

9/16/24 Monday

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The Crime is the Message: Why the US is Sanctioning Russian Media

On Friday, at a press conference announcing sanctions on Russian media, including Sputnik parent company Rossiya Segodnya and RT parent company TV-Novosti. The Director of the Global Engagement Center, Jamie Rubin, cited the lack of support for the NATO proxy war in Ukraine among the Global South as a reason the action was taken.

“But remember, sanctions are a tool. They’re not a goal. What’s the goal? The goal is for the rest of the world – and remember, you’ve asked questions from [State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller] for months and months about the Global South, and why there’s not more support for Ukraine in this part of the Middle East or that part of Latin America or this part of Africa. Well, one of the reasons – not the only reason, but one of the reasons why so much of the world has not been as fully supportive of Ukraine as you would think they would be, given that Russia has invaded Ukraine and violated rule number one of the international system, is because of the broad scope and reach of RT – where propaganda, disinformation, and lies are spread to millions if not billions of people around the world,” Rubin explained at the press conference.

The implication could not be more clear. RT and outlets like that are reaching people with a message that resonates, particularly in the Global South, and that is why the US security state cannot abide by it.

“If the crime is the content, then aren't we talking about a free speech issue here?” asked Michelle Witte, the co-host of Sputnik’s Political Misfits [during a conversation](#) with journalist and geopolitical analyst KJ Noh, an assertion that Noh agreed with.

“[Rubin] kind of gave away the game and with people this incompetent, no amount of propaganda is going to make the difference,” explained Noh.

While the US State Department has painted RT as a global propaganda machine with its tendrils seeping out of the shadows to infiltrate the minds of the public who are too stupid to evaluate information critically, in truth it is dwarfed by the propaganda arm of the West.

RT has a budget of about \$300 million while outlets like the Reuters and The New York Times have budgets measured in the billions, Noh asked how RT is “winning the war for public opinion when it’s outmatched in funding by 50 to 1 by Western media agencies? I mean Reuters alone is 20 times the budget [of RT]. So, either RT has the smartest, most cost-effective propagandists on the planet, or maybe it is telling the truth and people can see that and hear that.”

Days before the sanctions on Russian outlets were announced, the US House of Representatives passed the Countering the PRC [People’s Republic of China] Malign Influence Fund Authorization Act. If signed into law, it would allocate \$1.6 billion for the State Department and USAID to, among other tasks, subsidize media and civil society sources around the world to counter China’s alleged malign influence.

USAID has been accused by multiple heads of state of acting as a front for the CIA to sow dissent in their countries. In 2010, it was caught launching and running a social media website described as "Cuban Twitter" designed to foment unrest.

"One of the things that Baudelaire, the poet, said is that the greatest trick of the devil was convincing the world that he didn't exist. I think that we could apply the same thing to propagandists. You know, the greatest propaganda coup of the Western media is convincing themselves or/and convincing the world that they don't do propaganda," Noh lamented.

The \$1.6 billion spread over five years equals approximately \$876,712 a day. If spent entirely on anti-China propaganda, that would result in roughly 53,333 articles per day at \$30 an article, a high rate for a 500-700 word article in the Global South.

While the fund will also be dedicated to other purposes, it demonstrates that the US propaganda arm is far more well-funded than any news outlet funded by Russia.

"In other words, we are going to get an incredible barrage of anti-China BS. It's just not going to stop," explained Noh. "We are going to be deluged with this complete firehose of falsehoods that... exists already inside the context in which we're already being hosed down with nonstop propaganda and lies against China."

"I think we really are in this kind of no-holds-barred information war. The US military, the Pentagon, sees [the] information space as a theater of war. They see narrative dominance, full-spectrum dominance and as a result... our minds have been occupied," Noh concluded.

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#### Trudeau's Liberal Party Facing Setback After Loss of Montreal Seat Held Since 2015

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) – The Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) lead by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is facing yet another political setback after the loss of a Monday byelection in Montreal's LaSalle-Emard-Verdun, a seat it had held since its creation in 2015.

The Liberal Party lost the Montreal to the Bloc Quebecois – a national party that supports independence for the French speaking province - by a slim 0.8% margin, Elections Canada reported.

Bloc Quebecois candidate Louis-Philippe Sauve got elected with 28% of the vote, whereas his Liberal opponent Laura Palestini was defeated at 27.2%, the electoral body said. Close behind followed the New Democratic Party (NDP) with just over 26% of the votes and in fourth place, the Conservatives achieved a meager 11.6%.

Elections Canada reported a voter turnout of 39.66% or 31,711 out of 79,966 individuals on the electors list. The counting was finalized as of 2:42 a.m. ET.

In late June, the Liberal Party faced the unexpected loss to their Conservative counterparts of the Toronto-St. Paul federal by-election. The seat had been held by the Liberals for more than 30 years and was considered to be one of the politically "safest."

The latest electoral upset also happens nearly two weeks after NDP leader Jagmeet Singh announced the termination of the "confidence-and-supply agreement" where the Neo-Democrats pledged to support Trudeau's Liberals in exchange for commitments on legislation put forward by their party. The deal, which had ensured the survival of a Liberal

minority government, was in place since March 2022.

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Meta Bans RT, Rossiya Segodnya From Apps Globally - Spokesperson

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) - Meta (banned in Russia for extremism) banned RT and Rossiya Segodnya from its apps globally for alleged foreign interference, a spokesperson said in a statement.

"After careful consideration, we expanded our ongoing enforcement against Russian state media outlets. Rossiya Segodnya, RT and other related entities are now banned from our apps globally for foreign interference activity," a spokesperson said in a statement obtained by NBC News on Monday.

The ban comes just days after the US sanctioned the Russian media outlets. Russia has repeatedly denied foreign interference, calling the allegations attempts to suppress alternative points of view.

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US Halted Havana Syndrome Study After Patients Allegedly Coerced - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) - The US put a halt to a study into the Havana Syndrome after a National Institute of Health (NIH) internal review board discovered patients were coerced into participating, media reported citing a statement from NIH.

"In March 2024, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) initiated an investigation in response to concerns from participants who were evaluated as part of a study on Anomalous Health Incidents (AHI), the results of which were published in the journal JAMA... The NIH investigation found that regulatory and NIH policy requirements for informed consent were not met due to coercion, although not on the part of NIH researchers," the NIH said in a statement obtained by Fox News on Monday.

