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Israel Delivers First of Two Iron Dome Air Defense Radars to US
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

The US has taken delivery of the first of two Multi-Mission Radars (MMR), the powerful tracking system behind Israel's Iron Dome air defense system. Washington bought two Iron Dome batteries from Israel to fill an urgent close-in air defense need.

According to [a report by the Jerusalem Post](#), the US Army has received the first MMR from Israel's Missile Defense Organization (IMDO), part of the Israeli Defense Ministry's Directorate of Defense R&D. A second radar is due by February 2021.

The US has ordered two off-the-shelf Iron Dome batteries from Rafael Advanced Defense Systems to [fill an immediate short-range air defense \(SHORAD\) need](#). Built by ELTA Systems, the mobile radars use an active electronically scanned array (AESA) to produce a 3D picture of airspace with up to 1,100 individual targets out to distances of 470 kilometers, [according to the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance](#). However, the Iron Dome's missiles can only reach out to 70 kilometers.

Elta EL/M-2084 radar used by Israel's Iron Dome surface-to-air missile system

The total package includes 12 missile launchers, two radars, two command centers and 240 missiles. [The rest of the first battery was delivered in late September](#); the second is due by February 2021. [The Pentagon had initially planned on ordering four systems](#), but after Jerusalem refused to provide the system's source code, the order was pared back to just two batteries.

Without the source code, the Iron Dome cannot be integrated with other layers of US air defenses - an ability other US air defense systems have already demonstrated [in Integrated Battle Command System \(IBCS\) tests](#) over the summer at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

However, IMDO chief Moshe Patel told Defense News in an interview published on Sunday that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) would be integrating the Iron Dome with the US network itself, since it uses many of the same air defense systems.

"All of our systems are fully interoperable, which means we can adapt Iron Dome interceptors, Iron Dome parts of batteries, and make them part of whatever the US Army will decide. For example, they're going to use the IBCS, so they're going to have the ability to connect those Iron Dome launchers and the interceptors to the IBCS," Patel said. He mentioned the US Marine Corps was also interested in buying Iron Domes.

The US will be buying up several such SHORAD systems [and holding a "shoot-off" at White Sands](#), according to Bruce Jette, assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology.

The IDF began using the Iron Dome in 2011 to intercept incoming rockets primarily launched toward Israel from the Gaza Strip. [It is reported to have a 90% success rate](#).

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Video: China's Hong Kong Garrison Performs Live-Fire Drills in Mountains Outside City
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

A new promotional video released by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) shows armored vehicles from the Hong Kong garrison heading out to the countryside outside the city for live-fire drills.

The PLA's Hong Kong Forces [posted a new video on its Sina Weibo page on Saturday](#) showing live-fire drills at a firing range on Castle Peak, a massive mountain dominating the westernmost parts of Hong Kong.

In the 65-second-long video, soldiers are seen mustering at their base in Pat Heung in the pre-dawn hours and rolling out in their WZ-551 armored personnel carriers.

An armored personnel carrier of China's People's Liberation Army's Hong Kong garrison rolls down streets on their way to mountain drills

After rolling down city streets, the troops arrive in their alpine destination and are seen inspecting and preparing the rounds they are to fire during the drills before unloading them on various targets set up against the mountainside.

A Chinese armored personnel carrier from the Hong Kong garrison fires its autocannon during live-fire drills

"The training was based on the combination of technical training, consolidation of tactical foundations, highlighting live ammunition shooting and improving operational capabilities," the garrison said in a post accompanying the video.

While both the training itself and video are fairly typical, in the past such posts have been seen as sending a particular message. In July, another Hong Kong garrison training video attracted wide attention when it was posted just days after China adopted a new nationwide security law that included Hong Kong for the first time. The law was denounced by the United States as an attack on Hong Kong's autonomy, and the video of live-fire drills was [interpreted as a show of force. Sputnik reported at the time.](#)

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US Army Adopts SM-6 Naval Missile as New Ground-Launched Weapon
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

The US Army has moved to adapt another missile from the US Navy's arsenal for use as a ground-launched weapon: the RIM-174 Standard Extended Range Active Missile (ERAM), better known as the Standard Missile 6 (SM-6).

On November 6, the [Army announced it had awarded Lockheed Martin](#) a \$339 million contract to adapt the SM-6 as a ground-launched weapon.

According to the news release, the missile will fill a mid-range capability (MRC) role between that of the [Precision Strike Missile \(PrSM\)](#) and the [Long-Range Hypersonic Weapon \(LRHW\)](#), and will hopefully be fielded by the end of fiscal year 2023. Both of those weapons are currently in development.

The PrSM's delay until at least fiscal year 2024 [has sent the Army looking for replacements](#) to fill the capability gap, but it's unclear if the SM-6 is envisioned as filling this role or is intended to supplement another weapon chosen to do so.

