

10/7/24 Monday

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Fearful of the Public, Western Leaders Turn to Censorship

On Saturday, former US First Lady Hillary Clinton called for increased federal regulation of the internet and repealing Section 230. "If the platforms... don't moderate and monitor the content, we lose total control," she said, raising the question of who "we" represents in that statement. The recent purge of YouTube accounts, including those from Mark Sleboda, Rachel Blevins, Glenn Diesen, DD Geopolitics, Fiorella Isabel, Larry Johnson, and Eva K. Bartlett, it is clear that the Western leaders are scared of their populations finding out the truth about their policies and actions.

"We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people," Former US President John F. Kennedy.

"That's what they're afraid of," Sleboda, an expert in geopolitical relations and a frequent guest on Sputnik Radio, [told The Final Countdown](#). "They don't trust you to hear an alternate view from the official US government narrative and come to what they consider the right political conclusions."

Many Americans were taught that freedom was proof-positive that Western-style democracies were superior to other systems.

In separate interviews, Sleboda and Blevins both said that their channels were taken down without warning or strikes. Both were accused of violating YouTube's policies on hate speech and said their appeals were denied within minutes.

"Just anyone who is critical of a US foreign policy, of hegemony, has had their YouTube channels deleted," Sleboda contended.

While the censorship technically came from Alphabet, the mega-monolith tech company that owns both Google and YouTube, a comprehensive program between the US government and large social media companies has slowly been revealed over the past couple of years making the line one without distinction.

"My lawyer called that First Amendment censorship via proxy, or government censorship via proxy," Political cartoonist and The Final Countdown co-host Ted Rall explained. "The US government has reached out to big tech companies, talked to people like [Meta* CEO] Mark Zuckerberg and so on, and said, 'we want you to control and squish what we call misinformation and disinformation.'"

With the internet practically ubiquitous in modern society, an expansion of the First Amendment to public and private sectors of the internet is needed to protect our speech rights.

"What does the First Amendment actually mean in today's age when just about everyone is on social media or on the internet in some way, and it has become sort of the new public square?" [asked Blevins](#), an independent journalist, and host of The Backstory on Radio Sputnik. "What

are we okay with when it comes to the ongoing censorship? Because I don't think it's going away anytime soon."

Even if the government were removed from the equation, and censorship came exclusively from the tech companies themselves they have become so powerful that acts of self-censorship would be indistinguishable from government-ordered censorship, especially during wartime. In post-9/11 America, large media companies kept dissenting voices off the air, limiting the reach of those who, for example, opposed the war in Iraq.

"And you get that corporate mentality of what will the advertisers think?" legendary Gonzo journalist Hunter S Thompson argued in an August 2002 interview with Media Report. "A kind of we're all in this together thinking." The consolidation of the internet from disparate groups of message boards and newsgroups into a handful of omnipresent tech companies raises that specter again.

"As we saw this weekend, YouTube can come in and just delete your channel and take your life's work away from you," decried Blevin, noting that her channel was backed up on the free speech platform Rumble.

The majority of the deleted accounts offered views that opposed the NATO-led proxy war in Ukraine and/or Western support of Israel. As the war drums beat ever louder in Europe, the Middle East, and the South Pacific, not to mention the US Presidential election next month, the crackdown is likely to increase.

"They haven't really thrown out the term election interference just yet, but I have a feeling that's coming in some way," warned Blevins.

"We'll tell our grandchildren about the golden age of a global internet," before censorship took it over, predicted Sleboda. "I think we're going to see our internet fractured into either individual states' internets or geopolitical block's internets. And I think the process has already begun," he warned.

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US Pushed UK Into Ceding Chagos Over Fear of Losing Control of Military Base – Reports

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration pressured the United Kingdom into relinquishing sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago to Mauritius due to fear of losing control over the strategically important military base on Diego Garcia, The Telegraph reported.

Last week, the UK government announced that it was yielding the sovereignty over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, while ensuring the operation of the joint US-UK military facility on Diego Garcia for "an initial period of 99 years." US President Joe Biden in a statement praised the "historic agreement."

Days after the Labour Party won the July general election, senior White House and State Department officials told the incoming government that refusing to give up the Chagos Islands to the former colony would put the US-UK special relationship at risk, the newspaper reported late on Monday.

US officials were reportedly concerned that in absence of a deal, Mauritius would successfully apply to the International Court of Justice for a binding ruling to obtain sovereignty of the

islands. The development could complicate the operation of the base, which was previously used by the US to bomb Iraq and Afghanistan, the report said.

American officials communicated to the Foreign Office that a deal should be sealed before the US and Mauritian elections in November, the report said.

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US Concerns About China's Support of Russian Defense Industrial Base Growing - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) – US concerns about China's "strong support" for the Russian defense industrial base are growing, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Kritenbrink said on Tuesday.

"Our concerns regarding China's strong support for the Russian defense industrial base remain. They are ongoing, and I would say they are growing," Kritenbrink told reporters during a press briefing.

The US made crystal clear the depth of its concerns and warned about the consequences of such support, he added.

"We will continue to take steps together with partners elsewhere, including in Europe, to curb that behavior going forward," Kritenbrink said.

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Blinken Has No Meetings Scheduled With Chinese Officials During ASEAN Summit – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) - The State Department has nothing to announce regarding US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's meeting with Chinese counterparts during the upcoming ASEAN summit in Laos, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Kritenbrink said on Tuesday.

"As far as any engagements with the PRC [are concerned], I certainly don't have anything to announce today," Kritenbrink said during a press briefing.

Kritenbrink noted that several topics related to China will be discussed during the ASEAN summit, including the situation in the South China Sea.

The 45th ASEAN summit will take place between October 6 and October 11 in Vientiane, Laos.

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US Remains 'Deeply Concerned' Over Burmese Junta Plans Hold Elections – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) – The United States remains "deeply concerned" about plans by the Burmese military junta to hold elections in 2025 under the current political conditions, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs Daniel Kritenbrink said

on Tuesday.

"We remain deeply concerned by the regime's stated plans to hold elections," Kritenbrink told reporters "Any elections under current conditions would stand no chance of expressing the will of the people of Burma."

The US official said the military junta has yet to make any progress on the ASEAN Five Points consensus or in taking the necessary steps for reducing widespread violence that would make elections credible and safe once more.

Moreover, Washington is concerned that "premature elections" would not lead to genuine peace and reconciliation, Kritenbrink said.

In late-September the Burmese military-established State Administration Council proposed that all armed groups opposing it come to the negotiating table and participate in general elections. The council emphasized the damage done to Myanmar's population and infrastructure, saying that the country's stability and development are blocked due to the ongoing conflict.

In February 2021, the military seized power in Myanmar using a constitutional mechanism for transferring powers in an emergency situation. The military arrested government officials, accusing them of rigging the general election, and later appointed a new administration. Myanmar has been facing economic sanctions since the takeover.

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us concerns about china's support of russian industrial base are growing - state department

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Biden to Skip ASEAN Summit in Laos, US to be Represented by Blinken - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden will skip the ASEAN summit in Laos this week, with the American delegation to be represented by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Kritenbrink said on Tuesday.

"While the President will not attend the ASEAN leaders summit this year, there should be absolutely no doubts regarding his and the United States' strong commitment to the region," Kritenbrink told reporters.

Blinken will represent the US at the summit, Kritenbrink added.

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US Imports From Russia in August Fall to Lowest Level Since 1993 - Commerce Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) - The United States imported \$84.4 million worth of Russian goods in August, the lowest amount since 1993, amid the Biden administration's aggressive sanctions and trade policy against Moscow, according to Commerce Department

data published on Tuesday.

