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9/5/24 Thursday

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Iran's Response Will 'Surely' Come as Israel's Assault on West Bank Continues

This week IDF soldiers detained two young men after raiding the village of Deir Abu Deif just east of Jenin while two Palestinians who were attempting to hand out bread to civilians were gunned down by IDF forces as well. Attacks continued in the West Bank on Thursday, during which a teenager in a refugee camp was gunned down.

Iran has not backed down from its promise to retaliate against Israel for the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, but its silence in recent weeks has left onlookers feeling uneasy. However, neither Hezbollah nor Israel want a full-scale war as it would upend "normal life" in their countries as well as Tehran's hopes for diplomacy, an observer told Sputnik last month.

Yet Israel does not appear to be backing down from its assault on Palestinian territory – quite the opposite. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have reportedly been conducting violent raids in the occupied West Bank for more than a week now. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently announced his intentions to ignore mass protests and pleas for a ceasefire in Gaza that would allow for the return of hostages.

Ehsan Safarnejad, an Iran-based journalist and geopolitical analyst, joined Sputnik's The Backstory on Thursday and explained Iran's position regarding Israel and its unwavering ally, the United States.

"We first have to understand why it has taken Iran so long to respond. And it is paramount for us to understand the environment in which Iran has decided to postpone – please, take note of the term – postpone rather than cancel its retaliatory strike on Israel," said Safarnejad.

The show's guest explained that the March of Arbaeen, which this year falls on August 25, is a major religious event in which "Shias from different countries in the region, make pilgrimage to Iraq, the city of Karbala, and visit the mausoleum of Imam Hussein." He added that the group of those who would make the pilgrimage are the most likely to "go on and enlist in an army or join an insurgent group in a possible full-on war between Iran and Israel, or the US." And based on statistics given by the Office of Caretakers of Imam Hussein's mausoleum, 21 million people visited the mausoleum of Imam Hussein, he added.

"First of all, there [has been] no Iranian retaliation. So, any attack on those pilgrims would be considered as an act by either ISIS or Israel in order to carry out a sabotage within Iran. Or Israel, as they were threatening, would decide to carry out a so-called preemptive strike, which then Iran would use as a justification to carry out even a harsher response on Israel," he explained.

"Both of these things would have been considered as a sort of win for Iran. Obviously, this strategy worked and there was no civil war in Iraq. That scenario was prevented. And, in fact, they actually tried to cause unrest and a civil war within Iraq, but due to the vigilance of the Iraqi security officials and their Iranian counterparts, fortunately, these things were folded," the analyst added.

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"...what I'm trying to say is that everything is going according to the plan. You know, Iran didn't plan to respond within this very sensitive timeframe. The Iranian response will surely come. All the rumors that are circulating around on social media that Iran has decided to cancel its retaliatory strike are completely nonsense," said Safarnejad. "Based on [a source's] statement, I would say that the Iranian establishment and the Iranian armed forces are still very much keen on carrying out the retaliatory strike for the assassination of Mr. Ismail Haniyeh... in Tehran."

Violent raids in the occupied West Bank have been occurring for more than a week, according to Sputnik and Al Jazeera. On Tuesday Sputnik reported that much of the Israeli Defense Forces' (IDF) assaults have been focused on Jenin.

As of Tuesday, power in Jenin has been cut off amid IDF raids and telecommunications services have been affected. Key infrastructure such as roads, water and sewage networks, and homes have also been destroyed by IDF soldiers. While the IDF has called their actions "counterterrorism operations", Palestinians continue to maintain that these are attempts by Israel to push them out of their homes.

"We don't really perceive it as out of character for the Israelis to then lash out on the West Bank, which has nothing to do with Hamas. It doesn't have Hamas in it. The West Bank is controlled by the Palestinian organization that is governed basically by Mahmoud Abbas," the analyst explained. "So, they didn't have any reason to do that. But they have the Dahiya doctrine. This is the doctrine that says in order to create a deterrence, Israel should carry out attacks against civilian targets, civilian infrastructure, in order to pose deterrence against this enemy."

"Iran never rules out diplomatic approaches in order to reach a ceasefire or, you know, putting an end to war," Safarnejad added. "[But] we don't really have the best experience dealing with the West. The West says something and then behaves in a completely different way. And all this talk about the ceasefire and some sort of agreements being reached, Iran is not going to sabotage those efforts."

Since October, at least 685 Palestinians, including 157 children, have been killed by Israeli soldiers and settlers in the occupied West Bank, Al Jazeera reported. It was reported on Thursday that at least five Palestinians were killed in an Israeli air attack in the West Bank city of Tubas and that Israeli soldiers killed a teenager in the Far'a refugee camp. On Wednesday, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the IDF were using "lethal war-like tactics" in the West Bank.

"In Iran, we don't have the best experience when dealing with NATO countries. As such, I think Iran is betting most of its resources on a potential military solution to the conflict that we are seeing. I mean, I can't really even call it a conflict because there is this senseless genocide against unarmed civilians. So it's very hard to refer to it as a conflict," he added.

"One of the things that I think is general understanding within the Iranian population is that the US has its hand in so many different conflicts that it becomes really hard to justify its actions as a benevolent and a force for good kind of actor within not just the region but across the globe as well," Safarnejad explained.

"...apart from the fact that Iran doesn't want to start a war, but is also ready in order to respond to any action by the US, I think that there is also this ease of mind inside the Iran political class that they still consider US and its politicians as a semi-rational actors, that they understand that they have far too much to lose to gamble everything on Israel and the genocide it is carrying out within the region," the analyst added.

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Vive la Démocratie!

In April last year protestors in Paris swarmed BlackRock's office to protest Macron's pension reforms. A spokesperson for a French union told reporters at the time that they were there to let the world's largest asset manager know they were taking workers' pensions.
President Emmanuel Macron appointed Michel Barnier, a right-wing politician who played a major role in the 2016 Brexit Task Force, as the new prime minister of France Thursday. In July Macron accepted the resignation of Gabriel Attal following the president's electoral defeat. Attal was the country's youngest ever prime minister and held the position for eight months.
Macron's decision is his effort to break a political stalemate that has grasped France since snap legislative elections which were held in July. In a statement which came from Macron's office the president said that "the new prime minister and his government will create the conditions for the greatest stability."
Macron, 46, had failed to appoint a new prime minister for a record period of time following a narrow victory for the leftwing New Popular Front in July. Over 80 lawmakers called for Macron to step down in the following weeks after Macron decided to reject the New Popular Front's candidacy of Lucie Castets for prime minister, despite the coalition winning the most seats in July's elections.
Castets had voiced her desire to create a political alliance that would allow roll backs on pension reforms and tax hikes for the "ultra rich".
“They are all very worried. Nobody understands what Emmanuel Macron is doing, even the Macronists. He is not giving us [political parties] the chance to work together. If you ask me of course I will say I want our program to be the priority, but if you ask what can we change, what can we compromise on, I say we can compromise," Castets told The Guardian.
In March of last year France’s Senate passed a controversial reform bill to raise the retirement age for French citizens by two years. The Senate passed the bill by 195 votes to 112. Macron’s decision to push through a bill that is extremely unpopular among voters for the alleged sake of the economy clearly went unforgiven during July’s election.
“Macron says the problem is the [New Popular Front] program. He feels threatened because he thinks we’re going to change everything he did and it’s true that is our intention. But we’re not saying we will be able to change everything because we will need to find an agreement on every issue and we are fully aware of this," Castets added.
A study conducted by the French Observatory of Economic Conditions in 2020 found that those who have an unfavorable view of Macron believe him to be the "president of the rich". The author of the report said the losers of Macron's economic policy are among the "poorest, the unemployed, and the retired."

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'An Affront to the Democratic Will': Macron Pushes Through PM Pick After 60 Days

In July, Macron accepted Attal's resignation following the electoral defeat of the president's political party. The country has now been without a cabinet for 60 days.

President Emmanuel Macron has appointed Michel Barnier, 73, a veteran right-wing politician who served twice as European Commissioner and played a major role in the 2016 Brexit Task Force, as the new prime minister of France as of Thursday. Macron is trying to break through a political impasse that has gripped France following the country's snap legislative elections held in July.

The French presidency said in a statement that Macron is entrusting Barnier with "the task of forming a unity government to serve the country and the French people", the New York Times reported. Barnier will take over the role from Gabriel Attal, France's youngest ever prime minister who has held the position for the last eight months.

Phil Kelly, a Belfast-based political commentator and socialist activist, joined Sputnik's Political Misfits Thursday to discuss Macron's continued rejection of the French public's desires.

"This is far from democracy. This is an absurdity," said Kelly. "It's like a husband and wife debating over which electrician to hire to redo the wiring in your house not being able to come to an agreement and hiring a plumber. It's an affront, an absolute affront to the democratic will of the people."

"What Macron is doing is he's investing heavily in creating future problems because France is a powder keg. It is divided. The breakthrough for the left was good to see, but let's hope it's not a pyrrhic victory because what acts like this are doing is it just erodes faith that people have in their democratic institutions," he added.

"It's a further sign that France is in dissent and chaos, that its establishment is flailing, that Macron is just trying to hold the door against change," the analyst suggested. "But that change will come to France and I hope it's a positive change, but there's no guarantee there will be. The country's in a dark way."

