muslim voter preferences conducted earlier this week, Harris received 29.4% of the vote, slightly more than the 29.1% of respondents who planned to vote for Green Party presidential nominee Jill Stein. Trump only received 11.2% of the vote. A sizable 16.5% of voters remained undecided.

In an earlier poll CAIR conducted from May to July, Biden had only received 7.3% of the vote and Trump 4.9%. Stein had led with 36%.

However, McGaw noted that in the 2021 election, over 60% of US Muslims had voted for Biden, meaning the Democratic Party had lost about half of its support this time around.

The poll also found that the chances of Muslims voting in the election this year increased by about 10 percentage points after Biden withdrew.

The Democratic Party will still face a major challenge for its staunch support of Israel's nearly year-long war on Gaza. "Israeli genocide" was the most important foreign policy issue for respondents and 98.2% of them said they disapproved of Biden's handling of the situation.

The most recent poll was conducted from August 25-26 after the Democratic National Convention, garnering over 1,155 respondents. The earlier poll was conducted from May 23 to July 18, when Biden was still the presidential nominee, and had more than 2,850 respondents.

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Pentagon Declines to Confirm Reports of Ukrainian F-16 Crashing

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - A Pentagon spokesman declined to confirm to Sputnik on Thursday reports that a Ukrainian F-16 fighter jet crashed earlier this week.

"Sorry, can't confirm any of that," the spokesperson said when asked about the incident.

The Wall Street Journal reported, citing a US official, that a Ukrainian F-16 fighter jet crashed on Monday due to pilot error.

The incident occurred several weeks after Ukraine received its first batch of US-made F-16 fighter jets from its Western allies.

The White House National Security Council and State Department did not immediately respond to Sputnik's request for comment on this matter.

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FBI Not Adequately Handling Child Sex Abuse Allegations - Inspector General

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The FBI is not adequately handling child sexual abuse allegations several years after new rules were implemented in light of the Larry Nassar scandal, the Justice Department Inspector General said in a report released on Thursday.

"Our audit revealed instances where FBI employees did not comply with relevant law or policy for (a) mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse, (b) victim services, (c) transferring incidents between field offices, and (d) responding to allegations of active and ongoing child sexual abuse within 24 hours," the report said.

The new audit is a follow up to FBI Inspector General's Nassar Report, which was released in 2021.

The FBI had updated policies, training and systems to improve its handling of allegations of hands-on sex offenses against children following the Nassar report, but still found issues with the agency's handling of these cases.

The FBI discovered during its review that 42 incidents needed immediate attention and the cases were forwarded to FBI headquarters because of serious concerns.

In December 2017, Nassar was sentenced to 60 years in prison after being convicted on child pornography charges.

The following year, Nassar received two more sentences of 40 to 175 years and 40 to 125 years on sexual assault charges.

Nassar was the team doctor of the US women's national gymnastics team for 18 years and had access to hundreds of girls and young women. More than 260 women and girls have claimed they were assaulted by him.

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Shelter Firm Sees Client Surge Amid Growing Concerns About Social Unrest in US - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - Ron Hubbard, the owner of Atlas Survival Shelters, has observed an increase in the number of clients requesting shelters as Americans grow more concerned about potential for social unrest or various calamities affecting the United States, Fox News reported on Thursday.

Atlas Survival Shelters provides various types of bunker-like structures designed for protection at times of civil unrest, biological or nuclear threats, among others, with an average bunker featuring nine rooms.

Hubbard has been experiencing a high call volume and sells at least one bunker per day. The bunkers feature modern amenities tailored to the wealthy.

Atlas Survival Shelters operates factories in Dallas, Texas, as well as in Poland in order to cater to European clients. Some of the publicly known clients in the United States include Kim and Khloe Kardashian; YouTube influencer James Stephen Donaldson, and others.

The report pointed out that the company has increasingly attracted clients in the Middle East and beyond.

A survey by Marist National Poll conducted in May found that 13% of Americans view civil war in the United States a "very likely" outcome and an additional 34% consider it "likely."

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Harris Campaign Run by 'Frankenstein' Team with Multiple Power Centers - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - The campaign of Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris consists of several power centers, which at times makes it unwieldy and raises concerns about cohesiveness, Axios reported on Thursday, citing sources familiar with the matter.

President Biden's campaign was in contrast insular, relying on a few long-serving aides, the report noted.

Harris kept most of Biden’s aides in place. However, she also added her own loyalists and some staffers from President Barack Obama's 2012 campaign, the report said.

The new people are quickly remodeling the strategy, but the result is that the large and sometimes unwieldy team faces internal worries about cohesiveness and other issues, according to the report.