The NIH said given the role of voluntary consent as a key pillar of ethical research, it stopped the study out of an abundance of caution. NIH also said the investigative findings do not impact the study's conclusions.

US government and related personnel have reported Havana syndrome symptoms since 2015, including dizziness, pain, visual problems and cognitive dysfunction following intrusive sounds and head pressure. In early March, The Washington Post reported five US intelligence agencies concluded it was "very unlikely" that any foreign adversary targeted US diplomats and intelligence staff with the help of some sort of energy weapon that caused strange and painful acoustic sensations.

On March 31, CBS reported that based on new evidence Russia was allegedly behind a series of Havana syndrome-style attacks, including against US officials in Vietnam ahead of Vice President Kamala Harris' trip there in 2021. Following the report, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry

Peskov called the accusations groundless and emphasized that no evidence has ever been provided to back such claims.

In congressional testimony in May, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines said the agency was continuing to investigate anomalous health incidents, but needed to close gaps it identified. Haines underscored that the intelligence community has not changed its initial assessments that it is very unlikely that a foreign actor would be behind the incidents.

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US Awards Safran \$275Mln for Laser Target Locator Systems - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) - The US Army has given Safran Defense and Space a \$275 million contract for Laser Target Locator Module II devices, the Defense Department said in a press release.

"Safran Defense and Space Inc., Bedford, New Hampshire, was awarded a \$275,000,000 hybrid contract for the acquisition of Laser Target Locator Module II systems, associated spare parts, and contractor logistical and maintenance support," the release stated on Monday.

Laser Target Locator Modules (LTLM) are handheld or tripod-mounted devices users look through to deliver target data to forward observers, scouts, snipers, and platoon leaders. The LTLM II upgrade allows troops to determine target locations "in seconds" and much more accurately than the previous version, according to the US Army.

Work on the contract is scheduled to take a decade with an estimated completion date of September 15, 2034. Army Contracting Command at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland will oversee work on it as the contracting activity, the Defense Department said.

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**US Navy Extends L3Harris Contract For Trident Missile Testing Equipment - Pentagon**

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) - The US Navy has given the L3Harris Interstate Electronics Corporation a more than \$43 million contract extension to continue its maintenance support electronics used in flight tests for Trident II (D5) submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLCMs), the Department of Defense said in a press release.

"L3Harris Interstate Electronics Corporation (L3-IEC) [of] Anaheim, California is awarded a ...\$43,461,820 modification ...contract for Trident II (D5) flight test instrumentation systems support," the release said on Monday.

The contract award will also involve a foreign military sale to the United Kingdom, the Defense Department noted.

Most of the work on the project will be carried out in Anaheim, California (56%) and Cape Canaveral, Florida (30%); Washington, D.C (7%) and Barrow-in-Furness in the UK, the Defense Department said.

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**US Air Force Awards MITRE Corp. \$541Mln Contract to Run Engineering Center - Pentagon**

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) - The US Air Force has awarded the MITRE Corporation a more than half a billion dollar contract to run its National Security Engineering Center over the coming year, the Department of Defense announced in a press release.

"The MITRE Corporation [of] Bedford, Massachusetts was awarded a \$541,295,723 ...contract for support to the Air Force from MITRE," the release stated. "The contract provides for MITRE to be administrator of the National Security Engineering Center Federally Funded Research and Development Center."

Work on the project will be carried out in Bedford, Massachusetts, and in McLean, Virginia as well as in other locations inside and outside the continental United States over the coming year and is expected to be completed by September 30, 2025, the Defense Department said.

The Air Force Life Cycle Management Center at Hanscom Air Force Base in Massachusetts will oversee the work as its contracting activity, the Defense Department said.

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**US Awards Northrop \$54Mln to Make Satcom Antennas for Military Aircraft - Pentagon**

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) - The US Air Force has given Northrop Grumman a more than \$54 million contract to make experimental, multi-band, satellite communications antennas for military aircraft, the Defense Department said in a press release.

"Northrop Grumman Systems Corp., Linthicum Heights, Maryland, was awarded a \$54,713,276 cost-plus-fixed-fee contract for the defense experimentation using commercial space internet. This contract seeks multi-band, satellite communications antennas capable of use on military aircraft," the release said on Monday.

Work on the contract will be carried out in Linthicum Heights, Maryland over the next two and a half years and is expected to be completed by March 16, 2027, the Defense Department said. The Air Force Research Laboratory at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio will oversee work on the contract as its contracting activity, the Defense Department said.

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#### White House Says Biden Spoke With Trump Following Assassination Attempt

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden spoke with former US President Donald Trump in the wake of an apparent assassination attempt against the 2024 Republican presidential nominee, White House Senior Deputy Press Secretary Emilie Simons said in a statement.

"President Biden just spoke with former President Trump, and conveyed his relief that he is safe," Simons said via social media platform X on Monday.

Biden and Trump had a cordial conversation, during which Trump thanked Biden for the call, Simons said.

On Sunday, The US Secret Service opened fire on what appeared to be a shooter's nest near a golf course where Trump was playing at the time. Police arrested Ryan Routh in connection with the incident and prosecutors charged him with two firearm-related offenses.

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#### Blinken to Travel to Egypt for Talks on Reaching Ceasefire in Gaza - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is set to visit Egypt from September 17-19 to co-chair the opening of the US-Egypt Strategic Dialogue alongside Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and to discuss efforts to strike a ceasefire deal in Gaza, the State Department said in a press release.

"Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken will travel to Egypt September 17-19 to co-chair the opening of the U.S.-Egypt Strategic Dialogue with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty," the statement read on Monday. "In addition to co-chairing the strategic dialogue, the Secretary will meet with Egyptian officials to discuss ongoing efforts to reach a ceasefire in Gaza that secures the release of all hostages, alleviates the suffering of the Palestinian people, and helps establish broader regional security."

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CORRECTION - Pentagon Already 'Optimizing' to Prepare for High-End Conflict With China – Air Force

(Corrects lede to read China instead of Russia)

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) – The US Department of Defense is already “optimizing” to prepare for a potential high-end conflict with China and to sustain long-term strategic competition with the country, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force David Flosi said during an annual Air, Space & Cyber Conference.