In March of last year France's Senate passed a controversial reform bill to raise the retirement age for French citizens by two years. The Senate passed the bill by 195 votes to 112. Macron's decision to push through a bill that is extremely unpopular among voters for the alleged sake of the economy clearly went unforgiven during July's election. Business-friendly think tanks such as the pro-Macron Institut Montaigne claim Macron's pension plan is more cost-effective than other proposals, but a majority of French voters reject the ploy.

"A country that is able to send billions of euros to the Kiev regime while its own citizens are offered a diet of, 'we make you work longer for less'... and it's a bit like from his gilded palace in Paris. He's a bit like Macron Antoinette," Kelly said.

"Macron [is] a guy who's deeply unpopular, who, at one point, was talking up the advantage of World War III to the French people, now clinging on desperately to power, trying to make the guy who lost who came forth the leader of the country and all, as you say, to cling on to his own power for a little bit longer and to try and push through a policy that is so deeply unpopular."

In January, Macron claimed during a speech at the Swedish Defense Academy that the future security architecture of the continent could no longer be settled simply by the United States and that Europe should determine its own future.

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In April, the French president said he would be willing to discuss using French nuclear warheads as a "credible European defense" against a supposed Russian threat. The French president previously hinted at the use of France's nuclear weapons in 2020 and again in 2022. In March the leader alarmed other EU member states when he announced his openness to ground operations in Ukraine, saying it might be required "at some point".

"It's not, unfortunately, only France that has this kind of political class," Kelly added. "[There was] one of the ministers in the German government who's a member of the Green Party saying — I'm sure you remember this — 'I don't care about German voters, I'll do whatever it takes to support Ukraine.'"

"This is why Europe is in decline. Much like your country where the political establishment has [nothing to] offer, it has no vision of how to move things forward, it only has 'how can we trick the electorate in the next election and then just do the same [thing],'" he explained.

Macron delayed appointing a new prime minister for a record period of time following a narrow victory for the leftwing New Popular Front in July. Over 80 lawmakers have signed a resolution calling for Macron to step down in the weeks since. The resolution was triggered by Macron's decision to reject the New Popular Front's candidacy of Lucie Castets for prime minister, even though the coalition won the most seats in July's elections.

"Macron is a fool. And he's a fool at the top of the hill at the minute. But he won't be there forever," said Kelly. "His day of reckoning will be coming. But he is sowing the seeds of a very, very bitter harvest in France because to destroy the public's faith in their democratic institutions so much, to support your own vanity project, is how democracies die."

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Attacks on Sputnik, RT About Shoring up US Institutions While Quashing Freedom of Press

The First Amendment to the US Constitution lists a number of rights considered most important by the country's founding fathers, including freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech and the press.

This week brought further developments in the Biden administration's ongoing war against alternative media in the United States just days after the Federal Bureau of Investigation promised "more searches" of figures connected to Russian media.

The US Justice Department brought charges against two Russian media executives Wednesday, accusing them of not disclosing their support for a Tennessee-based media company that published edgy viral videos.

Lawmakers in Washington have moved to more aggressively attempt to mold the content and tenor of online discourse after former President Donald Trump's surprise victory in 2016. Allegations of "misinformation" took center stage during the Covid-19 pandemic; more recently, pro-Israel legislators have urged greater oversight after pro-Palestine views spread on platforms favored by young people such as TikTok.

"I think that we have to situate all of this in context," said attorney and DD Geopolitics host John Jackman on Sputnik's Fault Lines program Thursday. "There's a very important election coming up and the lead up to the November elections are really a critical moment for our political class,

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for both the Democratic and Republican parties, to preserve the legitimacy of the institutions that they rely on."

"In particular the Democratic Party is concerned that Donald Trump will potentially win the election again," he continued. "But I think that this is even a bigger and more existential issue than this, actually. Of course, we saw these charges brought under the guise of protecting against Russian disinformation. But I argue that this is really nothing more than a blatant attack on the very vision of freedom of speech and freedom of the press that American people actually once fought and died for."

Freedom of expression is among the most cherished concepts in the American political consciousness. The First Amendment to the US Constitution lists a number of rights considered most important by the country's founders, including freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech and the press. Such values constitute a cornerstone of Americans' self-perception as a democracy, a principle they frequently aim to spread across the globe by threat of force.

But the last several years have seen the US government signal an increasing concern over the political discourse in the United States, with Congress increasingly urging large social media platforms to more aggressively police content. Meanwhile anxieties have grown over independent and alternative media outlets like Sputnik and The Grayzone, which has been the target of several attacks by the Washington Post.

"The First Amendment Is Out of Control," read the headline of one editorial in The New York Times this year typical of elite concerts over the matter. "America Has a Free Speech Problem," read another just two years prior.

"The overarching narrative from the White House, from the US government, has been one to enact a significant chilling effect on Americans who are willing to just speak the truth or willing to go on programs like this to talk about the core issues facing American society," said Jackman, "really getting to the heart of what's happening in this country."

"At the core of it, what we're seeing is that there's so many Americans today who are becoming aware that the government is unwilling or incapable of just addressing those fundamental issues and the everyday needs of Americans, " he continued. "So what they're really looking to do is to stomp out a unified American voice that is pushing for more democracy with the total suppression and exploitation of democratic forces. And these latest charges from the DOJ are doing just that."

"Many Americans woke up today not sure about how to conduct their speech online. It basically diverts people from being able to push narratives that actually challenge imperialism, that actually challenge the hegemony of the ruling class in this country, and instead shows people that if you're willing to stick your neck out like this, then we just might come after you, too. And that's clearly the message that it sends."

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‘A Unique Kind of Fascism’: US Continues Clampdown on Alternative Media

The United States is continuing its persecution campaign against journalists and dissidents who work with Russian media.

The Biden administration signaled that it would continue to clamp down on alternative media Wednesday with the announcement of several measures against figures connected to Russian outlets.

"Today, the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated ten individuals and two entities as part of a coordinated US government response to Moscow’s malign influence efforts targeting the 2024 US presidential election," read a statement released Wednesday morning.

US Attorney General Merrick Garland claimed individuals connected to Russian media outlets were involved in a campaign to spread “disinformation” in the months leading up to November’s election, a favored talking point the Biden administration has repeatedly used to justify its heavy-handed tactics in regulating social media.

The account for RT on the video sharing giant YouTube was removed in 2022 and Biden signed legislation earlier this year likely to result in the social media app TikTok becoming unavailable in the United States after this fall’s election.

Writer and historian Dr. Gerald Horne joined Sputnik’s The Critical Hour program Wednesday to discuss the surprising development, which he attributed to the United States’ concern over the rise of Russia, China and Iran and the emergence of an increasingly multipolar world.

“It's difficult to judge what you just described without judging simultaneously what's unfolding in the Tampa, St. Petersburg area of Florida, where Chairman Omali and his comrades and the African People’s Socialist Party and the Uhuru movement are now facing trial in the halls of injustice for reasons eerily similar to these charges,” said Horne, referring to the Biden administration’s ongoing persecution of Black radical groups.

“Certainly, we should not forget what has befallen Scott Ritter, the former arms inspector, now viewed widely as a dissident who has been a frequent guest on numerous platforms including your own, as I understand it, rebuking and reprimanding US foreign policy, particularly as it relates to the escapade in Ukraine,” he continued.

“Not to mention the funding and financing an army of the radical regime in Israel. We are also aware of what has befallen Richard Medhurst who is a frequent speaker on issues related to Iran in particular. He was detained in London summarily just a few days ago in a blatant violation of civil rights and civil liberties, causing some commentators to suggest that England, Great Britain is moving towards a unique kind of fascism.”

Horne claimed a “hysteria” is gripping the US political class over an emerging counterhegemonic bloc of countries increasingly able to challenge the political and economic might of the United States. Former US Army officer Gen. Wesley Clark reflected the anxieties of Washington officialdom in an editorial in USA Today recently, casting Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping as enemies of “democracy.”

But a recent survey found that almost half of Amercans believe there is “not enough democracy” in the United States while 57% of people polled said the US government only serves a minority of its population. Russia and China ranked higher than the United States on most questions

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regarding their citizens' self-perception of their country's democracy, with Chinese people being among the most likely in the world to consider their country democratic.

Clark drew attention to improving relations between Beijing and Moscow, something the United States worked to undermine throughout the Cold War.

"Recall that the late national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security adviser under Jimmy Carter in the 1970s, in one of his final books The Grand Chessboard suggested that US imperialism would justifiably be fearful if there was a de facto alliance developing between Russia, China, and Iran, and that is precisely what's happening as we speak," said Horne.

The leadership of Iran has long been critical of the United States owing to the long history of US interference in the country. Recent polling reveals that people in countries throughout the Muslim world now overwhelming view the US negatively as the country backs Israel's violent military campaign in the Gaza Strip, which has killed almost 41,000.

Horne said the US is likely particularly disturbed by Beijing's growing influence in Africa as dozens of heads of state from across the continent meet in China this week to discuss economic development.

"The way in which the North Atlantic countries were able to soar to global preeminence was precisely by the battering and bludgeoning of the African continent," said the historian. "When Africa begins to rise, particularly when it begins to rise and lead with China – now the number two economy on planet Earth – to use the expression 'with a bullet,' it's understandable why there is hysteria gripping Washington."