The amount of imports has not been lower since February 1993, when they stood at \$78.9 million, according to data from the Commerce Department's Census Bureau.

Meanwhile, US exports to Russia in August reached their highest level in nearly a year at \$54.5 million, according to the data.

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SpaceX May Try First Catch of Starship Super Heavy Rocket at Launch Site on Sunday

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) - SpaceX hopes to make its first ever attempt to catch Starship's Super Heavy rocket with the launch tower's retractable arms as soon as Sunday in Texas, the company said in a statement.

"Starship's fifth flight test could launch as soon as October 13, pending regulatory approval," SpaceX said. "The primary objectives will be attempting the first ever return to launch site and catch of the Super Heavy booster and another Starship reentry and landing burn, aiming for an on-target splashdown of Starship in the Indian Ocean."

SpaceX is designing the Starship spacecraft and its Super Heavy booster rocket to be reusable for multi planetary missions to the Moon and Mars.

The catch attempt will only be possible if conditions are right, the company noted.

"Thousands of distinct vehicle and pad criteria must be met prior to a return and catch attempt of the Super Heavy booster, which will require healthy systems on the booster and tower and a manual command from the mission's Flight Director," SpaceX said.

If SpaceX aborts the catch attempt at the launch tower, the Super Heavy booster will simulate a landing attempt in the Gulf of Mexico.

SpaceX said it still needs approval from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to attempt the fifth flight test of the fully stacked Starship Super Heavy rocket.

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Trump Says Biden's Hurricane Helene Response 'Weak', Calls for Stronger Action on Milton

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump said that the Biden administration's response to Hurricane Helene had been "unbelievably weak," urging for stronger action as Florida braces for Hurricane Milton.

"The response has been very weak, unbelievably weak. Nobody's ever seen such a weak response, so we have to get a strong response, and now we have another one coming, and it

looks like it's going to be a whopper," Trump said on Monday evening during an event in Florida. Criticism mounts over the Biden administration's handling of Hurricane Helene. Republicans have targeted FEMA for allegedly spending \$1 billion on services for illegal immigrants last year, claiming it weakened the agency's readiness.

Furthermore, President Biden has urged Congress to pass emergency relief funding quickly, but lawmakers won't reconvene until November 12. Biden may request additional funds before his term ends, while House Speaker Mike Johnson indicated that Congress would likely delay approval until after the election.

Hurricane Helene made landfall in the southeastern United States on September 26, causing significant damage in several states. The death toll from the storm is at least 227 people.

Additionally, Florida faces a threat from Hurricane Milton, which is projected to hit the state's coast on Wednesday evening. The storm strengthened to a category 5 hurricane on Monday.

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Trump Promises 'Stronger Than Ever' US-Israel Relationship If He Wins Election

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump said that if he became the president again, the relationship between Israel and the United States would be even stronger than ever before.

"If and when I'm President of the United States, it will, once again, be stronger and closer than it ever was before," Trump said on Monday evening during an event in Florida.

Trump added that he was committed to protecting the Jewish state and American Jewish communities, pledging to prevent threats against Israel and support its fight against terrorism.

On October 7, 2023, Israel was subjected to an unprecedented rocket attack from the Gaza Strip. In addition, fighters of Palestinian movement Hamas infiltrated the border areas, opened fire on the military and civilians, and took hostages.

Israeli authorities say that about 1,200 people were killed during the raid. The Israel Defense Forces launched Operation Iron Swords in the Gaza Strip and announced a complete blockade of the enclave. The death toll from the Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip since October 7 has exceeded 41,900, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza.

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Biden Ending Campaign Sets Chance for Russia, US to Advance Prisoner Swaps - Negotiator

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden's decision to not seek reelection sets up a unique opportunity for Russia and the United States to make meaningful advancements on additional prisoner exchange deals between the two countries, Global Reach CEO Mickey Bergman told Sputnik.

Global Reach is a non-profit organization that negotiates the release of Americans who are detained abroad by criminal gangs, terrorist groups, or foreign governments. Bergman also

worked several years alongside the late Bill Richardson, who negotiated the release of many Americans held overseas and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize several times.

"With President Biden not running for re-election, there is an opportunity to advance the mutual repatriation of nationals between Russia and the US," Bergman said. "That opportunity exists currently and will last until January 20th, when the next President is inaugurated - regardless of who that is. The window of opportunity becomes even greater between November 5th and January 20th, though it is already open."

Both Democratic candidate Kamala Harris and Republican candidate Donald Trump are expected to set the return of detained Americans from Russia as one of their key objectives, but it is hard to anticipate how their efforts will be shaped, Bergman said.

Harris and Trump have extremely different approaches to the issue of prisoners and how it relates to other bilateral and multilateral issues of concern, Bergman added.

"I believe it is in the best interest of both President [Vladimir] Putin and President Biden to use the time until January 20th to find a way to repatriate the nationals of each country," Bergman said.

One of the largest prisoner swaps between Moscow and Washington took place in early August, bringing Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and former Marine Paul Whelan back to the United States.

The list of Russians returned home included Artem and Anna Dultsev together with their underage children, Pavel Rubtsov, Vadim Konoshchenok, Mikhail Mikushin, Roman Seleznev, Vladislav Klyushin, and Vadim Sokolov.

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Trump Says His First Immediate Instinct After Butler Rally Shooting Was to Resume Speech

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) - Former President Donald Trump told Fox News that his first immediate instinct after a failed assassination attempt on his life at a campaign rally in July was to resume his speech.

"My first instinct was to finish my speech. It's crazy," Trump said in an interview that aired on Monday.

Trump also disclosed that the US Secret Service thought he was shot at least three times because he had so much blood all over his clothes.

Trump mentioned that he thought the shooter's bullet went through the top part of his right ear but it was only grazed.

The Republican presidential candidate explained that the US Secret Service wanted to take him out on a stretcher but he decided it would be a bad look for him so he raised his fist to let his supporters know he was well.

Trump returned to Butler, Pennsylvania, on Saturday to make up for the campaign rally that was disrupted by the assassination attempt on July 13.

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Thousands of Pro-Palestine Protesters Rally in New York on Anniversary of Israel Attack

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) - Thousands of people gathered in New York City on Monday for a pro-Palestine protest on the one-year anniversary of Palestinian group Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel, a Sputnik correspondent reports.

At approximately 5:10 p.m. ET (12:10 a.m. Moscow time), the demonstrators reached Grand Central Station, after having marched around a number of other locations in the city.

Police are monitoring the protest and conducting traffic control operations.

There have not been mass arrests or major clashes between the protestors and law enforcement officers, according to the correspondent.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an attack on Israel, killing some 1,200 people and taking hundreds of hostages. Israel subsequently launched a military operation in the Gaza Strip, killing more than 41,000 people in the Palestinian enclave, according to local health authorities.

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US Intelligence Claims Russia Targeted Swing States Ahead of Presidential Election

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) – The US intelligence community believes Russia has been engaged in influence operations in US swing states ahead of the presidential election, a senior official said during a press briefing.

“Russia in particular, has targeted swing states for a variety of its influence efforts and a lot of the operations we see across the country, but in swing states in particular, are information operations to include social media activity, fake websites that purport to be US news websites and similar activity,” a senior US intelligence official said on Monday.

At the same time, the official could not clarify whether the purported Russian operations affected the upcoming election.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said that it is not Russia's job to interfere in US elections and that the winners will be chosen by the American people.