“The department is already optimizing to prepare for a high-end conflict if deterrence fails, and to sustain long-term strategic competition with the People's Republic of China,” Flosi said on Monday.

A war between China and the United States would be disastrous for both sides and Washington must work towards ensuring that it possesses a credible deterrent to convince Beijing that war is a bad option, Flosi said.

During his August trip to China, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said that the United States does not intend to start a new Cold War and does not seek a conflict with China.

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blinken to travel to egypt September 17-19 - state dept.

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Pentagon Already 'Optimizing' to Prepare for High-End Conflict With China – Air Force

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## SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, September 17 (Sputnik) -

### MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS

- \* The United States will look at other steps that may need to be taken if it finds that the Israeli investigation into the killing of US citizen Aysenur Ezgi Eygi is unsatisfactory, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.
- \* Changes in the Israeli government are possible but they will not affect either the course of military operations or Israel's security plans, a government source told Sputnik.
- \* Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian denied reports that Tehran was allegedly supplying hypersonic weapons to Yemen's Ansar Allah movement.

### TRUMP'S ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

- \* The FBI cited a 2002 weapons of mass destruction (WMD) charge in an affidavit filed on Monday in support of a criminal complaint against the suspect arrested in connection with an alleged assassination attempt against former US President Donald Trump.
- \* Prosecutors charged a man arrested after an alleged assassination attempt against Trump with two firearm-related offenses, ABC News reported .
- \* A website with an instruction on joining the Ukrainian Foreign Legion invites all volunteers to contact a US national, suspected of assassination attempt on Trump, a Sputnik correspondent found out.
- \* US President Joe Biden said on Monday following the second assassination attempt on Trump that the Secret Service "needs more help" in order to fulfill its duty to protect presidential candidates.

### DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA'S BORDER REGIONS

- \* The number of injured in the morning shelling of the city of Belgorod and the Belgorod district by Ukraine has risen to ten, Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said.
- \* The special forces of the Russian Guard, together with other forces, have eliminated a group of Ukrainian fighters attempting to penetrate a settlement in Russia's Kursk Region, the guard's press service said.
- \* The United Nations is ready to verify the situation in the Kursk area but needs approval from Russia, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said.

### ASSAD-SHOIGU TALKS

- \* Syrian President Bashar Assad and Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu have discussed issues of regional and global security in Damascus as well as touched upon the bilateral relations, the Syrian presidential office said on Monday.

### CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

\* Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev expressed on Monday his support for the Chinese and Brazilian peace plan on Ukraine.

\* Russia's army group West has eliminated up to 600 Ukrainian soldiers over the past 24 hours, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

\* There is a lot of information on the potential permission for strikes with western weapons deep into Russia, but Moscow has not seen any official statements, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

#### US SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIAN MEDIA OUTLETS

\* US sanctions against Russia's media outlet RT show that Washington will do anything in attempt to suppress alternative points of view, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

\* US sanctions against Russian media are similar to the works of UK novelist George Orwell, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said.

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#### Biden Says Tried Calling Trump, But He Was Not Available - White House Pool

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden told reporters on Monday that he tried calling Donald Trump following another failed assassination attempt on him, but he was not available.

Biden added that he plans to try reaching Trump again later in the day, according to a White House pool report.

The second assassination attempt on Donald Trump occurred on Sunday at the Trump International Golf Club West Palm Beach while the former president was playing golf. Police said Secret Service agents opened fire on the alleged assassin, who was hiding in the bushes. The man fled the scene but was later apprehended. An AK-47-style rifle was found at the scene, along with two backpacks and a GoPro camera.

The FBI has joined the investigation, and US authorities are treating it as an assassination attempt.

Following the incident, Biden said in a statement that he was relieved that his predecessor and presidential candidate Donald Trump was unharmed after an assassination attempt on him.

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#### FBI Says Examining Online Activity of Suspect in Trump Assassination Attempt

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The FBI is examining the online activity of the man arrested in connection with an apparent assassination attempt against former US President Donald Trump, FBI Miami Field Office Special Agent in Charge Jeffrey Veltri said on Monday.

On Sunday, the US Secret Service opened fire on what appeared to be a shooter's nest near a

golf course where Trump was playing at the time. Police arrested Ryan Routh in connection with the incident and prosecutors charged him with two firearm-related offenses.

"The subject had an active online presence, and we are going through what he posted, and any searches he conducted online," Veltri said during a press conference.

The FBI is also examining public statements from Routh about wanting to recruit Afghan soldiers and others to fight for Ukraine, Veltri said.

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Security at Mar-a-Lago 'Highest It Could Be' After Trump Assassination Attempt - Sheriff

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The security level at former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago property is as high as it could be following an apparent assassination attempt against the 2024 Republican presidential nominee, Palm Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw said on Monday.

"The security level at Mar-a-Lago is the highest it could possibly be now," Bradshaw said during a press conference.

On Sunday, the US Secret Service opened fire on what appeared to be a shooter's nest near a golf course where Trump was playing at the time. Police arrested Ryan Routh in connection with the incident and prosecutors charged him with two firearm-related charges.

Trump was also the victim of an assassination attempt at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania in July.

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fbi says it is going through trump assassination probe suspect's online presence, posts, searches

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Security measures at Mar-a-Lago high as they can be - Sheriff

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US Arrests Russian For Allegedly Exporting Microelectronics For Military Use-Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) — Russian citizen Denis Postovoy residing in Florida, was arrested on charges of conspiring to violate the Export Control Reform Act, smuggling, money laundering, and defrauding the United States, the Justice Department said in a statement on Monday.

"Denis Postovoy, 44, a Russian citizen living in Sarasota, Florida, was arrested this morning in Sarasota, Florida on an indictment charging him with conspiring to violate the Export Control Reform Act, to commit smuggling, to commit money laundering, and to defraud the United States," the statement said.

According to the statement, Postovoy procured and illegally exported microelectronic components with military applications, including those for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), from the United States to Russia through companies he owns or operates in Russia, Hong Kong, and elsewhere, without obtaining the required licenses from the US Department of Commerce.