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Persecution of Sputnik, RT Contributors Highlights US Hypocrisy – Ex-CIA Analyst

The US frequently funds pro-Western media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in foreign countries it targets for regime change to pave the way for a pro-US government to come to power.

The United States' persecution campaign against journalists and political dissidents with ties to Russian media accelerated Wednesday when new repressive measures were announced against several entities.

New sanctions were announced against 10 individuals and two organizations under the umbrella of the Rossiya Segodnya media group, including RIA Novosti, RT, Sputnik and Ruptly. The sanctions target these entities for alleged "hostile interference in the presidential elections," the US Treasury Department claimed. The measures also target editor-in-chief of Rossiya Segodnya and RT Margarita Simonyan and several top managers at RT.

Ex-CIA analyst and former State Department counterterrorism expert Larry Johnson spoke with Sputnik Wednesday about the startling development, the latest attempt by the Biden administration to shape political discourse online and in the media.

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“The latest stunt pulled by the Biden Department of Justice to declare all of these sanctions on Russia for alleged interference in the US political system is a level of hypocrisy that is staggering in its magnitude and in its foulness,” Johnson said.

“Let's be clear about one thing: the one country in the world that has been involved with more interference in the internal political affairs of every other country is the United States. During the reign of President Eisenhower in the 1950s, there were 170 different covert actions carried out against other countries.”

“This year [the US has] allocated almost $4 billion to interfere or meddle in the political affairs of other countries,” he continued. “$315 million of that goes to the National Endowment for Democracy. $300 million is specifically what they call counter-Russian influence. And another $2.9 billion is for ‘democracy’ programs. And these have been used basically to run propaganda, to pay people, to organize ‘democracy’ programs in places like Georgia.”

The US frequently funds pro-Western media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in foreign countries it targets for regime change to pave the way for a pro-US government to come to power. Author and journalist William Blum documented over 50 examples of significant US interference in other countries since World War II in his classic book Killing Hope, largely based on the shocking revelations of ex-CIA agent Philip Agee.

More recently the US has interfered in countries such as Brazil, Indonesia and Ukraine, paving the way for the latter country’s extremist anti-Russia government through its support for the Euromaidan coup in 2014.

“I don't know how many millions of dollars are allocated to the Central Intelligence Agency for additional covert actions designed to plant stories in media, to create electronic media, to influence social networks across the board,” Johnson continued. “It's the United States that's meddling.With respect to the entire bogus claim that Russia interfered in the 2016 election, we now know without a doubt that that was a Democrat operation led by Hillary Clinton and her team,” he added.

“Everything we were told about Donald Trump and the Russians was a lie. I was one of the few writing about it at the time to call it out… The notion that RT is manipulating and influencing the presidential election is beyond laughable,” he claimed, noting that the Russian television channel’s app is banned from many app stores in the West while its content has been removed from YouTube and other websites.

“How is a news network that's not allowed to broadcast and that’s shut [out] of social media in the United States supposed to influence [the election]? … It just goes across the board that they're going to try to attack any kind of alternative voice in the media.”

Johnson noted that he has been subjected to a “pre-interview” with most television news outlets he has appeared on, such as the BBC, MSNBC, Fox News, CBS and the CBC, during which employees for each outlet attempted to ascertain what he would say when interviewed live on air. RT was one of only two outlets that never subjected him to the practice, he said.

“It's the so-called ‘free democracies’ that want to run that litmus test,” he said.

Johnson said the recent persecution of figures connected to RT and Sputnik is merely another attempt to run the “Russiagate” playbook, attempting to discredit alternative media outlets that critique US foreign policy. “Electoral interference” continues to take place, Johnson claimed, but it is not the Russians but the US government that is engaged in an attempt to influence and control the popular narrative for its own benefit.

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US, Europe Helping Ukraine Design, Produce S-300 Substitute – Austin

WASHINGTON, September 6 (Sputnik) - The United States and Europe are currently assisting the Ukrainian military in designing and producing a replacement for the S-300 surface-to-air missile system and the R-27 air-to-air missile, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said on Friday.

"Meanwhile, with help from several European companies, the United States is working with Ukraine to design and build a substitute for the S-300 surface-to-air missile system and the R-27 air-to-air missile," Austin said at a press conference from the Ramstein Air Base in Germany.

The US has allocated over $200 million to acquire "critical components" necessary for Ukraine's domestic production of unmanned aerial vehicles and electronic warfare systems, Austin added.

On Friday, US President Joe Biden is set to announce an additional military assistance package worth $250 million to address Ukraine's defense needs, the secretary also said.

The Kremlin has consistently warned against the West's continued arms deliveries to Ukraine, saying that they only prolong the conflict and obstruct a potential peace process.

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Canada to Donate 80,040 CRV-7 Rocket Motors, 1,300 Warheads to Ukraine - Blair

(Adds background in para 5)

WASHINGTON, September 6 (Sputnik) – The Canadian government will donate 80,040 CVR-7 rocket motors and 1,300 warheads as part of its latest military assistance package to Ukraine, the National Defense Ministry said on Friday.

"Minister [Bill] Blair also announced that Canada will donate and transport 80,840 additional CRV-7 rocket motors and 1,300 warheads to Ukraine. This follows Canada's initial delivery of 2,160 CRV-7 rocket motors, as pledged earlier this year. The additional 80,840 rocket motors are being prepared for shipment to Poland and will arrive in the coming months," the ministry said in a statement.

The rocket motors are part of a decommissioned inventory previously operated by the Royal Canadian Air Force, the statement added. Canada will also provide Kiev with 970 surplus C6 machine guns as well as 10,500 surplus 9mm pistols from its inventory.

In addition, it will donate decommissioned chassis from 29 M113s and 64 Coyote LAVs, formerly used by the Canadian armed forces. The surplus vehicles will be repurposed or used for spare parts by Ukraine, according to the statement.

On Monday, Blair told CBC News that the US-made NASAMS purchased by Canada for transfer to Ukraine would be delivered in early 2025 following several production delays. Ottawa paid C$406 million ($300 million) for the systems in March 2023.

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Russia has consistently warned NATO that supply of weapons to Ukraine makes its members directly involved in the conflict and impedes the peace process.

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Turkish Cypriot Leader Says 'Very Positive' N. Cyprus to Have Better Position in Future

WASHINGTON, September 6 (Sputnik) - Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar told Sputnik he expects northern Cyprus will be in a better position on the world stage in the future, but said that it requires patience.

"I'm very positive that in the future, we will get to a position where we are more satisfied than at the moment, but obviously we need to be patient," Tatar said. "We need to work hard and through the support of our friends in many countries, we, I'm sure, will get to have a more prosperous and more acceptable position."

In April, Tatar told Sputnik that Azerbaijan establishing a working group on inter-parliamentary relations with northern Cyprus is "very important" and may serve as an example for other countries to follow.

"Over the years, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus became stronger, and basically we do our best to get our island and country promoted, and we have the means to do that, because over these years, we have been able to grow our business opportunities," Tatar said. "We have

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a lot of contacts with a lot of countries, and we do trade, we do business. They have investment in the north, in the tourism industry, in other light industry. So a lot of relationships with a lot of countries in every respect. So these are all promotion of the Turkish Republic over time."

Cyprus has been de facto divided into Greek and Turkish territories since 1974. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was declared in 1983 with Ankara's backing. It is recognized only by Turkey.

Negotiations on the reunification of Cyprus have been underway almost from the moment of its partition. Efforts are ongoing to restart talks between the Republic of Cyprus and northern Cyprus following the latest unsuccessful round of talks in the Swiss town of Crans-Montana in July 2017.

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Cyprus Should Not Be UN's Priority Amid Gaza Conflict - Turkish Cypriot Leader

WASHINGTON, September 6 (Sputnik) - The Cyprus issue should not be the main priority for the United Nations at a moment when the world is grappling with more acute crises such as the ongoing war in Gaza, Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar told Sputnik.

"They have their own responsibility, obviously, but I can tell you that with Gaza affairs and other serious problems, Cyprus is not and should not be a priority number one candidate for any kind of United Nations involvement because they have limited resources," he said. "They have limited manpower, and they obviously will have to look at the programs around the world and see which one is more urgent than the other."

When asked about the current level of cooperation between Northern Cyprus and the United Nations, Tatar said that the relationship is based on reciprocity and mutual understanding.

According to Tatar, the Cyprus issue is not urgent as it has been there for decades.

"Cyprus has been here for the last 50 years in peace and tranquility because of the Turkish army here. There's no fighting, no bloodshed, and people are only happy, on the whole, very happy in North Cyprus," he stated, adding that before that there had been conflicts and lives lost. "Now after 50 years of peace, it is very secure. Greeks are in the south. Turks are in the north, and there is a political balance very successfully being conducted."

Cyprus has been de facto divided into Greek and Turkish territories since 1974. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was declared in 1983 with Ankara's backing. It is recognized only by Turkey.

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Tatar Says Hopes Russia Will Open Consulate in Northern Cyprus in 'Near Future'

WASHINGTON, September 6 (Sputnik) - Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar told Sputnik that he hopes Russia will open a consulate in northern Cyprus in the near future.