Swing states are those where neither of the US political parties, Democratic and Republican, has a clear advantage among voters. The US states of Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin are considered swing states in this presidential campaign.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) -

TENSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- * Israel said on Friday that its aircraft have attacked more than 120 targets of the Lebanese movement Hezbollah in southern part of the country.
- * Israel also said that five border settlements in the north of the country are a closed military zone.
- * Hezbollah said its fighters conducted a massive rocket attack on the Israeli city of Haifa.
- * Russia maintains contacts with Israel but Russian President Vladimir Putin is not scheduled to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said.

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

- * Russia will continue to inform the Chemical Weapons Convention countries and UN members about Ukraine's use of toxic chemicals as well as about its planned provocations, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Monday.
- * The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) has recorded multiple contacts between emissaries of the Ukrainian intelligence services and heads of various terrorist groups in Syria, aimed at sabotaging Russian facilities in the country, SVR Director Sergei Naryshkin said.
- * Western intelligence services, primarily the United Kingdom's MI6, have been training Ukrainian sabotage groups to commit provocations at Russian nuclear power plants, Naryshkin said.
- * The US intelligence services have been providing Ukraine with information for strikes on Russian civilian infrastructure since the beginning of the conflict, Naryshkin, said.
- * Russia's army group Center has taken control of the village of Grodovka in the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), the Russian Defense Ministry said.

US FOREIGN MILITARY SALES

- * The Biden administration has approved the sale of 53 lightweight torpedoes to India for \$175 million, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) announced in a press release on Monday.
- * The US State Department has approved a potential \$110 million sale of four Sentinel Radar Systems and related equipment to the government of Romania, the DSCA said.
- * The US State Department has approved a potential \$680 million sale of the Electronic Attack Mission System and related equipment to the government of Italy, the DSCA said.

US-RUSSIA SPACE COOPERATION

- * The United States and Russia are committed to continuing cross flights to the International Space Station (ISS), NASA Administrator Bill Nelson told Sputnik on Monday.
- * The work between Russia and the United States on the International Space Station (ISS) is a "phenomenal example" of cooperation between the two countries, Nelson told Sputnik.
- * The United States and Russia will sign a new deal to fly integrated crews on American crew spacecraft and on the Soyuz spacecraft in another year or so, Nelson told Sputnik.

SITUATION IN RUSSIA'S BORDER REGIONS

* The Russian forces have eliminated about 150 Ukrainian soldiers, three armored combat vehicles, as well as two artillery pieces, four mortars in the border areas of Russia's Kursk Region over the past day, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Friday.

* The Russian Investigative Committee told Sputnik that it will request information from the Russian Defense Ministry on the use of chemical weapons in the Kursk region and will give a legal assessment of this information as part of the investigation of criminal cases.

* The Ukrainian armed forces planned to seize and plant bombs at the Kursk nuclear power plant during the August attack on the region, Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) Director Sergei Naryshkin said.

CIS LEADERS MEETING

* Russian President Vladimir Putin at the CIS summit in Moscow will invite the leaders of the commonwealth countries to take part in a meeting in the BRICS+ format in Kazan at the end of October, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said on Monday.

* The next regular informal summit of the leaders of the CIS countries will be held in St. Petersburg at the end of December, Ushakov said.

* The informal meeting of the CIS leaders scheduled for this evening will be a kind of preparation for the summit, which will take place tomorrow in Moscow, where the leaders will discuss regional and international issues, Ushakov said.

RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR ANOTONOV'S RETURN FROM US

* The return of Russian Ambassador to Washington Anatoly Antonov from the United States cannot be considered a downgrade of diplomatic relations, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

* Antonov worked in difficult conditions without having regular contacts with representatives of the US administration, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said.

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Foreign Actors Mulling Possibility of Another Contested US Presidential Election - ODNI

WASHINGTON, October 8 (Sputnik) - Foreign actors are considering the possibility of another contested presidential vote in the United States, an official from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) told reporters.

"As we approach election day, the intelligence community is also stressing that foreign efforts to undermine America's democracy won't end on November 5. The intelligence community expects foreign influence actors to continue their campaigns by calling into question the validity of the election's results after the polls close," the official said on Monday. "These Foreign actors are almost certainly considering the possibility of another contested presidential election."

The US presidential election will take place on November 5.

The Democratic Party will be represented by Vice President Kamala Harris, and the Republican Party by former President Donald Trump.

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China Not Seeking To Influence US Presidential Election - Senior Intelligence Official

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) -China is not aiming to influence the upcoming presidential election in the US, an ODNI official said in a press briefing on Monday.

"We also continue to assess that China is not seeking to influence the presidential election," the official said.

However, Beijing is focusing on influencing congressional races, targeting candidates who are perceived to support its strategic interests, particularly concerning Taiwan, he added.

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US Intel Community Claims Russia Favors Trump, Iran Favors Harris

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The US intelligence community claims that Russia favors former President Donald Trump, while Iran is in favor of Vice President Kamala Harris, an official from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) said in a press briefing on Monday.

"On the presidential race, the intelligence community continues to assess that Russia prefers the former president, and Iran prefers the vice president," the official said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said that it is not Russia's job to interfere in US elections and that the winners will be chosen by the American people.

In July, Peskov called accusations of Russian interference in US elections "absurd" and rejected them.

The US presidential election will take place on November 5. The Democratic Party will be represented by Vice President Kamala Harris, and the Republican Party by former President Donald Trump.

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White House Says Still Concerned About Potential for Another January 6 Riot After Election

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The White House still remains concerned about the possibility that there might not be a peaceful transfer of power following the US presidential election, Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Monday.

"I think the President and myself and many others have spoken to what we saw on January 6 of 2021 and so obviously there's always concerns," Jean-Pierre said.

Jean-Pierre added that Biden believes the US presidential in November will be free and fair.

A Sputnik correspondent reported on Monday that the White House has been fenced off as a security measure ahead of the upcoming US elections in November.

The enhanced security measures will remain in place until the inauguration of the new US president, which will take place on January 20.

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Harris Says Reuniting Hostages in Gaza With Families is Top Priority

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - US Vice President Kamala Harris said on Monday that the priority is reuniting hostages held in Gaza with their families and emphasized her commitment to securing the release of all hostages, including American citizens.

"We must reunite the hostages held in Gaza with their families, and I will never stop fighting for the release of all the hostages, including the American citizens living and deceased," Harris said during the planting of a memorial tree on the White House grounds.

Harris added that she reaffirms her commitment to ensuring Israel has the necessary support for its defense and prioritizes the safety and security of Jewish people globally.

On October 7, 2023, Israel was subjected to an unprecedented rocket attack from the Gaza Strip. In addition, fighters of Palestinian movement Hamas infiltrated the border areas, opened fire on the military and civilians, and took hostages.

Israeli authorities say that about 1,200 people were killed during the raid. The Israel Defense Forces launched Operation Iron Swords in the Gaza Strip and announced a complete blockade of the enclave. The death toll from the Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip since October 7 has exceeded 41,900, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza.

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Financial Times Claims Secret Talks Exist About Possible Ukraine-Russia Deal to End Crisis

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The Financial Times editorial board said in an op-ed published on Monday that there are secret talks allegedly mulling the idea of Ukraine giving up land that Russia gained in the conflict in exchange for Kiev being allowed to have certain NATO-like security guarantees.

"There is talk behind closed doors of a deal in which Moscow retains de facto control over the roughly one-fifth of Ukraine it has occupied - though Russia's sovereignty is not recognized - while the rest of the country is allowed to join NATO or given equivalent security guarantees," the board said.