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us arrests russian citizen for allegedly exporting us-sourced microelectronics with military applications to russia - justice dept.

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US Indicts Chinese National for Allegedly Trying to Steal NASA Software, Source Code - DOJ

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - Chinese national Song Wu has been indicted on charges of wire fraud and aggravated identity theft related to his alleged attempts to fraudulently obtain NASA software and source code, the US Justice Department said in a statement on Monday.

"Song Wu, a Chinese national, has been indicted on charges for wire fraud and aggravated identity theft arising from his efforts to fraudulently obtain computer software and source code created by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration ("NASA"), research universities, and private companies," the statement said.

According to the statement, Song allegedly sent spear phishing emails to individuals in the US government, including NASA, the military, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), as well as to staff at major research universities and private aerospace companies, disguising the emails as messages from colleagues.

"While conducting this spear phishing campaign, Song was employed as an engineer at Aviation Industry Corporation of China ("AVIC"), a Chinese state-owned aerospace and defense conglomerate headquartered in Beijing, China. AVIC manufactures civilian and military aircrafts and is one of the largest defense contractors in the world," the statement read.

The statement added that Wu is charged with 14 counts of wire fraud and 14 counts of aggravated identity theft, with a maximum sentence of 20 years for each wire fraud count and a mandatory two-year consecutive sentence if convicted of identity theft.

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## US Dissuades Israel From Starting Wider War Against Lebanon - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration has warned Israel not to start a wider military conflict against Lebanon, Axios reported on Monday.

US Special Envoy Amos Hochstein met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu earlier on Monday to convey a message that Israel should not start a war with Lebanon as it risks a much broader and protracted regional conflict, the report said.

Hochstein also made clear to Netanyahu as well as to Defense Minister Yoav Gallant that Washington remains committed to finding a diplomatic solution to the Israeli-Lebanese tensions regardless of whether the negotiations to free the hostages in Gaza succeeded, the report said.

The report also cited an unnamed US official who called Netanyahu's rumored plans to fire Gallant amid a war in Gaza and a looming conflict in Lebanon crazy.

Earlier on Monday, Netanyahu said in a statement following his meeting with Hochstein that Israelis will not be able to return to their homes in the country's north without fundamental changes in the security situation on the border with Lebanon.

Tensions on the Israeli-Lebanese border escalated after Israel started a military operation in the Gaza Strip in October 2023. The Israeli military and Hezbollah have been exchanging cross-border fire almost daily.

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## US, Uzbekistan Sign MOU to Strengthen Cooperation on Critical Minerals - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The United States and Uzbekistan on Monday signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation on critical minerals, the US State Department said in a statement on Monday.

"Today, Ambassador Jonathan Henick and First Deputy Minister of Geology Omonullo Nasritdinxodjaev signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to strengthen cooperation between the United States and Uzbekistan on critical minerals," the statement said.

The MOU is in line with the initiative from the C5+1 Presidential Summit to diversify global mineral supply chains and support the clean energy transition, while safeguarding the Central Asian ecosystems.

The signing ceremony took place in Tashkent, ahead of the Uzbekistan's participation in MINExpo INTERNATIONAL, the mining industry's largest global event in Las Vegas, the statement added.

Critical minerals and rare earth elements are becoming increasingly vital to economies, with the United States and Uzbekistan actively promoting private sector investment in Uzbekistan's mining sector, according to the statement.

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US Supports Return of Diplomats to N. Korea After Sweden Reopens Its Embassy - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The United States supports the return of foreign diplomats to Pyongyang after Sweden became the first Western country to reopen its embassy in North Korea following the pandemic, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

"We support the return of foreign diplomats to Pyongyang, and hope that it will reinvigorate dialog, diplomacy and other forms of constructive engagement with the DPRK," Miller said during a press briefing.

Sweden continues to be the protective power of the United States in North Korea, Miller said.

Miller also hoped Pyongyang would open its borders to international humanitarian workers.

NK News reported earlier in September citing sources in the know that Polish and British diplomats might be next to return to the country.

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UN 'Relieved' US Law Enforcement Acted Quickly, Trump Safe - Spokesperson

UNITED NATIONS, September 16 (Sputnik) - The United Nations is relieved that the relevant US security services acted quickly during the latest assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump and that he is safe, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Monday.

"We are obviously relieved that the former president is safe and law enforcement acted quickly," Dujarric told a press briefing.

On Sunday, the US Secret Service opened fire on a man who appeared to be sitting in a shooter's nest near a golf course where Trump was playing at the time. Police arrested 58-year-old Ryan Routh in connection with the incident.

The FBI said that the incident appears to be an attempted assassination of Trump. However, prosecutors have so far only charged Routh with two firearms-related offenses.

Routh was convicted of felonies in North Carolina in 2002 and 2010.

Further charges in the case are possible, US media reported on Monday, citing law enforcement officials familiar with the matter.

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US Seeking Information on Reports of 2 Americans Detained in Venezuela - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The United States is seeking more information on media reports of two additional US citizens detained in Venezuela, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

"We've seen the reports of two additional US citizens detained in Venezuela. We are seeking additional information and monitoring the situation. I don't have any further comment at this

time," Miller said during a press briefing.

On Sunday, Venezuelan Vice President and Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello said that another two US citizens and one Czech citizen were detained in Venezuela on suspicion of planning to deliver a group of mercenaries from France and Eastern Europe to the country to eliminate the Venezuelan top political leadership.

Cabello said ON Saturday that two Spanish citizens and one US citizen had been detained on suspicion of planning to murder the mayor of the city of Upata. The detainees were also suspected of planning, in coordination with the US and Spanish intelligence services, to deliver a group of mercenaries from France and Eastern Europe to Venezuela to assassinate top political figures.

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US Concerned Over Georgia's Anti-Democratic Actions, Conflicting with EU Norms -State Dept

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) — The United States is concerned about the anti-democratic actions of the Georgian government, which are incompatible with EU and NATO membership norms, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

"The United States remains deeply concerned by the ongoing anti-democratic actions of the Georgian government, which are incompatible with membership norms in the EU and NATO," Miller said during a press briefing.

Miller added that the Georgian government could reaffirm its commitment to its Euro-Atlantic goals by holding transparent elections, reversing undemocratic laws, and showing measurable progress on key EU accession reforms.