[The SM-6 was originally designed for use](#) as an air defense weapon capable of shooting down aircraft, incoming missiles and even terminal-phase ballistic missiles, up to 34,000 feet up and 150 miles away. The missile has also been adapted to hit naval surface targets.

The US Army has also begun adapting [another US Navy missile, the BGM-109](#)

[Tomahawk](#) cruise missile, for use as a land-based strike weapon. However, until August 2019, Washington was constrained by the limitations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which the Trump administration shredded, declaring without proof that Russia had violated the agreement. However, unless the SM-6's range is extended, it will remain within the parameters of the now-discarded treaty.

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US Dow Skyrockets 834 Points After Biden Win, Pfizer's COVID-19 Vaccine Results
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

US stocks hit record highs on Monday amid positive news about the effectiveness of Pfizer's SARS-CoV-2 vaccine currently in development and news that Joe Biden had emerged as the clear winner in the November 3 US presidential election, even as US President Donald Trump contests the decision.

When the closing bell rang on Monday for the first time [since most of the US mainstream media declared Biden](#) the obvious winner of the election, the Dow Jones was nearly 3% higher than it had closed on Friday, when the outcome was still very much in question.

The Dow finished at 29,157.97, having gained 834.57 points on Monday. The S&P 500 also grew, adding 41.06 points to finish at 3,550.50 - a 1.17% gain. However, the Nasdaq Composite, which heavily reflects the information technology sector, fell on Monday, losing 181.45 points to close at 11,713.78 - a 1.53% loss.

Just after opening on Monday morning, all three indices were even higher than their closing levels, with the Dow reaching an all-time high for single-day gains of more than 1,600 points. The S&P 500 grew by 2.7% early-on, but fell later in the day.

While the possibility of [a peaceful transfer of power greatly increased on Saturday](#), giving Monday traders new confidence, the news that [the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine Pfizer and BioNTech were producing](#) could have an effectiveness of 90%, really sent the markets into the skies.

The Dow hit [a major low late last month as COVID-19 cases](#) grew sharply around the planet and European nations introduced new lockdown measures designed to curb the virus' spread. The situation in the United States remains grim, with the country having [added a million new cases in just 10 days' time](#), but the possibility of a highly effective vaccine soon arriving to calm the chaos could soon mean an end to the social and economic turmoil that has characterized much of 2020.

In response, investors threw their money into the travel companies, retailers and banks likely to benefit from a return to some semblance of normality, with Carnival's shares surging by 34% and American Airlines by 17%. Retailer Kohl's grew by 20.1% and Bank of America by 15%. However, tech companies that have several benefited by the push for remote access to resources via the internet created by the COVID-19 pandemic saw major losses on Monday at the signal that in-person interaction could soon resume. Netflix lost 7.58% while Zoom Video Communications lost 16.5% of its value and Peleton Interactive lost 17%. Another major loser was cleaner maker Clorox, which has benefited from the need to sterilize surfaces to prevent the virus' spread. The company lost 9.69% of its value on Monday

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In Astronomical First, Scientists Find Cold Brown Dwarf 'Failed Star' With Radio Telescope by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

Astronomers have discovered how to spot elusive cold brown dwarfs, also called "failed stars," using a radio telescope instead of infrared sky surveys.

Astronomers from the Low-Frequency Array radio telescope in the Netherlands working with astronomers from the University of Hawaii's NASA InfraRed Telescope Facility and the International Gemini Observatory, also in Hawaii, have verified that it's possible to spot cold brown dwarfs using radio waves. Their findings were [published in The Astrophysical Journal Letters on Monday](#).

A cold brown dwarf is a celestial object too big to be a planet but too small to become a star. At 13 to 80 times the mass of Jupiter, they're big enough to have their own dull glow, but not massive enough to begin nuclear fusion of hydrogen into helium and shine like true stars do. As a result, they're sometimes called "failed stars."

By comparison, the lowest-mass main sequence star ever observed, 2MASS J0523-1403, has a mass of between 55 and 80 times that of Jupiter. Our sun, a much larger star, is about 1,000 times more massive than Jupiter.

Since they're so dim, cold brown dwarfs weren't actually observed until the 1990s, even though scientists theorized they must exist 30 years earlier. The discovery proves that even though the "failed" stars don't emit visible light, they do "shine" at radio wavelengths thanks to their powerful magnetic fields, which we can spot here on Earth.

"This work opens a whole new method to finding the coldest objects floating in the Sun's vicinity, which would otherwise be too faint to discover with the methods used for the past 25 years,"

Michael Liu, an astronomer at the University of Hawaii who co-authored the study, [said in a news release](#).

Earlier this year, a citizen science project funded by the US space agency NASA called "Backyard Worlds: Planet 9" enlisted the help of both professional scientists and ardent volunteer laymen [to scour archival data and discover 95 cold brown dwarfs](#) near Earth.