Under this deal, Ukraine could rebuild and integrate with the European Union, according to the board.

Ukrainian officials have reportedly acknowledged in private that they lack the manpower, weapons and Western support to recover all territory seized by Russia in the conflict.

The report also said Ukraine's allies have been distracted by the escalating tensions in the Middle East, and a potential Trump presidency may also slow the amount of security assistance making its way to Ukraine under the Biden administration.

The Financial Times editorial board urges President Joe Biden and his European allies to bolster Ukraine's security as much as possible over the next three months in case former President Donald Trump wins the presidential election in November and has plans to cut aid to Ukraine.

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US Working with Rwanda to Combat Marburg Virus Outbreak - White House

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) — The Biden-Harris Administration is working closely with Rwanda's government to end the Marburg Virus Disease (MVD) outbreak, the White House said in a statement on Monday.

"The Biden-Harris Administration is working closely with the Government of Rwanda to end the MVD outbreak as quickly as possible," the statement read.

According to the statement, the United States has allocated nearly \$11 million to support urgent health needs in Rwanda and nearby countries, focusing on surveillance, contact tracing, infection control, and exit screening at the airport and border crossings.

"CDC deployed three senior scientists to Rwanda to support its response. Although there are currently no FDA-approved vaccines or drugs against MVD, the United States contributed hundreds of investigational vaccine doses and a small number of investigational therapeutics doses, which arrived in Rwanda this weekend," the statement said.

The statement added that the US provided over 500 MVD tests and 500 units of personal protective equipment to Rwanda for aid.

Rwanda declared its first-ever outbreak of Marburg virus disease on September 27. At least nine people have died from it so far.

The virus causes severe viral hemorrhagic fever in humans, is transmitted to people from fruit bats, and spreads through direct contact with infected biological fluids. The disease begins acutely, with high fever, severe headache, and malaise. According to the WHO, there are no vaccines or antiviral medications authorized for its treatment.

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White House Fenced Off Amid Security Measure for Upcoming US Elections

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The White House in Washington has been fenced off as a security measure for the upcoming US elections in November, a Sputnik correspondent reported on Monday.

The White House is being surrounded by an additional two-meter fence along the perimeter of the territory, where the president's residence and offices are located. The fenced off territory now includes Lafayette Square.

During the election campaign in 2020, the closed off area was expanded as Election Day approached. After the events at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, the authorities erected

fences throughout the center of Washington.

The enhanced security measures will remain in place until the inauguration of the new US president, which will take place on January 20.

According to the US Justice Department, more than 1,488 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 US states for crimes related to the events on January 6.

On that day, a group of supporters of former President Donald Trump breached the US Capitol amid a protest that Congress was confirming the results of the 2020 election, which Trump claimed were the result of voter and election fraud.

The authorities alleged that the protesters attempted to interfere with Congress' Electoral College vote count.

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Biden Admin. Approves \$175Mln Sale of 53 Torpedoes to India - Defense Security Agency

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration has approved the sale of 53 lightweight torpedoes to India for \$175 million, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) announced in a press release on Monday.

"The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of India of MK 54 MOD 0 Lightweight Torpedoes and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$175 million," the release said. "The DSCA delivered the required certification notifying Congress of this possible sale today."

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US State Dept. Approves \$110Mln Sale of 4 Sentinel Radar Systems to Romania - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) – The US State Department has approved a potential \$110 million sale of four Sentinel Radar Systems and related equipment to the government of Romania, the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency said on Monday.

"The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Romania of Sentinel Radar Systems and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$110 million," the agency said in a press release. "The Government of Romania has requested to buy four (4) AN/MPQ-64 F1 Sentinel radar systems."

Romania also requested to buy a range of other items, including IPS 250X High Assurance Internet Protocol Encryptors (HAPE), KIV-77 Identification Friend-or-Foe (IFF) crypto appliqué with Mode 5 and Mode S capability, AN/PSN-13 Defense Advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) Receivers (DAGR) with Selective Availability Anti-Spoofing Module (SAASM), AN/PYQ-10 Simple Key Loaders (SKL), the release said.

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US State Dept. OKs \$680Mln Sale of Electronic Attack Mission System to Italy - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) – The US State Department has approved a potential \$680 million sale of the Electronic Attack Mission System and related equipment to the government of Italy, the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency said on Monday.

"The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Italy of Electronic Attack Mission System and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$680 million," the agency said in a press release.

According to the release, the Electronic Attack Mission System includes Network Centric Collaborative Targeting (NCCT) systems, System Control and Monitoring subsystems, Radio Frequency Receiver (RFR) subsystems, Software-defined Radio (SDR) subsystems, Counter Radar Assembly, AN/ARC-210 RT-2036 radios, KG-250 In-line Network Encryptors, and other equipment.

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us state department approves \$175mln sale of MK 54 MOD 0 Lightweight Torpedoes to india - pentagon

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

White House Says Trump Comment on Genetic Predisposition to Murder 'Hateful'

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump's comment on the link between genetics and committing murder is hateful and inappropriate, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Monday.

Earlier on Monday, Trump said during an interview on the Hugh Hewitt Show that he believes there is a genetic component to committing murder.

Trump also criticized the Biden administration for purportedly allowing 13,000 murderers to enter the United States due to its border policies. There are "a lot of bad genes" in the US, Trump said.

"That type of language is hateful, it's disgusting, it's inappropriate and has no place in our country," Jean-Pierre said during a press briefing, when asked about Trump's comments.

The Biden administration will forcefully reject such speech, Jean-Pierre added.

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

Florida Governor DeSantis Declines 'Political' Calls From Harris After Hurricane - Reports

(Update: adds White House comment, background in paras 5, 6)

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is refusing to take calls from US Vice President Kamala Harris in the wake of Hurricane Helene because he believes they are political in nature, NBC News reported on Monday.

DeSantis' office declined to answer calls from Harris because they seemed political, an aide to the governor reportedly said.

The aide also said that DeSantis has not spoken to US President Joe Biden either to the best of their knowledge.

Hurricane Helena made landfall in the southeastern United States on September 26, causing significant damage in several states. The death toll from the storm is at least 227 people, according to reports.

Earlier on Monday, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said that DeSantis was invited to survey damage from the hurricane alongside Biden but the governor declined.

DeSantis previously said that he declined the offer because he had another event planned at the same time.

Additionally, Florida faces a threat from Hurricane Milton, which is projected to hit the Florida coast on Wednesday evening. The storm strengthened to a category 5 hurricane on Monday.

DeSantis declared a state of emergency in 35 counties in Florida ahead of Hurricane Milton's impact.

From: Ethan Charles Holmes - ethan.holmes@sputniknews.com

Subject:

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State Dept. Says Looking 'Very Closely' at Case of Sentenced US Mercenary in Russia

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) – The United States is looking "very closely" at the criminal case of its citizen sentenced to prison by a court in Moscow for participating in military actions against Russia as a mercenary on behalf of Ukraine, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

"We have limited information available about this case because Russia has refused to grant consular access," Miller said during a press briefing. "We're looking at the case very closely and considering our next steps."

Earlier on Monday, the Moscow City Court sentenced US retiree Stephen Hubbard to six years and 10 months in a penal colony on charges of fighting against Russia in Ukraine.

Stephen James Hubbard of Michigan, also known as Steven James Humberd, 72, has been living in Ukraine since 2014. In February 2022, the man signed a contract with the Ukrainian armed forces and served in a territorial defense unit in the eastern Ukrainian city of Izyum before he was captured by Russian soldiers in April that same year.