In August last year, Russian Ambassador in Nicosia Murat Zyazikov said that the consular

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section of the Russian embassy in Cyprus will begin providing consular services in the north of the island. The sole purpose of this is to serve and protect the interests of the over 50,000 Russians living in northern Cyprus, the ambassador said. Russia's commitment to a Cyprus settlement based on UN Security Council resolutions remains unchanged.

A number of countries, including the US, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, and Australia, have offices in northern Cyprus to provide services to their nationals.

"I know that they [Russia] have a representative here, maybe not a full office, but maybe a representative. I hope that it becomes a permanent representative," Tatar said. "I very much hope that it becomes a consulate here in northern Cyprus, and I think they have considered this, but at the moment, whether it has finalized, I'm not sure, but I very much hope that in the very near future, they will open their consulate."

Tatar pointed out that he currently does not have many contacts with Russia, and, when necessary, such contacts are established through Turkey.

Cyprus has been divided into Greek and Turkish territories since 1974. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was declared in 1983 with the backing of Ankara. It is recognized only by Turkey.

The Greek Cypriots want a United Nations-led settlement based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, while Turkish Cypriots insist on a confederation of Cyprus.

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Turkish Cypriot Leader Sees Growing Risks From Use of Cyprus Bases by UK, US

WASHINGTON, September 6 (Sputnik) - Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar told Sputnik that the increasing use of Cyprus military bases by the United Kingdom and the United States, particularly during the Gaza conflict, presents risks to the island in case of possible retaliation.

After the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960, the UK retained two Sovereign Base Areas in Akrotiri and Dhekelia, leaving them beyond the reach of the republic. Amid Israel's war on Gaza, Cyprus has been facing backlash over the use of military bases by UK and US forces to strike the Houthis. Cyprus has denied any involvement in the conflict and said that the UK is not formally required to inform it about the use of the military installations. Nicosia instead highlights its role in international efforts to create a sea route for humanitarian aid to Gaza.

"In southern Cyprus, they have two British sovereign bases. They are using those bases for their own military needs and for other reasons maybe," Tatar said. "They are using the British sovereign bases for every kind of reason with regard to Palestine and Gaza, it is a fact. Now we have further ships coming to park few miles away from British sovereign bases. So they are increasing - the Americans and the British and the others - are increasing their bases in South Cyprus. Therefore, in my mind, risks are increasing."

Tatar noted that some groups in the Middle East like Hezbollah have warned of retaliation if Cyprus helps Israel in its ongoing military campaigns.

"This is disturbing, because Cyprus is a small island, and anything that happens in the south will automatically reflect in the north," he stated. "So I hope things are well managed, because I don't want people to suffer. I don't want women and young children to suffer."

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Tatar also pointed to an increase in ships anchoring in Cyprus, and said there is a talk of building new ports and logistics for aircraft carriers.

"They're using their facilities as logistics bases," Tatar said.

When asked about possible consequences, Tatar replied, "I don't know, but we know for sure that these logistics bases have increased in their size, in their power, in every aspect. So we, Turkish Cypriots, have to be, obviously, very, very careful."

Cyprus has been de facto divided into Greek and Turkish territories since 1974. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was declared in 1983 with Ankara's backing. It is recognized only by Turkey.

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Turkish Cypriot Leader Says Received No Invitation to Join Settlement Talks at UNGA

WASHINGTON, September 6 (Sputnik) - Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar told Sputnik that he has not received an official invitation from the United Nations to take part in Cyprus settlement talks on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, but he expects to hold a meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

The Cypriot newspaper Phileleftheros reported last month that Tatar had received an invitation from the United Nations to join Cyprus settlement talks in September.

"No, I have no official invitation, because for the invitation to take place we need to agree on the basis, the framework for the talks. This is not, you know, a coffee shop. This is a serious matter," Tatar said. "This involves Cyprus politics and Cyprus is very important for us, for Turkey. It's an important island and we have a lot of history here and negotiations, a lot of experience and details about the past."

Tatar emphasized that the policy of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was outlined to the United Nations and other interested parties in April 2021 in Geneva.

The policy stipulates that unless Northern Cyprus' "sovereign equality" and "equal international status" are acknowledged, they are not going to negotiate the Cyprus issue.

When asked whether he has a meeting planned with Guterres, Tatar said, "Every year, we go and we have a meeting, a short meeting, but we have a meeting because the UN Secretary-General respects our position."

"We are Turkish Cypriots and we have, obviously, a major interest in talking, listening and doing whatever we can. So, I expect that, as has happened in all the previous years, I'll be meeting with the secretary-general," Tatar added.

Cyprus has been divided into Greek and Turkish territories since 1974. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was declared in 1983 with Ankara's backing. Greek Cypriots seek a United Nations-led settlement based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, while Turkish Cypriots insist on a confederation of Cyprus.

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Georgia School Shooting Suspect's Father Purchased Gun Used in Incident as Gift - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 6 (Sputnik) - The father of the 14-year-old accused of killing four people during a school shooting in Georgia on Wednesday bought his son the firearm allegedly used in the shooting as a gift, CNN reported, citing two law enforcement sources with direct knowledge of the investigation.

On Wednesday, Colt Gray allegedly killed two students and two teachers during a shooting at Apalachee High School in Winder, Georgia.

Gray's father told investigators that he bought him the gun used in the shooting as a holiday gift in December 2023, the report said on Thursday.

The gun was purchased months after law enforcement authorities first contacted Gray and his family in connection with online school shooting threats, the report said.

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Blinken Says Will Hold UN Meeting in NY Urging Increased Funding Support for Haiti

WASHINGTON, September 6 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that he plans to hold a ministerial meeting at the UN General Assembly in New York, aimed at rallying increased financial support for Haiti.

"In a couple of weeks at the United Nations General Assembly, I intend to convene the ministerial to encourage better contributions to help meet Haiti's security needs, its economic needs, its humanitarian needs as well as to renew the mission's mandate, which expires in October," Blinken said in a press conference on Thursday.

Blinken also announced $45 million in new humanitarian assistance to the country.

Haiti has long been mired in a socio-economic and political crisis that escalated after the assassination of President Jovenel Moise in 2021. The country has faced an unprecedented increase in the activities of criminal groups that engage in extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and control entire areas of the country, as well as foreign interference.

On February 29, gang violence erupted in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince. The gangs said their goal was to prevent the country's prime minister from returning to Haiti and took control over parts of the city. The gangs also stormed Haiti's largest prison and freed an unspecified number of inmates. Following the events, the Haitian government declared a state of emergency in the capital region.

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New York Police Commissioner's Home Raided as FBI Cracks Down on Mayor's Circle - Reports

NEW YORK, September 6 (Sputnik) - FBI agents have raided the home of New York Police

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Department (NYPD) Commissioner Edward Caban, widening a dragnet that has ensnared other senior officials in the city administration of Mayor Eric Adams, media reports said on Thursday.
The reason for the action against the New York City officials was not immediately known and the FBI did not issue a statement.
News services, citing law enforcement sources, said the raid on Caban's home unfolded as agents stormed the residences of deputy New York mayors Phil Banks and Sheena Wright.
Terence Banks, a former official of the Metropolitan Transport Authority and brother of the Deputy Mayor Phil Banks, was also targeted, the sources said.
Timothy Pearson, another senior Adams aide, had his phones subpoenaed.
According to the reports, Deputy Mayor Banks had abruptly resigned as NYPD's chief of department in 2014 amid a federal bribery investigation in which agents allegedly uncovered evidence that he had accepted thousands of dollars in free meals and sports tickets.
Prior to this week, the home of Brianna Suggs, the top fundraiser for the mayoral campaign of Adams, was raided in November 2023. Then, the FBI was reportedly investigating whether the campaign "conspired with the Turkish government and others to funnel money into its coffers."
Since he took office in January 2022, Adams' campaign has also ignored multiple requests from city regulators to disclose the identities of more than 500 supporters behind some $300,000 in contributions to his mayoral campaign, reports said.
The mayor has raised eyebrows for appointing many of his close friends to top positions in the city.
In addition to appointing Banks and Wright as deputy mayor, Adams - a former New York police captain - hired his longtime friend Lisa White as deputy commissioner for employee relations at the NYPD with an annual salary of more than $241,000.
The Adams administration has faced criticism on a variety of issues, including the death of at least 26 prisoners over changes he approved the confinement policy at New York penitentiaries, and complaints about the NYPD have also hit a decade-high.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, September 6 (Sputnik) -

US SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA
* The United States has imposed energy-related sanctions on two Indian companies and two vessels allegedly linked to Russia's Arctic LNG 2 project, the US Treasury Department announced on Thursday.
* The United States has charged US political scientist and Russian TV presenter Dimitri Simes and his wife Anastasia Simes with alleged violation of US sanctions and with money laundering, the Justice Department said.
* The Russian Foreign Ministry is examining the US sanctions against the Rossiya Segodnya media group in order to develop countermeasures, spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Sputnik.