Earlier today, the US sanctioned two Georgian government officials and two private Georgian citizens for their alleged connections to human rights abuses.

The two government officials are associated with crackdowns on peaceful protesters and political opponents. The two private citizens are responsible for or complicit in violently suppressing the exercise of the freedom of assembly.

The sanctions were designated pursuant to an Executive Order that builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.

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Pentagon Received Nearly 27,000 Domestic, Child Abuse Complaints in 2023 - Report

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The US armed forces received in fiscal year 2023 almost 27,000 cases of domestic and child abuse involving the families of serving personnel, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) said in a report on Monday.

"In fiscal year 2023, the Department of Defense recorded 26,978 reports of domestic and child abuse incidents, of which 14,110 met the Defense Department definition of abuse," the GAO said in the report.

Defense Department Incident Determination Committees (IDC) reviewed thousands of reported incidents of domestic and child abuse to determine whether the incidents meet or do not meet the Defense Department's criteria for abuse, the report said.

"Defense Department and civilian officials GAO spoke with said they perceive that abuse victims and alleged abusers use IDC decisions in ways outside their intended purpose, such as in support of divorce and child custody legal proceedings," the report said.

Military service IDC decision notification processes vary and most are at least partially inconsistent with Defense Department guidance, the report added.

This variation exists because the Defense Department has not clearly communicated to the military services its guidance and expectations for the method and content of notifications, according to the report.

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FBI Leading Investigation Into Alleged Trump Assassination Attempt - US Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The FBI is leading the federal investigation into the alleged assassination attempt against former President Donald Trump, the US Justice Department said on Monday.

On Sunday, the US Secret Service opened fire on a man who appeared to be sitting in a shooter's nest near a golf course where Trump was playing at the time. Police arrested 58-year-old Ryan Routh in connection with the incident.

"The FBI is leading the ongoing investigation. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the US Secret Service are providing assistance," the Justice Department said in a statement.

The FBI said that the incident appears to be an attempted assassination of Trump. However, prosecutors have so far only charged Routh with two firearms-related offenses, the statement said.

Prosecutors charged Routh with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and possession and receipt of a firearm with an obliterated serial number, the statement said. Routh was convicted of felonies in North Carolina in 2002 and 2010, the statement said.

Further charges in the case are possible, US media reported on Monday, citing law enforcement officials familiar with the matter.

Routh is accused of fleeing from a shooter's nest in a tree line near the golf course, where he allegedly left a loaded SKS-style rifle with a scope, a digital camera and a backpack, the statement said.

A detention hearing in the case is scheduled for September 23, the statement said. The investigation remains ongoing, the statement added.

The state of Florida is also conducting its own investigation into the incident to examine potential violations of state laws, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said.

US Congressman Thomas Massie said that he does not trust the other agencies involved and is glad that Florida is conducting its own investigation.

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US Sanctions Intellexa Spyware Associates as National Security Threat - Treasury

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The US government has imposed economic sanctions on five individuals and one business entity associated with the Intellexa Consortium for developing and distributing spyware that posed an alleged security threat to the United States, the Treasury Department said in a press release on Monday.

"Today, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned five individuals and one entity associated with the Intellexa Consortium for their role in developing, operating, and distributing commercial spyware technology that presents a significant threat to the national security of the United States," the release said.

The individuals designated are top executives of the consortium and/or heads of member companies including Greek national Felix Bitzios, Merom Harpaz (Romanian national), Andrea Gambazzi (Swiss), Artemis Artemiou (Cyprus), and Panagiota Karaoli (Cyprus).

The move followed US government actions against commercial spyware vendors, including previous sanctions against individuals and entities associated with Intellexa, the release noted.

The Intellexa Consortium is a group of decentralized companies that built and commercialized spyware products, primarily marketed under the "Predator" brand name, according to the statement.

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US to Mull Other Measures if Israeli Probe of Eygi's Killing Unsatisfactory – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) – The United States will look at other steps that may need to be taken if it finds the Israeli investigation into the killing of US citizen Aysenur Ezgi Eygi unsatisfactory, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

"If the first [Israeli] investigation plays out and we are briefed on the results and we are briefed on the process and we are briefed on the underlying facts, and we're not satisfied, we will, of course, look at whether any other measures are appropriate," Miller said during a press briefing.

Eygi, a 26-year-old human rights activist, was shot in the head last Friday during a protest against Jewish settlement expansion in the Israel-occupied West Bank. The Israeli military said she was likely hit "indirectly and unintentionally" by a bullet that ricocheted off the ground.

US President Joe Biden publicly backed Israel's version of events, calling Eygi's death "the result of a tragic error." The Turkish Foreign Ministry accused the Israeli military of killing its citizens. The United Nations called for a full investigation into the activist's death.

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## Trudeau to Attend UN General Assembly, Summit of The Future in Person – Statement

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) – Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will be traveling to New York to partake in the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the Summit of the Future, the premier's office said on Monday.

The UNGA's high-level week will take place from September 24-30

"The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced that he will travel to New York City, United States of America, from September 22 to 25, 2024, to participate in the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and the Summit of the Future," the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

Trudeau intends to work on strengthening democracy, take climate action, defend global security, and enhance healthcare access in close cooperation with international partners, the statement said. The Canadian Premier will reaffirm Ottawa's commitment to advancing toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it added.

The Prime Minister will further host a conversation with his Haitian counterpart Gary Conille in a bid to mobilize the resources Port-au-Prince requires to address the multiple crises it's been facing, and support Haiti-led and focused solutions, the statement said. Trudeau will also co-host a high-level event with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to promote action on climate change, carbon pricing, and industrial decarbonization.

During his visit to the UN, the Prime Minister will also cooperate with other leaders on geopolitical challenges, including Russia's special military operation in Ukraine as well as the ongoing security situation in the Middle East, the statement noted.

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## US Congressman Massie Says Worried About Potential 'Mole' Leaking Trump Location

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - US Congressman Thomas Massie said on Monday that he is worried about a possible mole within the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) leaking information about former President Donald Trump's location after a second assassination attempt against the 2024 Republican presidential nominee.