Hubbard only has less than half of his sentence left to serve because he has been in custody

since April 2, 2022, and has been in prison under the "day for day and a half" scheme, meaning he has already served over 3.5 years, a Sputnik correspondent reported.

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Ukraine Will Be Big Part of Biden's Upcoming Visit to Germany - White House

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) – Ukraine's military needs will be a “big part” of US President Joe Biden’s upcoming trip to Germany, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said on Monday.

"If you think about Ukraine and the self defense of Ukraine, that's going to be a big part of this visit, and continuing that support, continuing to do everything that we can to stop the Russian aggression. And so that is going to be certainly a big part of that, continuing contributions to meet the NATO pledge," Jean-Pierre told reporters.

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US Does Not Want UNIFIL Put in Danger by Hostilities in South Lebanon - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The United States does not want to see the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) put in harm's way by ongoing hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in southern Lebanon, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

"Obviously we don't want to see UNIFIL forces put in danger, in any way," Miller said during a press briefing.

The presence of the peace contingent in Lebanon plays an important role in ensuring the country's security, Miller said. Ultimately, the US wants to see UNIFIL able to conduct their duties in implementing UN Security Council resolution 1701, he added.

The spokesperson said that Washington views UNIFIL'S role as one that also prevents Hezbollah from occupying the space in the southern border from where they conducted attacks against Israel.

"That's what they [UNIFIL] were put in there to do... and that's the role that we want to see them play," Miller continued.

The US official further said that Israel is currently conducting operations to push Hezbollah further north and noted that Washington hopes to see their incursion successful for UNIFIL to be able to fill the security vacuum.

Israel and Lebanese movement Hezbollah have been trading fire across the border since the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack. Tensions exacerbated in September when Lebanon was hit by a deadly wave of exploding communications devices. Israel also intensified its airstrikes on Lebanon, causing heavy civilian casualties and killing Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah.

Last Monday, Israel announced the start of a limited military ground operation in southern Lebanon. On Wednesday, Hezbollah said that its forces had engaged in clashes with Israeli

infantry for the first time since Israel launched the ground operation.

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Губернатор пострадавшей от урагана Флориды отказывается отвечать на звонки Харрис - СМИ

ВАШИНГТОН, 7 окт - РИА Новости. Губернатор Флориды Рон ДеСантис не отвечает на звонки вице-президента и кандидата в президенты от Демократической партии Камалы Харрис, которые связаны с последствиями обрушившегося на штат урагана "Хелен", пишет NBC News.

По данным источника телеканала, ДеСантис, который ранее баллотировался в президенты от Республиканской партии, игнорирует попытки Харрис вступить в контакт, так как считает их политически мотивированными.

"Камала пыталась связаться, но мы не ответили", - цитирует канал помощника губернатора.

Ураган "Хелен" обрушился на юго-восточную часть США в конце сентября, унеся жизни более 220 человек. Последствия стихии почувствовали на себе жители Северной и Южной Каролины, северо-западного побережья Флориды, Джорджии, Теннесси.

Накануне губернатор Флориды, которая все еще справляется с последствиями "Хелен", объявил чрезвычайное положение в 35 округах штата в связи с надвигающимся тропическим штормом "Милтон".

Выборы президента США состоятся 5 ноября. Демократическую партию на них будет представлять вице-президент Камала Харрис, Республиканскую - экс-президент Дональд Трамп.

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Reports of Blinken Approving Israeli Strikes on Gaza Aid Convoys 'Not True' – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - Media reports that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken allegedly approved Israel's policy of bombing humanitarian convoys heading to Gaza are "just not true" and ridiculous, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

"The suggestion that we, in any way, signed off on bombing humanitarian convoys [is] just not true," Miller said during a press briefing. "The idea that we, anyone in this department, signed off on bombing humanitarian convoys is just absolutely ridiculous."

According to a report by Drop Site News, soon after Hamas attacked Israel, Blinken arrived on October 16 at the Kirya, the Israeli military's main headquarters in Tel Aviv, to participate in the discussions of the Israeli War Cabinet. The following day, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced that Israel would "thwart" humanitarian aid supplies if it believed they would fall into Hamas hands.

Security Cabinet member Bezael Smotrich later told the Israeli media that the War Cabinet was

promised that "aid trucks hijacked by Hamas and its organizations would be bombed from the air," the report said.

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Florida Governor DeSantis Declines 'Political' Calls From Harris After Hurricane - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is refusing to take calls from US Vice President Kamala Harris in the wake of Hurricane Helene because he believes they are political in nature, NBC News reported on Monday.

DeSantis' office declined to answer calls from Harris because they seemed political, an aide to the governor reportedly said.

The aide also said that to the best of their knowledge, DeSantis has not spoken to US President Joe Biden either.

Hurricane Helene made landfall in the southeastern United States on September 26, causing significant damage in several states. The death toll from the storm is at least 227 people, according to reports.

Additionally, Florida faces a threat from Hurricane Milton, which is projected to hit the Florida coast on Wednesday evening. The storm strengthened to a category 5 hurricane on Monday.

DeSantis declared a state of emergency in 35 counties in Florida ahead of Hurricane Milton's impact.

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Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Among World's 'Most Complicated Situations' - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The United States considers the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Gaza Strip to be one of the most complicated in the world, US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

"This, of course, is one of the most complicated situations on the face of the Earth," Miller said during a press briefing.

Miller made the remarks in response to a reporter's question about whether the United States has reflected on its actions and considered whether some steps could have been taken differently since October 7.

The spokesperson said the United States does look back all the time regarding the decisions it has made.

The United States also looks at the outcomes and how it could have done things differently, Miller added.

On October 7, 2023, the Palestinian movement Hamas attacked Israel from the Gaza Strip, killing more than 1,110 Israelis - both military and civilians - and took several hundred hostages. Israel imposed a complete blockade on Gaza, started massive bombardments as well as invaded the Palestinian enclave. As a result of Israel's military operations, some 42,000

Palestinians have been killed, more than 100,000 wounded and 1.9 million out of 2.3 million Gaza residents have been displaced.

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US Continues Facilitating Evacuation Flights Out of Lebanon, Demand Remains - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The United States will continue to facilitate evacuation flights out of Lebanon as the demand for repatriation by US subjects remains, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Monday.

"We do believe there's still demand, and so we plan to continue organizing these flights," Miller told reporters during a press briefing.

Since the US began organizing evacuation flights last week, around 900 US citizens, legal permanent residents as well as their families have departed Lebanon, Miller said. Washington has been able to secure an additional 868 seats in commercial flights that are set to leave the country, he added.

"We don't know exactly how many of those have been filled because we don't get an exact number, but we know that a significant proportion of those 868 have seats have been filled," he continued.

The State Department has been in contact with approximately 8,500 individuals currently in Lebanon, Miller said. However, asking for information does not mean all of them intend to depart the country. Some are making daily assessments about their situation, he noted.

Asked about the price of air fares in flights booked by the US, Miller said the costs remain locked at \$283 per seat. The spokesperson had previously said Washington does not have the right by law to cover such costs.

Israel and the Lebanon-based Shia movement Hezbollah have been exchanging rocket and air strikes this month. Israel sent troops across the border and clashes on the ground started last week. Numerous countries are evacuating their nationals from Lebanon due to insecurity. Iran's missile attack against earlier this month only exacerbated the tensions in the region.