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HUNTER BIDEN COURT CASE

* Hunter Biden will enter a guilty plea in the federal tax evasion case against him, NBC News reported on Thursday.
* The US Justice Department disagrees with Hunter Biden's plan to plead guilty in the federal tax evasion case against him, CNN reported.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

* Israel and Hamas are nowhere near a ceasefire, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Nethanyahu said on Thursday, insisting that it is the Palestinian militant group that should be pressured to stop hostilities for its killing of Israeli hostages rather than his government.
* The Western countries' policies toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Gaza Strip are immoral and hypocritical in comparison to their approach to the Ukrainian crisis, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said in an interview with RIA Novosti and RT.
* Russia will do everything possible to resolve the serious and long-standing Middle East crisis, Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

* There would be very little impact on the battlefield if the United States moves forward with the provision of long-range weapons to Ukraine as has been repeatedly requested by Kiev, Pentagon deputy spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Thursday.
* The European Commission has not yet finalized a proposal to the EU countries on the previously promised loan of about $50 billion to Kiev with repayment from the proceeds of frozen Russian assets, and the work is ongoing, an EU Commission representative told RIA Novosti.
* Austria, as a country hosting the headquarters of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), will be ready to become a venue for negotiations on settling the conflict in Ukraine, Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer said.
* China and 53 African countries support all efforts that contribute to a peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian crisis, the Beijing declaration signed at the summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation said.
* Principal Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer traveled to Kiev to meet with senior officials and discuss Ukraine's energy security and US plans to support the country for the rest of President Joe Biden's term, the White House said.

SITUATION IN RUSSIA'S BORDER REGIONS

* One person has been killed as Ukraine shelled the town of Shebekino in Russia's Belgorod region, Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said on Thursday.
* The Russian armed forces have eliminated more than 10,100 Ukrainian soldiers and 81 tanks during military operations in the border areas of the Kursk Region, the Russian Defense Ministry said.
* A Russian bomb squad has found and destroyed a warhead of a Patriot missile in the Kursk Region, the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations said.

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TRUMP'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

* Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said on Thursday that his economic plan promises to halve energy costs and revive the US economy within 12 months of taking office - if reelected in November.

* Trump said that, if elected, he will empower a government efficiency commission and charge it with conducting a complete financial and performance audit of the entire federal government.

* Trump said that US billionaire Elon Musk has agreed to lead his proposed Government Efficiency Commission.

* Trump said that his administration would focus on embracing future industries, aiming to establish the United States as the "world capital" for cryptocurrencies and Bitcoin.

* Trump said on that sanctions ultimately undermine the value of the US dollar and its global significance.

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US Sanctions on Russian Partners Accelerate Global Shift Away From Dollar – Antonov

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) – US sanctions for cooperation with Russia are further forcing countries across the globe to move away from the dollar and accelerate the shift toward multipolarity, Russian Ambassador to Washington Anatoly Antonov said on Thursday.

"All these steps [sanctions] only strengthen the sane part of the world community in the conviction that the dollar-centric system has its risks, and those are not small ones. They fuel interest in alternative channels for building economic ties, accelerate the movement toward multipolarity," Antonov said.

Earlier on Thursday, former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said that the overuse of US sanctions threatens the dollar and thus the economic security of the United States.

An analysis by The Washington Post revealed in July that the United States is the all-round champion in the number of sanctions imposed on its adversaries and rivals, with one-third of all countries on Earth subject to some sort of restrictions.

Between February 2022 and January 2024 alone, the United States imposed sanctions on more than 16,000 individuals, over 9,000 companies, and more than 3,200 institutions from Russia, making the country the most sanctioned one in the world.

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Pentagon Says Will Continue Ukraine Aid Packages as Funding Deadline Approaches

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration will continue to work on Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA) aid packages for Ukraine ahead of an expiration date for the funding at the end of the month, Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said on Thursday.

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"We continue to roll out and announce Presidential Drawdown packages that vary in size, but we continue to do that on a consistent basis. I have no doubt that we are going to use everything we can that's available to us to make sure that we are continuing to provide Ukraine what it needs, both in the short-term and the long-term," Singh said during a press briefing when asked about some $6 billion in unused PDA funding set to expire.

The US State Department hopes to tie an extension for the PDA funding into a stopgap funding bill, which lawmakers could pass before the end of the month to prevent a government shutdown, Reuters reported on Thursday, citing multiple sources familiar with the matter.

The Biden administration is also developing an alternative plan to spend the remaining PDA funds in a substantial package before the end of the month, the report said. Under the backup plan, the delivery timeline for the aid would be pushed back, the report added.

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US Navy Secretary Violated Hatch Act With Election Comments - Office of Special Counsel

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro violated the Hatch Act by making comments related to the 2024 US presidential race, the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) said on Thursday.

The Hatch Act limits certain political activity by federal employees in the workplace or in their official capacity.

"OSC is transmitting to the President a finding that Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro violated the Hatch Act. Secretary Del Toro made statements in his official capacity advocating for and against the election of presidential candidates," OSC said in a statement.

Del Toro made comments in support of US President Joe Biden's reelection while speaking abroad on behalf of the US Defense Department, the statement said.

Special Counsel Hampton Dellinger said in a letter to Biden that he hopes Del Toro will take responsibility for his mistake and accept a sanction voluntarily.

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us Principal Deputy National Security Advisor visited Kiev Sept. 4-5 to coordinate US plans to support ukraine for rest of Biden's term - white house

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Trump Says Harris' Policies Will Turn US Into 'Venezuela on Steroids'

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said on Thursday that Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris' proposed

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policies would transform the United States into a "Venezuela on steroids."
"These are not the policies designed to create a prosperous America. These are policies to turn the United States into Venezuela on steroids," Trump said during an event at the Economic Club of New York.
Trump said Harris' proposed tax increases would lead to the "largest tax hike in history" for small businesses.
In addition, Trump criticized Harris' plans to raise corporate and capital gains taxes as severely damaging to the economy.
"For this reason alone, Kamala Harris must be defeated decisively," Trump said.
Harris has pledged to follow through with many of President Joe Biden's policies, which Trump has characterized as disastrous for the United States.

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US Sanctions 2 Entities, 2 Vessels Linked to Russian Arctic LNG 2 - Treasury

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) – The United States imposed energy-related sanctions on two Indian companies and two vessels allegedly linked to Russia's Arctic LNG 2 project, the US Department of the Treasury announced on Thursday.
The United States targeted two India-based companies, Gotik Shipping Co. and Plio Energy Cargo Shipping OPC Private Limited, for being allegedly linked to the Arctic LNG 2 project in Russia, the department said.
Additionally, the new sanctions affected two vessels under the flag of Palau, New Energy, and Mulan, for their alleged links to the two sanctioned companies

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US Justice Department Disagrees With Hunter Biden Guilty Plea in Tax Case - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - The US Justice Department disagrees with Hunter Biden's plan to plead guilty in the federal tax evasion case against him, CNN reported on Thursday.
The Justice Department objected in court to Biden's request to enter an Alford plea, which involves maintaining innocence but accepting a sentence.
Prosecutors accuse Biden of failing to pay at least $1.4 million in taxes and charge him with three felony and six misdemeanor counts.
Biden initially pleaded not guilty and was set to bring the case to trial in Los Angeles. Jury selection was set to begin on Thursday.

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US Says Extremely Concerned About Cooperation Among Nicaragua, Russia, China

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - The United States considers the cooperation among Nicaragua, Russia and China to be "extremely concerning," Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Eric Jacobstein said on Thursday.

"This is extremely concerning, the collaboration between [Nicaragua] and Russia and PRC [People's Republic of China]," Jacobstein said.

The United States continues to be very concerned about these relations, Jacobstein added.

In June, Nicaraguan investment adviser Laureano Ortega said his country has set a goal to join the BRICS group of nations, which includes Russia and China, and is negotiating with BRICS member countries about possible accession.

White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said earlier on Thursday that the United States has secured the release of 135 alleged political prisoners in Nicaragua on humanitarian grounds.

Jacobstein explained that all the alleged prisoners are currently in Guatemala and can choose where they would like to go next, including the United States.

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Oil Prices Struggle to Rebound as US Crude Draw Offset by OPEC+ Worry

NEW YORK, September 5 (Sputnik) - Oil markets struggled to recover on Thursday from a two-day rout as the plans by OPEC+ to increase supply later in the year proved a bigger factor than falling US crude and fuel balances.

With 90 minutes to the day's settlement, the US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) and UK North Sea Brent crude benchmarks were trading barely in the positive, after rising more than 2% earlier in the session.

Crude prices remained anemic despite the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) reporting encouraging draw numbers for crude and fuel during the just-ended week.

Crude inventories fell by 6.87 million barrels in the week to August 30, versus the prior week's drop of 846,000 barrels. Industry analysts had expected a deficit of just around 300,000 barrels for the latest week.

Gasoline stockpiles slid by 848,000 barrels versus the prior week's 2.2 million and expectations for a draw of 1.11 million. Gasoline is the primary automobile fuel in America.

Distillate balances dropped by 371,000 against the prior week's build of 275,000 and forecasts for a 41,000 deficit. Distillates are primarily processed into the diesel required by trucks, buses and ships, and also goes into making airplane fuel.

But the encouraging consumption numbers for crude and fuel did little to assuage traders and investors concerned that OPEC+ might still raise production before the year end — delaying by just two months a hike originally planned for October.