One campaign official pointed out that this has created confusion about who is in charge.

"The entanglement of these different entities has led to many people feeling a real lack of role clarity," the official said.

Another official said some decisions must be made in a "mad rush." "Things are colliding occasionally, but it's not malicious," this official added.

People involved in the campaign expressed the hope that the short timetable before the

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November election will not allow tensions inside the Harris team to go deeper, the report said.

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ANALYSIS - Harris, Trump Cross Swords With Economic Plans That Might Do Little For Americans

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - US Vice President Kamala Harris says she'll fight price gouging in the food and grocery industries and help the American home-owning dream by providing cash down-payment to first time buyers if she becomes president.

Former president Donald Trump vows to bring back the steep tax cuts he introduced during his 2016-2020 term and maximize tariffs on Chinese goods as well if he returns to the White House.

Democrat Harris and Republican Trump might sound great to their respective supporters in the November 5 US election. But the economic proposals of the two candidates, if implemented, might cause more complications than the problems they intend to solve, analysts say.

"It's the classic poise of a presidential election campaign: You want to present a winning idea that works for all and which blows your rival out of the water," Ramesh Mohan, an economics professor at Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island, told Sputnik. "The question is whether some of these ideas even work at all. The difference between what you promised on the stump and what you can do in office is often realized after you win that election."

'PRICE-GOUGING BAN' THAT MIGHT NOT REDUCE PRICES AFTER ALL

Harris' idea for a ban on price-gouging in the food and grocery industries was the first economic policy officially proposed by her campaign since she replaced President Joe Biden as the standard-bearer of her Democratic Party in the election.

The plan was pitched as a direct response to the inflation that's been choking poor and middle-income American families for over two years now — despite consumer prices themselves having fallen from the four-decade highs tied to the coronavirus pandemic, and approaching levels desired by the Federal Reserve.

Harris' most-ardent supporters say her initiative will serve as a check on corporations that resort to profiteering and also bring relief to wage-earners stung by a 20% surge in food costs since Biden came to power in 2021.

But there is no explicit plan of action from her on how she will achieve that.

Instead, media reports have cited Harris' campaign officials as saying the vice president never promised that the ban itself would immediately bring down grocery prices.

If anything, relief to American families would come from associated policies of the Biden-Harris administration that include providing support to small businesses in the grocery, meat and farming industries that would foster competition and help drive prices down, they said.

In her original pitch of the idea, Harris said "many of the big food companies are seeing their highest profits in two decades" by not passing along savings to customers. While the jobs created by these big employers were appreciated, the inclination of some not to play by the rules means "we need to take action," she added.

As president, Harris could use the regulatory power of the Federal Trade Commision to minimize mergers among food and grocery giants to prevent a dwindling of competition in the

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two sectors, her campaign added.

But the deliberate little the vice president has said in the way of the plan has opened her up to attacks from her Republican rival Trump. The former president accused her of setting the stage for "Soviet-style price controls," denouncing the price-gouging proposal as "communist."

DOWN-PAYMENT THAT COULD COME LATE FOR HOME BUYERS

Harris has also met skepticism with her idea of helping Americans who do not yet own a home to buy one — despite record-high house prices now. The vice president has rolled out a plan to build three million new homes and provide a down-payment assistance of as much as $25,000 for first-time buyers.

But critics question how effective that would be in solving the nation's housing crisis.

Fiona Green, an economist from Florida with experience in public policy, says Harris' plan "seems more like a poll gimmick than a feasible policy." Others say sellers will simply raise prices by $25,000, reducing Harris' "help" to nothing.

Even if the money came through, it wouldn't be upfront, in the way needed by most home-buyers, said David Dworkin, president and chief executive of the National Housing Conference. "Because the money comes in after the closing, there's no way to apply those funds, except as a reimbursement," he added.

REPUBLICAN PLAN COULD CAUSE HUGE US FISCAL DEFICIT

Trump's proposals have come under criticism as well.

The former president would increase the US federal fiscal deficit by $5.8 trillion over the next decade with his plans, almost five times more than Harris with her proposals, says the nonpartisan Penn Wharton Budget Model.

The analysis on Trump estimated that he would add over $4 trillion to the US deficit over the next 10 years with his plan to make his 2017 tax cuts permanent. The Republican's proposal to abolish taxes on Social Security benefits could also cost $1.2 trillion, with another $6 billion coming from his pledge to further reduce corporate taxes.

As for Harris, the Penn Wharton Budget Model found that her plan to expand the Child Tax Credit, the Earned Income Tax Credit and other tax credits would raise the deficit by $2.1 trillion in the coming 10 years. Her proposal to create a $25,000 subsidy for all qualifying first-time homebuyers would cost a further $140 billion over a decade.