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US Involvement in Israel-Iran Conflict Hurts National Interests in Region - Ron Paul

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The United States' involvement in the conflict between Israel and Iran harms US national interests in the region, former US Congressman Ron Paul said on Monday.

"This war fever between Israel and Iran not only has nothing to do with us, but our increasing involvement actually hurts our national interests in the region. After a deadly and futile three-year proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, the last thing we need is another war in the Middle East, especially against Iran," Paul said in a column for the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity.

US Central Command chief Gen. Michael Kurilla visited Israel over the weekend to coordinate military activity against Iran with Israel. The Biden administration offered Israel a compensation package if it refrains from striking certain Iranian targets, according to Israeli media reports.

Paul questioned how the US would respond if an adversary like China paid Iran to strike some US targets but not others.

Moreover, the US Congress has neither declared war on Iran nor authorized military intervention, Paul said, adding that the US is "sleepwalking" into a catastrophic war.

US involvement in a war between Iran and Israel would make the country less free, less safe and much poorer, Paul said.

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Israel Debating Form of Response Against Iran But Attack Will Happen - Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, October 7 (Sputnik) - Israel is debating how to respond to Iran's missile attack but a military response is not in question, Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon said on Monday.

"We are debating it and the cabinet met and will continue to meet. We will choose the exact location and the way of the response but it will happen," Ambassador Danny Danon told the journalists in front of the UN Security Council. "It will take place."

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

Israel's Military Ops in Mideast Risk Long-Term Peace - Former Egyptian Foreign Minister

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - Israel's expanding military operations in the Middle East may achieve some tactical successes but will jeopardize the potential for long-term stability in the region, former Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy told Sputnik.

"[Israel] is premeditated in expanding tensions in order to gather Israelis together and ensure Western support," Fahmy said. "In doing so it may achieve some tactical success, but this will be at tremendous strategic costs as the whole objective of peace with Israel becomes increasingly questioned."

Israel's complete disregard for international norms, civilian casualties, and the sovereignty of territories will have dangerous consequences in the long term, Fahmy added.

Increased confrontations between Israel and non-state parties will ultimately put civilian populations in and outside the region at risk, according to Fahmy. He underscored that the number of deaths and amount of destruction impacting mostly Palestinians and Arabs in the Middle East over the last year should not be ignored.

The United States, as Israel's greatest supporter, shares responsibility for the current state of the Middle East crisis, Fahmy said.

"Its stature in the region has been greatly diminished as a complicit party or an ineffective player in limiting Israel's actions," Fahmy said of the US role in crisis.

Fahmy further said that the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council should consider concrete measures that could potentially help resolve the conflict before it diminishes their credibility.

"[The UN Security Council] cannot rest on formal statements calling for the end of hostilities or even condemning one action or the other ... They must carry their responsibility with more conviction," Fahmy said.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an unprecedented rocket attack on Israel from the Gaza Strip, infiltrated border areas, opened fire on the military and civilians and took hostages. Israeli authorities say that about 1,200 people were killed during the raid.

The Israel Defense Forces launched Operation Iron Swords in the Gaza Strip and announced a complete blockade of the enclave. The toll from the Israeli aggression has risen to 41,909 dead and 97,303 injured since October 7, 2023, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza.

In recent weeks, Israel has expanded its military operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon. On September 17 and 18, thousands of Hezbollah pagans and walkie-talkies exploded in an attack that the group has blamed on Israel. The Israeli military then intensified its airstrikes on Lebanon, causing heavy civilian casualties and killing senior leaders including Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah. Israel then began a ground incursion in Lebanon last week.

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Israel debating when to respond to Iran missile strikes, will choose exact location and way of response - envoy to UN

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

Hurricane Milton Strengthens Into Category 5 Storm, Will Make US Landfall Wednesday - NHC

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - Hurricane Milton has strengthened into a category 5 storm and is projected to hit Florida on Wednesday evening, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said on Monday.

"Data from an Air Force Reserve Hurricane Hunter aircraft indicate that Milton has strengthened to a category 5," the NHC said in a statement via X. "The max sustained winds are estimated to be 160 mph with higher gusts."

The National Weather Service said Hurricane Milton is projected to be the worst storm to impact the area in more than 100 years. A category 5 hurricane produces a life-threatening storm surge.

According to the NHC, Hurricane Milton's path should clear Florida by Friday morning and head further east towards the Atlantic Ocean.

Florida's Division of Emergency Management Director Kevin Guthrie called on people to start taking all necessary measures, including preparations to evacuate further inland. Guthrie told reporters on Sunday that the State Emergency Response Team was preparing for "the largest evacuation that we have seen most likely since 2017 Hurricane Irma."

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said on Sunday that a state of emergency has been declared in 35 counties amid concerns about Milton.

President Joe Biden also approved a declaration of emergency for Florida and will surge additional federal resources to aid in recovery efforts from Hurricane Milton. However, last week, Biden warned that the United States would begin to run out of disaster relief funding by the end of the year if Congress does not take swift action to approve more funds.

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UPDATE - Biden Talks with Israeli President Herzog on Anniversary of October 7 Attacks - Statement

(Updates with more details in paras 4, 5)

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden spoke with Israeli President Isaac Herzog on the first anniversary of the October 7 attack by the Palestinian movement Hamas against Israel, the White House said on Monday.

"President Biden spoke with Israeli President Isaac Herzog to mark the solemn occasion of the one-year anniversary of the horrific Hamas October 7 terrorist attacks," the White House said in a statement.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas attacked Israel from the Gaza Strip, infiltrating the border areas and killing more than 1,110 Israelis - both military and civilians - and taking several hundred hostages. Israel imposed a full blockade on Gaza, started massive bombardments and then invaded the Palestinian enclave. As a result of Israel's military operations, some 42,000 Palestinians have been killed and 1.9 million out of 2.3 million residents of Gaza have been displaced.

According to a White House readout of the conversation, Biden extended condolences to Israel and the families of the victims who were killed by Hamas, emphasizing the US commitment to securing the release of all remaining hostages.

"President Biden conveyed his commitment to the safety of the Jewish people, the security of Israel, and its right to exist, and reaffirmed his support for Israel's right to defend itself against attacks from Iran and all Iranian-backed terrorist groups, including Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis," the readout said.

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Biden Talks With Israeli President Herzog on Anniversary of October 7 Attack - Statement

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden spoke with Israeli President Isaac Herzog on the first anniversary of the October 7 attack by the Palestinian movement Hamas against Israel, the White House said on Monday.

"President Biden spoke with Israeli President Isaac Herzog to mark the solemn occasion of the one-year anniversary of the horrific Hamas October 7 terrorist attacks," the White House said in

a statement.

On Monday, Israel commemorates the unprecedented attack by Hamas with ceremonial events taking place throughout the country. The raid is considered the largest single mass attack against Jews since the Holocaust.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas attacked Israel from the Gaza Strip, infiltrating the border areas and killing more than 1,110 Israelis - both military and civilians – and took several hundred hostages. Israel imposed a complete blockade on Gaza, started massive bombardments and invaded the Palestinian enclave. As a result of Israel's military operations, some 42,000 Palestinians have been killed and 1.9 million out of 2.3 million residents of Gaza have been displaced.

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US-Russia Work at ISS 'Phenomenal Example' of Bilateral Cooperation - NASA Chief

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The work between Russia and the United States on the International Space Station (ISS) is a "phenomenal example" of cooperation between the two countries, NASA Administrator Bill Nelson told Sputnik on Monday.