OPEC+ will likely delay until December a planned output rise of 180,000 barrels, US media reported on Thursday, citing three sources within the alliance. OPEC+ consists of the Saudi-led

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13-member Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and 10 independent oil producing nations steered by Russia.

The production expansion is a part of a plan to unwind the alliance's most recent layer of output cuts totaling 2.2 million barrels per day. But weak demand for energy in some of the world's most high-profile growth areas, including China, has led to doubts on whether the OPEC+ increases are justified.

"Many aren't convinced that there's enough demand to cover the higher OPEC+ output," John Kilduff, partner at New York energy hedge fund Again Capital, said.

WTI was last at $69.17 per barrel - down 3 cents, or 0.04, to add to the 6.3% tumble over the past two sessions.

Wednesday's session low of $68.94 for WTI also marked a bottom not seen for the US crude benchmark since a December trough of $67.71.

UK-origin Brent crude was at $72.73 per barrel - up 3 cents, or 0.04%. Brent lost 6.3% over the past two sessions. Like WTI, Thursday's session low of $72.47 for Brent marked a bottom not seen by the global crude benchmark since December.

While crude prices have not even finished a week of September's trading, losses for the month have already exceeded the August tally. WTI is down more than 6%, above last month's 5.8% drop. Brent has slumped more than 8%, way above the previous month's 2.5%.

This week's slump began with weak global manufacturing data out of China and signs of US industrial contraction, noted Phil Flynn, energy analyst at the Price Futures Group in Chicago.

China's economy has been stuttering for months. Prices of newly-constructed homes fell 4.9% in July from a year earlier, the fastest drop in nine years, according to US media calculations. Unemployment ticked up by 0.2% in July to 5.2%, with the 16-24 age group, particularly, hit by a 17% jobless rate - the highest since such data became available in December.

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US Charges 6 Russians for Conspiring to Hack Ukrainian Government - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - The United States is charging six Russian residents and nationals with allegedly conspiring to hack Ukrainian government computer systems, the US Justice Department said on Thursday.

"In an indictment unsealed today, a grand jury in Maryland charged six computer hackers, all of whom were residents and nationals of the Russian Federation, with conspiracy to commit computer intrusion and wire fraud conspiracy," the Justice Department said in a statement.

Five of the defendants were officers of the Russian Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) and one was a civilian, the statement said.

Prosecutors allege that the group engaged in a conspiracy to hack into, exfiltrate and leak information from, and destroy computer systems associated with the Ukrainian government in advance of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, the statement said.

The group is also alleged to have later targeted computer systems in countries around the world that provided support to Ukraine, including the US and 25 other NATO allies, the

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statement added.
The indictment is part of an international effort, dubbed Operation Toy Soldier, which is intended to combat malicious cyber activity by GRU's Unit 29155, according to the statement.

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Trump Says Will Make US 'World Capital' for Cryptocurrencies, Bitcoin

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said on Thursday that his administration would focus on embracing future industries, aiming to establish the United States as the "world capital" for cryptocurrencies and Bitcoin.
"Instead of attacking industries of the future, we will embrace them, including making America the world capital for crypto and Bitcoin," Trump said during an event at the Economic Club of New York.

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US Charges Russian TV Contributor Simes With Alleged Sanctions Violations - Justice Dept.

(Updates with more details , background in paras 3-10)
WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - The United States has charged US political scientist and Russian TV presenter Dimitri Simes and his wife Anastasia Simes with alleged violations of US sanctions and money laundering, the Justice Department said on Thursday.
"Dimitri Simes, 76, and Anastasia Simes, 55, both of Huntly, Virginia, and Russia, are charged by indictments with two separate schemes to violate U.S. sanctions," the Justice Department said in a press release. "The first indictment alleges that Dimitri and Anastasia Simes participated in a scheme to violate US sanctions for the benefit of sanctioned Russian broadcaster Channel One Russia and to launder funds obtained from that scheme."
The Justice Department alleges that from at least June 2022, Simes took part in a scheme to violate the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) by providing services to Channel 1 Russia and receiving more than $1 million and other benefits.
Simes and his wife, believed to be in Russia at present, have each been charged with one count of conspiracy to violate IEEPA, one count of violating IEEPA and one count of conspiracy to commit international money laundering, the release said.
If convicted, they face up to 60 years in prison, the release added.
According to the second indictment, Anastasia Simes allegedly participated in another scheme to benefit and receive funds from sanctioned Russian businessman Aleksandr Udodov. More specifically, Simes' wife violated IEEPA by purchasing art and antiques for Udovov from galleries and auction houses in the United States and Europe, and later shipped them to Russia, the release said.
Based on the second indictment, Anastasia Simes is charged with one count of conspiracy to

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violate IEEPA, one count of violating IEEPA and one count of conspiracy to commit international money laundering, and faces up to 20 years in prison.

In August, FBI agents raided the homes of former United Nations weapons inspector Scott Ritter as well as Simes.

The news comes after the Treasury Department announced on Wednesday sanctions against Russia's Rossiya Segodnya media group, RIA Novosti, RT, Sputnik and Ruptly. The US sanctions also affected RT and Rossiya Segodnya Editor-in-Chief Margarita Simonyan.

The US government has made unsubstantiated claims about alleged hostile influence operations targeting the US presidential elections. Russia's authorities have repeatedly denied such claims.

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Trump Says Elon Musk Has Agreed to Lead Government Efficiency Commission

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said on Thursday that US billionaire Elon Musk has agreed to lead his proposed Government Efficiency Commission.

"And Elon [Musk], because he's not very busy, has agreed to lead that task force. . . if he has the time," said Trump during a luncheon hosted by the Economic Club of New York.

Earlier on Thursday, Musk wrote on X that he was "ready to serve his country without salary or title" by working on the proposed commission. Musk also said in a post that there was "a lot of waste and needless regulation in government that needs to go," in response to a report that Trump would involve him and other high-profile business executives in auditing federal agencies and cutting programs.

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Trump Says His Plan Will Cut Energy Prices in Half, Revive US Economy Within 12 Months

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said on Thursday that his economic plan promises to halve energy costs and revive the US economy within 12 months of taking office - if reelected in November.

"My plan will cut energy prices in half or more than that. Within 12 months of taking office, there will be an economic revival of our country like no one has ever seen before," Trump said during remarks at a luncheon hosted by the Economic Club of New York.

Trump added that he will also immediately issue a national emergency declaration to bolster domestic energy supplies and address what he calls a dire energy crisis caused by the Biden administration.

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Israel, Hamas 'Unfortunately Not Close' to Ceasefire Deal - Netanyahu

(Updates with more details in pars 4-16; modifies headline)

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Israel and Hamas are nowhere near a ceasefire, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday, insisting the Palestinian group should be pressured to stop hostilities after the killing of Israeli hostages and not his government.

"Making concessions [for a ceasefire] now would be a license [for Hamas] to kill [more] hostages," Netanyahu said in an interview with Fox News. "We have to continue to put the pressure on Hamas, not Israel."

Asked if a ceasefire deal was close, Netanyahu replied: "Unfortunately, it's not."

On Wednesday, a senior Biden administration official said the Gaza ceasefire agreement being put together by negotiators had a total of 18 paragraphs, with 14 of them already finalized.

"Basically, 90% of this deal has been agreed, and it's been agreed on terms that even Hamas had in their own proposal," the official told a press briefing.

Netanyahu replied during the interview that the statement is "exactly inaccurate."

"There's a story, a narrative out there that there's a deal out there … that's just a false narrative," Netanyahu said.

Street protests are raging in Israel over Netanyahu's inability to secure the release of the hostages in Hamas captivity as he resists intense pressure at home and from international allies such as the United States, Iraq and Qatar to strike a quick deal with the Palestinian group.

Netanyahu asked for his nation's forgiveness after the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) recovered the bodies of six Israelis in a Hamas-used tunnel. He maintains that the best way to ensure the return of the remaining 100 hostages - over half of whom are believed to still be alive - will be for the IDF to keep control over the Philadelphi corridor.

Netanyahu caused a furor last week when The Times of Israel reported that he had told Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant he prioritized an IDF presence along the Philadelphi corridor over saving the lives of the remaining hostages.

The Philadelphi corridor, alternatively known as the Salah al-Din axis, is a narrow strip of land under 9 miles in length and around 100 yards wide that runs along the Gaza side of the coastal Palesrinian enclave's border with Egypt. It includes the key Rafah border crossing and has long been considered a lifeline for Palestinians in Gaza that allows crucial supplies of food, medicine and other aid to get into the strip. It also enables the movement of Palestinians in and out of the enclave under a 17-year blockade imposed by Israel.

But Netanyahu said the corridor has become an enabler of Hamas and what he calls Iranian terrorists bent on Israel's destruction.

"So if you want to release the hostages and you want to make sure that Gaza doesn't pose a threat to Israel again, you've got to keep the Philadelphi corridor … and that's what we're really doing right now," Netanyahu said.

Going back in time, Netanyahu told Fox News that Israel had agreed to several deals proposed

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by US, Egyptian and Qatari negotiators, but Hamas "has consistently said no to every one of them" each time.

"They don't agree to anything: Not to the Philadelphi Corridor, not to the keys of exchanging hostages for jailed terrorists, not to anything … [they] just want us out of Gaza so they can retake Gaza and do as they vowed to do," Netanyahu added.