But by raising corporate taxes to 28% from the current 21%, the vice president could still leverage about $1.1 trillion in additional income, the analysis found. On paper, Harris is fighting for $5 trillion worth of revenue raisers contained in President Biden's budget proposal for 2025, though that comes with the catch of lawmakers' approval — an uncertainty given the tight races for both Congress and the Senate in the election.

Trump argues that he will finance his economic proposals with a 10% tariff on all imports and 60% tariffs on Chinese imports, neither of which would need to be passed by Congress in order to be implemented — he could use executive orders signed by the president, he says. He also claims these will generate enough long-term domestic growth to outweigh short-term costs.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at ratings agency Moodys, however, disagrees. In comments carried by NBC, he said Trump's tariffs would likely generate $2.5 trillion in revenue at the most — less than half of the new costs the Republican would incur on a return to the White House.

Another risk in Trump's plans: The 60% tariff proposed on imports from China, America's biggest trading partner, could cause inflation to spike again — reigniting a problem the Federal

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Reserve is just getting close to solving.

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US-Made F-16 Fighter Jet Destroyed in Crash in Ukraine - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - A US-made F-16 fighter jet that was transferred to Ukraine by its Western partners, crashed on Monday just weeks after the first batch of such aircraft was delivered to Kiev, the Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday, citing a US official.
The incident occurred during a missile strike on Ukraine on Monday, but the fighter jet was not hit by Russia and was likely caused by a pilot error, the report said.
US media reported in August that Ukraine received the first ten of the 79 F-16 fighter jets promised by Western countries on July 31. Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed the delivery. UK media subsequently reported that Kiev was already using the F-16 jets for air defense.
Russian officials have said that the supplies of weapons by the West to the Kiev regime, including F-16 jets, cannot fundamentally change the situation on the ground.

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One Person Hospitalized After United Airlines Airplane Makes Emergency Landing in Memphis

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - One person has been hospitalized after an United Airlines airplane made an emergency landing in Memphis, Tennessee, the airline said in a statement on Thursday.
"United flight 1196 diverted to Memphis this afternoon after encountering a brief period of severe turbulence while the seatbelt sign was on. Paramedics met the aircraft at the gate and transported one passenger to the hospital," the statement said.
The incident occurred on Wednesday afternoon as the airplane was flying from Cancun to Chicago. There were 172 passengers and seven crew on board the aircraft.
"United Airlines Flight 1196 landed safely at Memphis International Airport around 2:50 p.m. local time on Wednesday, August 28, after the crew reported severe turbulence over Louisiana," the statement said.
Seven people were injured as a result of the incident, according to media reports.
The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced that it will launch an investigation into the incident.

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US Company to Develop Small Modular Reactor Project in Ghana – State Dept.

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WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) - US nuclear technology project developer Regnum Technology Group and Nuclear Power Ghana have signed a commercial agreement to develop a small modular reactor project using NuScale Power technology, the State Department announced on Thursday.

"[US and Ghanian officials] observed a significant milestone in civil nuclear cooperation between U.S. and Ghanaian nuclear industries — the signing of a commercial agreement between Nuclear Power Ghana (NPG) and Regnum Technology Group, the U.S. developer for a small modular reactor project using NuScale Power technology," the department said in a press release.

The project is expected to be a cornerstone of Ghana's plans to enhance its energy infrastructure by advancing green energy solutions, the release added.

Small and medium nuclear reactors (SMR) are nuclear fission reactors that are significantly smaller than traditional nuclear reactors and can be built at one location and then transferred to another. In 2018, the International Atomic Energy Agency said SMRs are among the most promising emerging nuclear power technologies.

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Harris, Trump in Tight Race Across Battleground States - Poll

WASHINGTON, August 29 (Sputnik) – US presidential nominees Kamala Harris and Donald Trump are in a tight race across seven battleground states, according to a poll by The Hill and Emerson College Polling released on Thursday.

Harris had a slight lead over Trump in Georgia (49% to 48%), Michigan (50% to 47%), and Nevada (49% to 48%), while Trump had a slight lead in Arizona (50% to 47%), North Carolina (49% to 48%), and Wisconsin (49% to 48%). They were tied at 48% each in Pennsylvania.

Harris led Trump among independent voters in all seven states except for Nevada.

There was a clear gender divide, with Harris leading with women in all seven states except for Arizona, and Trump leading with men in all seven states.

There was also a clear age divide, with Harris leading with voters under 30 in all seven states.

The poll was conducted from August 26-28.

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