"This is one of the phenomenal things in history because we have been cooperating - the Russians and the Americans - have been cooperating in space ever since 1975 Apollo-Soyuz," Nelson said. "Then Russia had the first space station. Then they built Mir. And they wanted us to come and dock our American space shuttle to Mir. Then we together built the International Space Station. So it's a phenomenal example of cooperation between the two nations."

In April, Nelson said in a congressional testimony that the US space agency requested additional emergency funding from Congress to start preparing a spacecraft to deorbit the ISS and bring its remains safely to Earth after 2030 if space cooperation with Russia breaks down before then.

Current plans anticipate that NASA and the Russian state space corporation Roscosmos will work closely together to safely deorbit the ISS so as not to threaten any populated areas on Earth, the NASA chief said in April. However, given the current tensions in US-Russia relations, NASA cannot take for granted that the ongoing cooperation with Roscosmos will continue in the indefinite future, Nelson added.

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

Canada's 'Victims of Communism' Memorial Urged to Remove 330 Names Tied to Nazis – Reports

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) – The Department of Canadian Heritage is being urged to remove 330 names out of 550 on the so-called "Victims of Communism" memorial to be unveiled in the capital, the Ottawa Citizen reported on Monday.

Canadian Heritage is being told that over half of the 550 names listed to be engraved in the

memorial ought to be removed due to their potential ties to Nazis or over questions arising about their affiliations to fascist groups, the report said, citing government records obtained via an access to information request.

Accordingly, the department recommended in a 2023 report that more than 330 names be excluded in order to be "on the safe side," the records showed. The recommendation was made due to the lack of information on certain individuals' or organizations' backgrounds, and whether they might entertain ties to Nazi or fascist groups, among others.

The review for the commemorative elements is ongoing, the report further said, citing a spokesperson for Canadian Heritage Caroline Czajkowski, when questioned on whether the names would be removed.

Canadian media reported in 2021 that donations had already been made for the memorial to include the names of SS Roman Shukhevych, a commander of the Ukrainian Nightingale Battalion and the UPA, as well as Ante Pavelic, who ran the Nazi regime in Croatia and who is considered by many as the main instigator of the holocaust in the Balkans, the report continued.

The C\$7.5 million (US\$5.5 million) Memorial to the Victims of Communism was originally set to be unveiled in November 2023. However, the inauguration was paused following the major scandal involving the entire legislature at the Canadian House of Commons, who gave two standing ovations to then 98 year-old Ukrainian Nazi veteran Yaroslav Hunka. The new unveiling date has yet to be determined.

Canada has had a long and controversial history of granting safe haven to former Nazi veterans, oftentimes including those convicted of crimes in the Soviet Union. In the mid-1980s, the Canadian government launched the Commission of Inquiry on War Criminals, also known as the Deschenes Commission, to investigate the immigration of individuals with a Nazi background into the country.

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

US, Russia Committed to Continuing Integrated Flights to ISS - NASA Chief

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The United States and Russia are committed to continuing cross flights to the International Space Station (ISS), NASA Administrator Bill Nelson told Sputnik on Monday.

"Of course," Nelson said, when asked whether the integrated flights will be continued.

A NASA spokesperson told Sputnik in September that NASA is working to reach an agreement with Roscosmos to continue integrated space flights to the International Space Station (ISS) beyond 2025.

Earlier, Roscosmos chief Yuri Borisov told reporters he expects Roscosmos and NASA will be able to agree on the continuation of cross-flights of integrated crews to the ISS after 2025. NASA and Roscosmos had previously committed to work together to send crews to the ISS until at least 2025.

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us, russia operating iss together is a 'phenomenal example of cooperation between two nations'
- nasa chief to sputnik

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NASA Chief Expects New Deal on Integrated Flights With Russia 'in Another Year or So'

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The United States and Russia will sign a new deal to fly integrated crews on American crew spacecraft and on the Soyuz spacecraft in another year or so, NASA Administrator Bill Nelson told Sputnik on Monday.

"In another year or so," Nelson said, when asked when a new agreement on integrated flights will be signed. "I don't know the timing on the documents, but of course we fly integrated crews on Soyuz and on Dragon and eventually on Starliner because we have to have both countries represented on the space station."

Nelson noted that the Russian section of the space station gives the boosting and propulsion up.

"The American section gives all of the electricity. So naturally, we have to have both crews up there in order to be able to operate the space station," the NASA chief added.

A NASA spokesperson told Sputnik in September that NASA is working to reach an agreement with Roscosmos to continue integrated space flights to the International Space Station (ISS) beyond 2025.

Earlier, Roscosmos chief Yuri Borisov told reporters he expects Roscosmos and NASA will be able to agree on the continuation of cross-flights of integrated crews to the ISS after 2025.

NASA and Roscosmos had previously committed to work together to send crews to the ISS until at least 2025.

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us, russia to sign new deal on integrated flights to iss 'in another year or so' - nasa chief to sputnik

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

US Announces New Sanctions Targeting 4 Individuals, 11 Entities Linked to Hamas - Treasury

(Updates with more details in paras 5-7)

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The United States has imposed sanctions on individuals and entities linked to Hamas, the US Treasury Department announced in a notice on Monday.

The Treasury Department updated its Specially Designated Nationals list by adding four individuals from Turkey, Austria, Italy and the United Kingdom, according to the notice. The United States also imposed sanctions against 11 entities from Yemen, Gaza, Italy, Turkey, Lebanon and the Czech Republic.

The US State Department issued a statement that the targeted individuals and entities are among the most prominent supporters of Hamas and seek to manipulate the suffering of innocent Palestinian civilians for their malign objectives.

"They play critical roles in providing funds for Hamas terrorist activities, often under the guise of charitable work," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in the statement.

The Treasury Department clarified that it targeted three individuals and one entity for providing Hamas with international financial support.

The United States also sanctioned one Hamas supporter, Hamid Abdullah Hussein al Ahmar, a Yemeni national living in Turkey, and his nine businesses along with allegedly Hamas-controlled Al-Intaj Bank in Gaza, the statement said.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the US government will continue to relentlessly degrade Hamas' and other destabilizing Iranian proxies' ability to finance their operations and carry out additional violent acts.

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US Military Aid to Israel Since October 7 Soars to Record \$17.9 Bln – Study

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) – The US government has approved at least \$17.9 billion in military aid for Israel's war on Gaza and the broader Middle East in the year since the October 7 attacks, according to a study released Monday by Brown University's Cost of War project.

The \$17.9 bln figure marked the highest amount granted in any year since the US began providing military aid to Israel in 1959.

The study also found that expanded US military operations in the Middle East since October 7 added billions in additional costs. In particular, the US Navy's scaling up of operations against Yemen's Houthis, who have been waging a solidarity campaign with Palestine by disrupting shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, has added at least \$4.86 billion. This brings the overall bill for US taxpayers to at least \$22.76 billion.

The study noted that \$22.76 billion was a conservative estimate, in part because of the lack of government transparency regarding military aid to Israel. For example, the Biden administration has made at least 100 arms deals with Israel since October 7 that fell below the threshold value that would have required congressional notification.

The figure also does not include many other economic costs incurred by the US; for example, commitments already made for future military aid to Israel, increased security aid to Egypt or other US allies in the region, or increased cost of goods to US consumers from disrupted maritime trade.

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SpaceX Launches Europe's Hera Spacecraft on Asteroid Probe Mission

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - SpaceX successfully launched the EU's Hera asteroid mission on Monday from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.