White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby told a media briefing on Thursday that the United States believed discussions "can and should continue" toward a ceasefire deal that would secure the lives of the remaining hostages under Hamas control.

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Trump Lawyer Calls Prosecution Proposal on Superseding Indictment 'Unfair' - Correspondent

(Updates with more details in paras 8-16)

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump's attorney John Lauro has called the proposal of the prosecution on the superseding indictment and the immunity question "unfair."

"I can't imagine a more unfair protocol for proceeding on these weighty issues," Lauro said.

US prosecutor Tom Windom said at the beginning of the hearing in Washington that they are currently working on an extensive defense in the case and asked for a period of two-to-three weeks to file it.

"It's enormously prejudicial to President Trump," Lauro said.

Lauro also said that the court should decide on the presumptive immunity of the communications between Trump and then Vice President Mike Pence.

Lauro emphasized that if the court decides they are subject to immunity, then the whole case "goes away" and will be just "a waste of time."

Trump has pleaded not guilty to new charges brought against him in the 2020 election interference case, a Sputnik correspondent reported from the court on Thursday.

The conference hearing began Washington at 10:00 a.m. ET. and Trump has not been present in the court room.

After lengthy arguments, Chutkan announced that she would vacate her ruling denying the defense motion to dismiss on statutory grounds amid the superseding indictment and proposal to redo the briefings.

Meanwhile, Lauro called Smith an illegitimate prosecutor and his indictment illegitimate as well.

Chutkan allowed Lauro to file a motion challenging Smith's appointment.

Lauro clarified to the judge that while two separate motions will be filed, the communication between Trump and Pence will be the main focus in order to dismiss the superseding indictment.

The hearing finished without a trial date being scheduled.

"The issue of immunity will stop these proceedings once again," Chutkan said. "It's an exercise in futility."

At the end of August, a US grand jury confirmed the four-count indictment filed by Special

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Counsel Jack Smith against former US president Donald Trump for an alleged attempt to subvert the outcome of the 2020 election.

Smith's recrafting of the indictment comes after the US Supreme Court ruled in July that Trump was immune to prosecution on the basis of official acts conducted as part of his role as president.

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UNSC Condemns in 'Strongest Terms' Monday's Terrorist Attack in Kabul - Statement

UNITED NATIONS, September 5 (Sputnik) - The UN Security Council members condemned in the strongest possible terms the latest terrorist attack in Kabul, which took place on September 2, the UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Thursday.

"The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the heinous terrorist attack that occurred in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, on 2 September, which was claimed by ISIL (Da'esh) -K and resulted in multiple people killed and many wounded," the statement said.

The Council members also said that the perpetrators need to be brought to justice and urged everyone involved to cooperate, it added.

On Monday, six people were killed and 13 others injured in a suicide bomber attack in the Afghan capital of Kabul. The explosion took place in the city's southwestern area.

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us charges channel one russia tv contributor and his wife for alleged sanctions violations, money laundering - justice dept.

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Gaza Ceasefire Would Boost US Voter Support for Either Harris or Trump – Poll

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza would benefit either US presidential nominee, according to a Zogby poll released on Thursday that was commissioned by the Arab American Institute.

"Calling for an immediate ceasefire helps her and has almost negligible impact negatively," pollster John Zogby said at a press briefing, referring to Kamala Harris.

The poll found that 64% of Harris voters, 9% of Trump voters, 41% of third-party voters, and 29% of undecided voters would be "more/somewhat likely" to vote for Harris if she were to "demand an immediate ceasefire and allow unimpeded humanitarian aid into Gaza." Overall, voter support for Harris would increase from 44% to 50%.

Trump would also benefit from taking the same stance – the poll found that that 11% of Harris voters, 37% of Trump voters, 31% of third-party voters, and 18% of undecided voters would be

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"more/somewhat likely" to vote for him, with his overall support increasing from 40% to 44%.
"It suggests to me that Harris and Walz would be wise to take a move on this before somebody tries to undercut them," Zogby added.
Additionally, the poll found that if Harris were to "suspend any US diplomatic support for or arms shipments to Israel until they implement a ceasefire and withdraw their forces from Gaza," her overall support would increase from 44% to 49%. On the other hand, Trump would only benefit from a one percentage point increase in overall support if he took this stance.
In general, the poll found that voters who were Democratic, aged 18-34, and non-white tended to show the most support for Palestinians.
The poll, which surveyed 2,505 respondents, examined US voter attitudes toward the 2024 US presidential election, with an emphasis on policy toward Israel's US-backed war on Gaza. It was conducted from July 31 to August 1.

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Hunter Biden Will Change Plea to Guilty in Tax Evasion Case - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Hunter Biden will enter a guilty plea in the federal tax evasion case against him, NBC News reported on Thursday.
Biden previously pleaded not guilty to three felony and six misdemeanor charges but will change to a guilty plea, the report said, citing Biden attorney Abbe Lowell.
Jury selection for a trial in the case was set to begin on Thursday in Los Angeles. Prosecutors accuse Biden of allegedly avoiding paying at least $1.4 million in taxes
The conditions of the plea and whether the judge will accept it remain unclear, the report said.

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Israel, Hamas 'Unfortunately Not Close' to Ceasefire Deal - Netanyahu

(Corrects spelling, adds background in para 4)
WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Israel and Hamas are nowhere near a ceasefire, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday, insisting that it is the Palestinian militant group that should be pressured to stop hostilities for its killing of Israeli hostages — not his government.
"Making concessions [for a ceasefire] now [on Israel's part] would be a license to kill [more] hostages," Netanyahu said during an interview with Fox News. "We have to continue to put the pressure on Hamas, not Israel."
Asked if a ceasefire deal was close, he replied: "Unfortunately, it's not."
Earlier in the day, media reported that the Biden administration is racing to come up with a new proposal for a Gaza ceasefire and the release of hostages by Hamas in the coming days.

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hunter biden changing plea in federal tax case - nbc news

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US Senate Panel Says Will Hold Hearing on Use of US Tech for Russian Military Equipment

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - The US Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations will hold a hearing next week on the alleged use of US technologies for Russian military equipment, the panel said in a hearing notice.

The hearing, dubbed "The US Companies' Technology Fueling the Russian War Machine," will take place on September 10 at 3:30 p.m. ET (19:30 GMT).

Lawmakers will receive testimony from officials representing Texas Instruments, Intel, AMD and Analog Devices.

The United States has imposed a variety of sanctions to attempt to prevent the flow of semiconductors and other electronics to Russia in an effort to hinder its production of military equipment.

Russian officials have said that Western sanctions against Moscow have failed.

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Hunter Biden Arrives at Los Angeles Federal Courthouse for Tax Evasion Trial

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden arrived at a federal courthouse in Los Angeles on Thursday for the beginning of jury selection in a tax evasion trial against him.

Biden was charged with three felony and six misdemeanor counts for allegedly failing to pay at least $1.4 million in taxes.

The case was brought by special counsel David Weiss, alongside a felony firearm case. In June, a jury found Biden guilty on three felony firearm charges.

Sentencing in the firearm case is scheduled for November 13. Biden faces up to 25 years in prison and a $750,000 fine, although first-time offenders often receive a lighter sentence than the prescribed maximum.

Biden faces up to 17 years in prison if convicted on all counts in the tax case. Opening statements in the trial are expected to begin on Monday.

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White House on Putin's Harris Remarks: He Ought to Stop Talking About US Elections

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Russian President Vladimir Putin should stop talking about US presidential elections, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Thursday in comments about Putin's remarks regarding US Vice President Kamala Harris.

"Mr. Putin ought to stop talking about our elections. Period. He shouldn't be favoring anybody one way or another. The only people who should get to determine who the next president of the United States is the American people, and we would greatly appreciate it if Mr. Putin would stop talking about our election and stop interfering in it," Kirby said during a press briefing.

Earlier on Thursday, Putin said that Russia will support US presidential candidate Kamala Harris, as recommended by US President Joe Biden. However, Putin clarified his statement by saying that the American people are the ones to decide who will be the president of the United States.

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Trump's Lawyer Calls Prosecution's Proposal on Superseding Indictment 'Unfair'

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump's attorney on Thursday called the prosecution's proposal on the superseding indictment in his federal election interference case "unfair," a Sputnik correspondent reported from the court.

"I can't imagine a more unfair protocol for proceeding on these weighty issues," John Lauro said during a hearing.

US prosecutor Tom Windom said at the beginning of the hearing in Washington DC that they are currently working on the extensive defense of their case and asked for 2-3 weeks to file it.

"It's enormously prejudicial to President Trump," Lauro stated.

Lauro also said that the court should decide on presumptive immunity of the communications between Trump and then-Vice President Mike Pence.

He stressed that if the court decides there is immunity, then the whole case "goes away" and will be just "a waste of time."

Trump's lawyer entered a not guilty plea on behalf of Trump earlier on Thursday. The conference hearing began in Washington, D.C. at 10 a.m. ET., and Trump is not present in the court room.

In late August, a US grand jury returned with a new four-count indictment filed by Special Counsel Jack Smith against former US president Donald Trump for an alleged attempt to subvert the outcome of the 2020 election.