On Sunday, the US Secret Service opened fire on a man who appeared to have been in a shooter's nest near a golf course in Florida where Trump was playing at the time. Police arrested Ryan Routh in connection with the alleged assassination attempt and prosecutors have so far charged him with two firearms-related offenses.

"Yeah. You know, 95% of these people that work there are Democrats," Massie said during an interview on the Todd Starnes Show, when asked if he is worried about a potential mole at DHS leaking Trump's whereabouts.

US President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and the media are complicit in the assassination attempts due to their rhetoric about Trump, Massie said.

Massie also said that he is glad that the state of Florida is conducting its own investigation into the incident, adding that he does not trust other agencies involved.

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US May Use Fighter, Bomber Pilots on Other Aircraft to Meet Shortages - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The US Air Force (USAF) may soon switch trained new fighter and bomber pilots to fly other types of planes due to a severe shortage of personnel, US media reports said on Monday.

Combat pilots currently graduating from training courses on standard T-38 Talon jet training aircraft may be switched over to fly other types of planes in order to cope with the shortages, according to a new Air Force policy, Defense News reported.

The publication cited an official August 2024 US Air Force service memo and said an USAF official had confirmed its authenticity, the report said.

Defense News quoted their official memo as acknowledging that the USAF was currently 1,848 pilots short of the numbers it needed, with 1,142 of them being fighter pilots.

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UN is Ready to Verify Situation in Kursk Area, Need Approval From Russia - Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, September 16 (Sputnik) - The United Nations is ready to go and verify the situation in the Kursk area but needs approval from the Russian side, UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Monday.

"The short answer from us is that we are ready to do it [verify the situation in Kursk] but we would need authorization from the Russian Federation," Dujarric told a briefing.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said Kiev invited the UN and the International Red Cross to visit settlements in Kursk. Earlier, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called the statement by Sybiha a provocation.

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Blinken, President Aliyev Discuss Peace Efforts Between Azerbaijan, Armenia – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) – US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a phone call with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev discussed efforts to reach a durable peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia among other regional and bilateral issues, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

“Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken spoke to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev today and reaffirmed the importance of a durable and dignified peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Secretary Blinken welcomed recent progress between the parties, including agreement on a border delimitation regulation,” Miller said in a press release.

Blinken and Aliyev also discussed the importance of Azerbaijani adherence to international human rights obligations and commitments, the release said.

In 2022, with mediation from Russia, the United States, and the European Union, Armenia and Azerbaijan began talks on a future peace treaty. In May 2023, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that Yerevan was ready to recognize Azerbaijan's sovereignty within its Soviet-era borders, including over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

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Two Former New York City Fire Chiefs Charged in Bribery Scandal - Court Docs

NEW YORK, September 16 (Sputnik) - Two former New York City Fire Chiefs were charged on Monday with soliciting nearly \$200,000 in bribes in exchange for preferential treatment, including expedited building inspections, court documents show.

"The defendants repeatedly abused their positions of trust as high-ranking officials in the New York City Fire Department... by soliciting and accepting tens of thousands of dollars in bribe payments in exchange for providing preferential treatment to certain individuals and companies with matters pending before the FDNY," wrote US Attorney Damian Williams in an indictment unsealed on Monday.

Brian Cordasco and Anthony Saccavino are accused of covertly partnering with an unnamed co-conspirator to start a fire safety company while both were fire chiefs. The scheme, which is alleged to have gone on between mid 2021 and early 2023, allowed businesses to pay the company to expedite necessary building inspections, according to the indictment, which was unsealed by the US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.

According to the indictment, Cordasco and Saccavino are accused of referring customers to the company and then using their authority as chiefs of the Fire Department's Bureau of Fire Prevention to pull strings. In exchange, the chiefs received a cut of the company's profits.

Cordasco and Saccavino are charged with conspiracy to solicit a bribe, solicitation and receipt of a bribe, wire fraud, conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud and making false statements.

The news comes as members of New York City Mayor Eric Adams' inner circle had their phones confiscated by federal agents earlier this month. As part of the federal investigation, the home of New York City Police Commissioner Edward Caban was raided, leading to Caban's resignation.

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#### Boeing to Furlough Workers, Pause Jet Supply Purchases - Staff Memo

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - Boeing may put its managers on unpaid leave as it freezes new hiring and executive salary hikes, pauses jet supply purchases and cuts costs on non-critical travel and airshows to deal with its first employees' strike in 16 years, according to a staff memo leaked to the media on Monday.

"Our business is in a difficult period," Boeing Chief Financial Officer Brian West said in the memo shared on the X social media platform by a reporter at Business Insider. "This strike jeopardizes our recovery in a significant way and we must take necessary actions to preserve cash and safeguard our shared future."

More than 30,000 manufacturing employees at Boeing laid down their tools on Friday in the first strike at the planemaker since 2008, landing the company - already wallowing in \$60 billion debt and multiple safety issues - into a deeper crisis.

West said Boeing will make significant reductions in supplier expenditures and stop issuing the majority of supplier purchase orders on the 737, 767 and 777 programs.

"We are also considering the difficult step of temporary furloughs for many employees, managers and executives in the coming weeks," West said.

Furloughs refer to temporary work stoppage where employees retain their jobs without pay.

West said Boeing was instituting a hiring freeze at all levels and pausing on pay increases for internal executive and management promotions.

Other actions include eliminating all first and business class travel, including for the "Executive Council"; reducing company participation in airshows, trade shows and special events; abolishing non-customer catered meal and food services; and keeping staff meetings virtual whenever possible.

West projected last week that Boeing might take longer to achieve its goal of producing up to 38 aircraft per month by the end of the year. The company has orders for more than 5,500 airplanes but production is below expectation due to manufacturing issues and labor shortages. There are about 70 aircraft in the company's inventory now.

Fitch Ratings has cautioned that if the strike drags on with no conclusion in sight, Boeing may have to access new liquidity sources to adhere to its cash targets. That could bring more strain on a company that has already lost \$8 billion this year. The previous strike in 2008 lasted more than 50 days and incurred the company an estimated loss of \$3 billion.

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UN ready to verify the situation in the occupied Kursk areas but it needs Russia's authorization - spokesperson

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UPDATE- Trump Says Biden, Harris Rhetoric Main Cause of Assassination Attempts on Him

(Update: adds statement, background in paras 7-8, edits throughout)

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said on Monday that US President Joe Biden's and Vice President Kamala Harris' rhetoric is the main cause of the assassination attempts on him.