The European Space Agency will use this mission to study the impact NASA's Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) spacecraft had on the Dimorphos asteroid after it struck its surface on September 26, 2022.

These planetary defense missions assess how much a spacecraft impact can potentially deflect an asteroid's trajectory that may be threatening to be on a collision course with Earth.

SpaceX had to request a waiver from the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to launch this mission aboard a Falcon 9 rocket because it is part of an ongoing investigation into a minor incident that occurred during the Crew-9 mission liftoff on September 28 and required the temporary grounding of the spacecraft.

Although the Falcon 9 rocket is reusable, SpaceX said it decided not to recover the booster rocket for Monday's launch due to the additional performance required to deliver Hera to interplanetary transfer orbit.

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Republicans Hold 2-Point Lead on Generic US Congressional Ballot - Poll

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - Republicans hold a two-point lead over Democrats with likely voters on a generic congressional ballot, according to a Rasmussen Reports poll released Monday.

Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents would vote for the Republican candidate and 45% would vote for the Democrat if congressional elections were held today, the poll report said.

The Republicans' lead declined from August, when they held a five-point lead over Democrats, the poll report added.

The lead is largely attributable to Republicans' advantage among independent voters, the poll report said. Forty-five percent (45%) of unaffiliated respondents would vote Republican and 35% would vote Democrat, the poll report said.

The poll surveyed 1,050 likely US voters from October 1-3. The poll has a margin of error of plus-or-minus three percentage points with a 95% confidence level.

The United States will hold a variety of federal, state and local elections on November 5.

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US Announces New Sanctions Targeting 4 Individuals, 11 Entities Linked to Hamas - Treasury

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The United States has imposed sanctions individuals and entities linked to Hamas, the US Treasury Department announced in a notice on Monday.

The Treasury Department updated its Specially Designated Nationals list by adding four individuals from Turkey, Austria, Italy and the United Kingdom, according to the notice. The United States also imposed sanctions against 11 entities from Yemen, Gaza, Italy, Turkey, Lebanon and the Czech Republic.

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US to Face Significant Increase in Debt Under Next President - Report

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The United States could experience a multi-trillion dollar debt increase in the coming years regardless of which candidate wins the presidential election in November, the Committee for Responsible Federal Budget said in a new report on Monday.

"Under our central estimate, Vice President [Kamala] Harris's plan would increase the debt by \$3.5 trillion through 2035, while President [Donald] Trump's plan would increase the debt by \$7.5 trillion," the report said.

The next president will face significant fiscal challenges upon taking office, including record debt levels, large structural deficits, surging interest payments and a looming insolvency of critical trust fund programs, the report said.

"Our large and growing national debt threatens to slow economic growth, boost interest rates and payments, weaken national security, constrain policy choices, and increase the risk of an eventual fiscal crisis," the report said.

Neither candidate has made plans to address the rising debt burden and their tax and spending plans would lead the country to further increase deficits and debt, the report added.

The United States' national debt currently stands at \$35.6 trillion and is increasing by \$1 trillion every 100 days. In June, Congress passed legislation that suspended the debt ceiling until January 2025 in order to avert a default on the federal government's debt.

The report said the worst case scenario would be if the debt increased by \$8.1 trillion through 2035 under a Harris administration and by \$15.15 trillion if Trump is the president. The best scenario envisages no increase under a Harris administration and an increase of \$1.45 trillion under a Trump administration.

"The national debt currently stands at 99 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is projected to grow from 102 percent of GDP at the start of FY 2026 to 125% by the end of 2035 based on the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO) current law baseline," the report added.

Debt would continue to grow faster than the economy under either candidate's plans and in most scenarios would grow faster and higher than under current law, according to the report.

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China Asks US Not to Interfere With Its Right to Develop Ties With Hungary - Embassy

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - The United States should not interfere with China's right to develop relations with the government of Hungary, the Chinese Embassy in Washington told Sputnik after US lawmakers lambasted Budapest for growing ties with Beijing.

A group of US senators was in Hungary last week to meet with government officials. Following the visit, the senators issued a joint statement criticizing Hungarian officials for developing ties with Russia and China, adding that Budapest has ignored allies' concerns regarding its deepening cooperation with Beijing.

"China's right to develop bilateral relations and conduct normal exchanges with other countries in the world should not be interfered with or disrupted," the Chinese Embassy spokesperson said.

The Chinese Embassy added that the remarks by the US senators advocate bloc confrontation and are full of Cold War thinking and zero-sum game concepts, coercing other countries to choose sides.

The US senators did not go into detail about their concerns in the joint statement but urged Hungary to work closely with its allies, and listen to their concerns and act on them.

The delegation of US senators that visited Hungary included senators Jerry Moran, Susan Collins, John Cornyn, John Boozman and John Hoeven.

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White House Spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre Promoted to Senior Biden Adviser - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre was promoted to senior adviser to US President Joe Biden, ABC News reported on Monday.

Jean-Pierre will continue serving as press secretary through the end of the Biden administration in addition to her new advising role, the report said, citing White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zients.

"Karine has been a trusted advisor to the President and all of us here at the White House since day one. Her counsel will be critical to get as much done as possible for the American people in the coming months," Zients reportedly said.

The promotion demonstrates the faith that Biden has in Jean-Pierre and his commitment to having diverse voices contribute to his decision-making, the report also said, citing a White House official.

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Senior US Defense Official to Travel to Germany, UK on October 7-9 – Pentagon

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) - Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Amanda Dory will travel to Germany and the United Kingdom from October 7 to 9 to meet with counterparts to discuss a range of issues, including the US-UK-Norway cooperation framework, the US Department of Defense said on Monday.

"Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Ms. Amanda Dory, will travel to Germany and the United Kingdom October 7-9," the department said in a press release. "Ms. Dory will then travel to the United Kingdom where she will join British and Norwegian counterparts to finalize a framework for U.S.– UK – Norway trilateral multidomain cooperation."

The trip is set to begin on October 7 in Berlin where Dory will participate in a strategic dialogue with senior German defense official Jasper Wieck, the release added.

The release said that Dory is scheduled to arrive in the United Kingdom from Berlin to have a trilateral meeting with her British and Norwegian counterparts to finalize a framework for US-UK-Norway trilateral multidomain cooperation.

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Hurricane Milton Becomes Category 4 Storm as It Nears US Coast – National Hurricane Center

WASHINGTON, October 7 (Sputnik) – Hurricane Milton has strengthened into a major Category 4 storm as it moves toward the Gulf of Mexico and the west coast of Florida, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said on Monday.

"Data from both Hurricane Hunter aircraft indicate that Milton has strengthened to a category 4 hurricane. The maximum sustained winds are estimated to be 150 mph (240 km/h). Milton is a category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale," the NHC said in a statement.

The NHC further warned about an increasing risk of life-threatening storm surge and damaging winds for certain areas of the west coast of the Florida Peninsula beginning either Tuesday night or early Wednesday.

"Storm Surge and Hurricane Watches are now in effect for portions of the west coast of the Florida Peninsula and residents in that area should follow any advice given by local officials and evacuate if told to do so," the NHC noted in a series of "key" messages.

US officials warned that Milton could prompt massive evacuations from Florida's west coast.

Florida's Division of Emergency Management Director Kevin Guthrie called on people to start taking all necessary measures, including preparations to evacuate further inland. Guthrie told reporters on Sunday that the State Emergency Response Team was preparing for "the largest evacuation that we have seen most likely since 2017 Hurricane Irma."

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said on Sunday that a state of emergency has been declared in 35 counties amid concerns about Milton.