Smith's recrafting of the indictment comes after the US Supreme Court ruled in July that Trump was immune to prosecution for official acts conducted as part of his role as president.

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Ending Clean Energy Tax Credits Would Hurt US, Help China - Yellen

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Any move to end the Biden administration's clean energy tax credits would raise costs for families in the United States, stall new investments in job-creating US manufacturing and empower China, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Thursday.

"There are some out there who want to eliminate the credits … this would be a historic mistake," Yellen said in a speech slated for delivery at an event in North Carolina. "Rolling them back could raise costs for working families at a moment when it's imperative that we continue to take action to lower prices."

The Treasury Secretary said families across the United States have claimed $8.4 billion in energy tax credits to ease their energy bills over the long-term, Yellen said.

In North Carolina alone, some 90,000 families have claimed more than $100 million in residential clean energy tax credits for installations like solar panels and energy storage batteries and another $60 million in energy efficiency tax credits for heat pumps, efficient air conditioning and insulation, Yellen said.

Ending such credits would hurt employment and China would be among the beneficiaries if America lost out on such investments, Yellen said.

"It could jeopardize the significant investments in manufacturing we're seeing here and across the country, along with the jobs that come with them, many of which don't require a college degree," Yellen said. "And it could give a leg-up to China and other countries that are also investing to compete in these critical industries."

Yellen's remarks came amid pledges by Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump to rescind - if reelected - many of President Joe Biden's clean energy rules for power plants and electric vehicles.

Trump has also vowed to end hundreds of billions of dollars in tax subsidies enacted in Biden's 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, pledging to end what the Republican called the "green new scam" and redirect the money saved toward building roads and bridges.

Vice President Kamala Harris, who faces Trump in the November 5 election as the Democratic presidential candidate, has pledged to carry through with many of Biden's policies.

The Biden administration is due to soon in the near term steep increases in tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles, batteries, solar cells and other goods to protect the development of a clean US energy supply chain.

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Trump Pleads 'Not Guilty' to Charges in Superseding Indictment in Federal Election Case

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump has pleaded not guilty to new charges brought against him in the 2020 election interference case, a Sputnik correspondent reported from the scene on Thursday.

Presiding US District Judge Tanya Chutkan asked Trump's attorney John Lauro whether he

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confirms that Trump pleads not guilty to the indictment.
"That is right," Lauro said.
Chutkan then said that she will consider Trump's arraignment for the superseding indictment to be complete.
The conference hearing began Washington at 10:00 a.m. ET and Trump has not been present in the court room.
At the end of August, a US grand jury confirmed the new four-count indictment filed by Special Counsel Jack Smith against Trump for his alleged attempt to subvert the outcome of the 2020 US presidential election.
The recrafting of the indictment came after the US Supreme Court ruled in July that Trump was immune to prosecution on the basis of official acts conducted as part of his role as US president.

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US Offers Up to $1Mln Reward for Info About Russian National Tim Stigal - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - The United States is offering a reward of up to $1 million for information leading to the arrest of Russian national Tim Stigal, whom it suspects of partaking in transnational organized crime, the State Department said on Thursday.
In June, a federal grand jury in the US state of Maryland indicted Tim Stigal's son, Amin, for allegedly conspiring to hack and destroy Ukrainian and allied computer systems.
"The Department of State is announcing a reward offer under the Transnational Organized Crime Rewards Program of up to $1 million for information leading to the arrest and/or conviction in any country of Tim Vakhaevich Stigal for participating in, conspiring to participate in, or attempting to participate in transnational organized crime," the statement said.
The US authorities accuse Stigal of engaging in multiple significant computer intrusions targeting US businesses, organizing the theft of payment card data, and monetizing this data for personal financial gain, according to the statement.
In January, the US Department of Justice charged Stigal with allegedly participating in four separate conspiracies to traffic in stolen payment card information belonging to the customers of at least three different corporate victims in the United States between April 2014 and March 2016.
"Stigal is charged with four counts of wire fraud conspiracy, 12 counts of wire fraud, one count of computer fraud extortion, three counts of access device fraud, and three counts of aggravated identity theft," the statement said.
The US Secret Service has added Stigal to its public Most Wanted Fugitive page.

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trump's lawyer enters 'not guilty' plea to charges against him in superseding indictment in federal election case - correspondent

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Musk Says Ready to Serve Without Pay or Title in Potential Trump Administration

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) – US billionaire Elon Musk said on Thursday that he is ready to serve his country with no salary or title, amid reports that Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump intends to accept his proposal to establish a government efficiency commission if he wins.

"I look forward to serving America if the opportunity arises. No pay, no title, no recognition is needed," Musk wrote on X.

Former President Trump is expected to outline his economic plan in a speech before the Economic Club of New York on Thursday. This plan will include creating a government efficiency commission proposed by Musk, The Wall Street Journal reported.

In recent months, Musk has repeatedly expressed his willingness to take on government efficiency during a potential Trump administration. However, Trump expressed doubt last week that the billionaire could be part of his team, saying the SpaceX and Tesla CEO would likely be too busy to serve in his cabinet. At the same time, he suggested that Musk could play a consulting role in his administration if he wins the November election.

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Israel, Hamas 'Unfortunately Not Close' to Ceasefire Deal - Nethanyahu to Fox News

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - Israel and Hamas are nowhere near a ceasefire, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Nethanyahu said Thursday, insisting that it is the Palestinian militant group that should be pressured to stop hostilities for its killing of Israeli hostages — not his government.

"Making concessions (for a ceasefire) now (on Israel's part) would be a license to kill (more) hostages," Nethanyahu said during an interview with Fox News. "We have to continue to put the pressure on Hamas, not Israel."

Asked if a ceasefire deal was close, he replied: "Unfortunately, it's not."

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White House Says US Secured Release of 135 'Political Prisoners' in Nicaragua

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said on Thursday that the United States has secured the release of 135 "political prisoners" in

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Nicaragua on humanitarian grounds.

"The Biden-Harris Administration today secured the release of 135 unjustly detained political prisoners in Nicaragua, on humanitarian grounds. No one should be put in jail for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights of free expression, association, and practicing their religion," Sullivan said in a statement.

Among those released, 13 were members of Texas-based Mountain Gateway organization, the statement said. Other individuals include Catholic laypeople, students and those whom Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and Vice President Rosario Murillo allegedly view as "threats" to their "rule," Sullivan said.

Sullivan thanked the Guatemalan government for agreeing to host the released prisoners. Once in Guatemala, the individuals will be given the opportunity to apply for lawful ways to rebuild their lives in the US or other countries through President Joe Biden's Safe Mobility Office initiative, the statement added.

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US Implements Technology Export Controls in Coordination With Allies - Commerce Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) – The United States has introduced new export restrictions on quantum computers, semiconductors, aerospace, and other advanced technology as part of a multilateral agreement, according to a Commerce Department notice scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on Friday.

"The United States is implementing new controls, including a limited number of deemed export requirements in the sectors of quantum computers, materials, and related electronic assemblies; aerospace technology; and integrated circuit 'development' or 'production.' With this rule, BIS imposes controls on items in these categories that warrant export controls because of national security concerns," the notice said.

It added that the measures are "consistent with controls implemented by several international partners."

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FBI Says Georgia School Shooting Suspect Was Questioned in 2023 Over Online Threats

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) - A teenage student who killed four and injured multiple people in a high school in the US state of Georgia on Wednesday was interviewed by law enforcement agencies last year in connection with online threats, the FBI said on Thursday.

At least four people were reported dead and some 30 others injured in a shooting at Apalachee High School in Georgia on Wednesday. Georgia Bureau of Investigation Director Chris Hosey said that 14-year-old student Colt Gray, responsible for the shooting, is now in custody.

"In May 2023, the FBI's National Threat Operations Center received several anonymous tips about online threats to commit a school shooting at an unidentified place and time," the FBI said

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in a statement.

The online threats contained photos of guns.

"Within 24 hours, the FBI determined the online post originated in Georgia and the FBI's Atlanta Field Office referred the information to the Jackson County Sheriff's Office for action," the statement said.

The sheriff's office located a 13-year-old boy and interviewed him and his father. The father admitted having hunting guns at home, but his son did not have unsupervised access to them, according to the statement.

The boy denied making the threats online. Jackson County, however, alerted local schools for continued monitoring of the subject.

At that time, there was "no probable cause for arrest or to take any additional law enforcement action," the FBI said.

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Trump to Include Musk's Government Efficiency Commission in Economic Plan - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 5 (Sputnik) – Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump plans to include a government efficiency commission proposed by Elon Musk when outlining his economic plan on Thursday, The Wall Street Journal reported.

The commission would carry out "a complete financial and performance audit of the entire federal government" and make "recommendations for drastic reform" with the goal of eliminating fraud, the Journal reported, citing an advance copy of Trump's speech to be given at the Economic Club of New York.

In response to the report, Musk posted: "This would unlock tremendous prosperity for America."

On Tuesday, Musk also said in a post that there was "a lot of waste and needless regulation in government that needs to go," in response to a report that Trump would involve him and other high-profile business executives in auditing federal agencies and cutting programs.

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netanyahu says deal to end Gaza conflict, exchange prisoners and hostages not close

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