Fox News quoted Trump as saying in an interview that the language his Democratic political opponents use against him is what has caused him to be the victim of two assassination attempts, including the second one allegedly committed by Ryan Routh on Sunday.

"He [Routh] believed the rhetoric of Biden and Harris and he acted on it," Trump said. "Their rhetoric is causing me to be shot at, when I am the one who is going to save the country, and they are the ones that are destroying the country – both from the inside and out."

The second alleged assassination attempt on Trump occurred on Sunday at the Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Florida, while the former president was playing golf.

Police said US Secret Service agents opened fire on the gunman, who was hiding in the bushes. Routh fled the scene but was later apprehended by the authorities. An AK-47-style rifle was found at the scene along with two backpacks and a GoPro camera. Authorities are treating the incident as an assassination attempt.

Following the incident, Biden said in a statement that he was relieved that Trump was unharmed after the assassination attempt on him.

Trump also said in a social media post on Monday that the situation will "only get worse," adding that "bullets are flying" because of the rhetoric against him.

Prosecutors charged Routh with two firearms-related offenses on Monday amid an initial court appearance in Florida. Further charges are reportedly possible as the investigation continues.

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"He [Routh] believed the rhetoric of Biden and Harris and he acted on it," Trump said. "Their

rhetoric is causing me to be shot at, when I am the one who is going to save the country, and they are the ones that are destroying the country - both from the inside and out."

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FBI Cites 2002 WMD Charge in Complaint Against Trump Assassination Suspect - Affidavit

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The FBI cited a 2002 weapons of mass destruction (WMD) charge in an affidavit filed on Monday in support of a criminal complaint against the suspect arrested in connection with an alleged assassination attempt against former US President Donald Trump.

Police arrested Ryan Routh in connection with the alleged assassination attempt and prosecutors charged him with two firearms-related offenses. However, further charges are reportedly possible as the investigation proceeds.

"A review of law enforcement indices reflected that, on or about December 20, 2002, Routh was convicted in Greensboro, North Carolina, of possession of a weapon of mass death and destruction," the affidavit said.

Moreover, Routh was also convicted of multiple counts of possession of stolen goods in 2010, the affidavit said.

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US Completes Withdrawal of Military Personnel, Assets From Niger - Africa Command

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The United States has completed the withdrawal of military personnel and assets from its bases in Niger, the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) said on Monday.

"The US Department of Defense and the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Niger announce that the withdrawal of US forces and assets from Niger is complete," AFRICOM said in a press release. "

In addition, the US Africa Command's coordination element, consisting of a two-star general officer and staff, has departed from Niger, the release said.

In July, the United States completed the withdrawal of its forces and assets from Air Base 101

near Niamey. Air Base 201 in Niger's Agadez was fully vacated on August 5.

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#### Security Incidents Targeting UN Convoys Unacceptable, Protocols Must be Enforced

UNITED NATIONS, September 16 (Sputnik) - Security incidents in Gaza targeting UN convoys are unacceptable and agreed protocols need to be implemented, UN Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza Sigrid Kaag said on Monday.

"Recent security incidents, including shootings at humanitarian convoys, are unacceptable and demonstrate that agreed protocols and procedures still need comprehensive on time implementation," Kaag said in the Security Council chamber to his colleagues during a meeting on Gaza.

In addition, she said that the United Nations also urgently needs to bring in more security communications and tracking equipment in order to work in Gaza.

Last week, Israeli military forces detained a convoy of UN vehicles in the Gaza Strip for over six hours.

Late August, Israeli Defense Forces shot at a "clearly marked" UN humanitarian vehicle in the Gaza Strip.

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#### DeSantis Says Trump Assassination Attempt Suspect Likely Violated Florida State Law

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The man arrested in connection with an alleged assassination attempt against former US President Donald Trump likely violated Florida state laws in addition to federal ones, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said on Monday.

"We do believe that there were multiple violations of state law," DeSantis said during a press conference.

On Sunday, the US Secret Service opened fire on a man in what appeared to be a shooter's nest near a golf course on which Trump was playing. Law enforcement authorities arrested Ryan Routh after the incident, for which he currently faces two firearms-related charges.

DeSantis said that Florida will conduct its own investigation into the alleged assassination attempt.

There is a need for the truth about the incident to come out in a "credible" way, DeSantis said.

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UPDATE 2 – Suspect in Trump Assassination Attempt Hit With 2 Gun Charges - Reports

(Adds details in paras 7-8)

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - Prosecutors charged a man arrested after an alleged assassination attempt against former US President Donald Trump with two firearm-related offenses, ABC News reported on Monday.

The suspect, Ryan Wesley Routh, is charged with possession of a firearm as a convicted felon and possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number, the report said, citing a reporter inside the federal courthouse in Florida.

A detention hearing is scheduled for September 23, followed by the arraignment on September 30, according to CNN.

On Sunday, the US Secret Service opened fire on what appeared to be a shooter's nest near a golf course on which Trump was playing. US law enforcement is treating the incident as an assassination attempt.

During the Monday court appearance, prosecutors requested that Routh be held in pre-trial detention, the CNN report said. Prosecutors cited a flight risk and danger to the community, the report added.

The judge found that Routh could not afford his own attorney due to having "zero funds" in savings, the report said.

Routh could face additional charges as investigators continue to examine the incident, the report said, citing law enforcement officials familiar with the matter.

The firearms-related charges were filed in order to keep Routh detained, the report said.

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Trump Blames Biden-Harris Rhetoric for Latest Assassination Attempt

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UN Security Council Should Act in Unity on Gaza, Not Issue 'Hypocritical Calls' - Nebenzia

UNITED NATIONS, September 16 (Sputnik) - The UN Security Council should act with unity on the issue of Gaza but has instead only issued empty and hypocritical calls, Russian Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia said on Monday.

"Unfortunately, we do not see this happening and we continue to hear empty and hypocritical calls in this chamber," Nebenzia said during a meeting of the UN Security Council on the situation in Gaza.

The Russian ambassador emphasized that he hopes the UN Security Council will act responsibly.

Earlier on Monday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that the United States is hampering any attempts to establish a ceasefire in Gaza and the conflict there remains the main international problem.

Nebenzia noted that the latest resolution adopted by the UN Security Council calling for a

ceasefire in Gaza has not been implemented and called for its prompt implementation.

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Suspect in Trump Assassination Attempt Hit With 2 Gun Charges - Reports

(Update: adds details in paras 5-6)

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#### Trump to Meet US Secret Service Director After 2nd Assassination Attempt - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - Former President Donald Trump is set to meet with acting US Secret Service Director Ronald Rowe later on Monday after an attempt to his life at a Florida golf course, the Washington Post reported.

Trump is also scheduled to unveil a new cryptocurrency business, the report said.

On Sunday, a shooting occurred at a golf course in Florida, where Trump was present. The assailant fled the scene and attempted to escape in a vehicle, but was apprehended by the authorities. An AK-47 with a telescopic sight, two backpacks and a GoPro camera were found near where the shooter was spotted.

The US authorities are treating the incident as an attempted assassination of Trump.

US Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene identified the assassin as Ryan Wesley Routh.

The suspect's identity has not been publicly confirmed by law enforcement.

Routh has been a fanatical supporter of the United States proxy war in Ukraine and involved in recruiting mercenaries, according to his social media accounts. Routh is author of the book "Unwinnable War" in which he describes his time in the International Legion attached to the Ukrainian military.

In July, 20-year-old Thomas Crooks tried to assassinate Trump at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, but the bullet grazed Trump's right ear. US Secret Service agents killed the gunman moments after he was able to fire several rounds toward the stage, killing one spectator and critically injuring two others.

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#### Trump Says Leaving 'Slow, Outdated Banks' Behind With His New Crypto Platform

NEW YORK, September 16 (Sputnik) - Former US president Donald Trump says he will be embracing the future and leaving behind "slow, outdated banks" with the launch on Monday of a cryptocurrency platform designed by his teenaged son and backed by his two adult sons.

Eighteen-year-old Barron Trump, a first-year student at New York University, is project visionary for the World Liberty Financial platform promoted by his adult brothers Eric and Donald Trump Jr.

"We're embracing the future with crypto and leaving the slow and outdated big banks behind," Trump said in a video posted on the X social media site.

Few other details are known of the project, which Eric Trump says will promote "financial independence" and Donald Trump Jr claims will "make finance great again" — a play on Trump's long-running political mantra of "Making America Great Again."

Trump, who's running to be president again in November's election, wasn't a crypto fan when in office between 2016 and 2020. Then, he described it as something that "can facilitate unlawful behavior, including drug trade and other illegal activity."

But with research showing that 43% of American men aged between 18 and 20 have invested in, traded or used cryptocurrency at some point, the Republican Party nominee for president seems to have had a change of heart.

Still, Trump's deeper foray into crypto might bring unwelcome risks to his White House campaign, Nic Carter, an investor in such ventures, warned.

"I think it genuinely damages Trump's electoral prospects, especially if it gets hacked (it'll be the juiciest DeFi target ever ...)," Carter wrote on the X site. Describing it as an "obvious choice" for regulators from the Securities and Exchange Commission to target, he said the platform was "at best ... an unnecessary distraction, at worst ... a huge embarrassment and source of (additional) legal trouble" for Trump, who's already convicted for felony and faces multiple civil lawsuits too."

Even before its launch, World Liberty Financial's website's had been targeted by hackers, reports said. Earlier this month, unauthorized posts appeared on the X social media accounts of Lara Trump and Tiffany Trump — daughter-in-law and daughter, respectively, to Trump — directing users to a fake version of the crypto platform's website. Eric Trump, husband to Lara, then said the X profiles of his wife, as well as that of sister Tiffany, "have become compromised" and the redirects were a scam.

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#### US Sanctions 4 Georgian Citizens for Alleged Human Rights Abuses - Treasury

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The United States sanctioned two Georgian government officials and two private Georgian citizens for their alleged connections to human rights abuses, the US Treasury Department said on Monday.

The two government officials are associated with crackdowns on peaceful protesters and political opponents, the Treasury Department said in a statement. The two private citizens are responsible for or complicit in violently suppressing the exercise of the freedom of assembly, the statement said.

"Today's action underscores our concern about the consequences of anti-democratic actions in Georgia and efforts by key individuals to use violence and intimidation to achieve their aims," the statement said.

The sanctions target the Chief of the Special Task Department, Zviad Kharazishvili, and his deputy Mileri Lagazauri. Konstantine Morgoshia, a founder of the Alt-Info media company, and Zurab Makharadze, an associated media personality, were also targeted, according to the statement.

The sanctions were designated pursuant to an Executive Order that builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, the statement said.

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## NATO Does Not See Changes in Russia's Nuclear Posture - Stoltenberg

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - Outgoing NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Monday that the military alliance has not seen changes in Russia's nuclear posture that require a response, according to his interview with Foreign Policy.

"We are monitoring very closely what Russia is doing. So far, we haven't seen any changes in their nuclear posture that require any changes from our side," Stoltenberg said.

Stoltenberg reiterated that Russian President Vladimir Putin's nuclear threats were "reckless" and "a nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought."

NATO had the right to support Ukraine without becoming a party to the conflict, Stoltenberg also said.

The alliance did not regard Iran or North Korea, which are supplying weapons to Russia, as parties to the conflict, Stoltenberg added.

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## Man Suspected of Trump Assassination Attempt Arrives at US Court in Florida - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 16 (Sputnik) - The man suspected of attempting to assassinate former President Donald Trump arrived at a US federal court in Florida for an initial appearance, CNN reported on Monday.

The suspect, Ryan Wesley Routh, arrived at the courthouse with his hands and feet in shackles, the report said.

On Sunday, Routh was arrested after the US Secret Service opened fire on what appeared to be a shooter's nest near a golf course in Florida where Trump was playing.

The US authorities are treating the incident as an assassination attempt although the exact charges against Routh remain unclear.

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## Stoltenberg Says Up to Individual NATO Allies to Decide to What Extent They Restrict Weapons They Provide to Ukraine

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## Suspect in Trump's Second Assassination Attempt Enters Courtroom in Shackles - CNN