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US Senate Majority Leader McConnell Says Trump '100% Within His Rights' to Tap Legal Options

US Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) on Monday said that US President Donald Trump is "100% within his rights" to tap legal options in the 2020 presidential election.

"We have the system in place to consider concerns, and President Trump is 100% within his rights to look to allegations of irregularities and weigh his legal options," McConnell noted in a Monday speech in the Senate.

"According to preliminary results, voters across the nation elected and reelected Republican senators to a degree that actually stunned prognosticators," McConnell added.

"No states have yet certified their election results. We already have at least one or two states that are already on track for a recount. And I believe the president may have legal challenges underway in at least five states," McConnell continued.

McConnell also did not acknowledge Joe Biden as US president-elect or Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA) as vice president-elect.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), however, called challenging the election's outcome "dangerous," noting that "lawsuits must have basis in facts" and that "Joe Biden won this election fair and square."

On Saturday, Biden was declared US president-elect after gaining the majority of the Electoral College votes. However, Trump has refused to admit defeat, filing lawsuits in several states alleging voter fraud. Most of the [lawsuits have been filed](#) in Pennsylvania, Nevada, Georgia and Michigan, states where a winner has yet to be determined or where Biden won by a slim majority.

"We all know why Joe Biden is rushing to falsely pose as the winner, and why his media allies are trying so hard to help him: they don't want the truth to be exposed. The simple fact is this election is far from over," Trump [said in a statement Saturday](#) after Biden was declared president-elect.

"Joe Biden has not been certified as the winner of any states, let alone any of the highly contested states headed for mandatory recounts, or states where our campaign has valid and legitimate legal challenges that could determine the ultimate victor. In Pennsylvania, for example, our legal observers were not permitted meaningful access to watch the counting process. Legal votes decide who is president, not the news media," he added.

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Asymptomatic Patient Shed Infectious COVID-19 Particles For at Least 70 Days - Study

A new case study published in the journal Cell reveals that a 71-year-old hospital patient diagnosed with COVID-19 in Kirkland, Washington, who also had leukemia, shed infectious particles of the respiratory virus for at least 70 days without showing any symptoms of the disease.

According to the [study](#), the patient continued to shed infectious particles of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, 70 days after her diagnosis. More than 100 days after her initial diagnosis, the woman was still testing positive for COVID-19, which indicates that her body still contained trace amounts of genetic material from the novel coronavirus.

"We think that at least up to day 70, this patient would have been able to spread the virus to others," Vincent Munster, a virologist at the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious

Diseases who was involved in the study, [told the Business Insider](#).

"This was something that we expected might happen, but it had never been reported before," Munster added.

The researchers came to their conclusions by studying samples collected from the patient's upper respiratory tract. According to the study, the patient's 70-day period of infectiousness is the longest span of infectious shedding yet seen in an asymptomatic COVID-19 patient.

The longest-known infectious shedding span for a symptomatic person is [61 days](#).

Researchers believe that the woman remained infectious for so long because her weakened immune system was unable to generate a substantial amount of antibodies to fight the virus. In fact, blood tests indicated that the patient's body was never able to make such antibodies.

At one point, she was treated with convalescent plasma, a technique in which doctors isolate antibodies in the plasma of survivors of the novel coronavirus and inject those antibodies into sick patients. Plasma is the liquid component of blood.

However, the treatment did not have an effect on the patient due to her low concentration of antibodies. Despite this, she never showed any symptoms of COVID-19.

"At the time we started this study, we really didn't know much about the duration of virus shedding," Munster [told Cell Press](#).

"As this virus continues to spread, more people with a range of immunosuppressing disorders will become infected, and it's important to understand how SARS-CoV-2 behaves in these populations."

The [latest data by Worldometer](#) reveals that there have been more than 10 million cases of COVID-19 in the US and over 244,000 COVID-19-related deaths.

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US Underwent Record Amount of Wildfires, 'Historic' Hurricanes in October - NOAA

Extreme weather plagued the US in October, with the nation seeing wildfires, hurricanes and record snowfall, according to a recent analysis conducted by the US' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Data [compiled by NOAA](#) found that the average October temperature across the US was 54.4 degrees Fahrenheit, which is 0.3 degrees above the 20th-century average. California experienced its hottest October on record, while Arizona and Florida each experienced their third-hottest Octobers on record.

The average precipitation in the US last month was 2.16 inches. However, below-average precipitation was recorded across many parts of the West, the Deep South and the central and northern Plains, as well as parts of the Southeast. California endured its second-driest October ever recorded.

In addition, the average US temperature for the year to date was 2.1 degrees above the 20th-century average, coming in at 57.0 degrees Fahrenheit. This year is now tied for the seventh-warmest such mark on record.

Meanwhile, the year-to-date US precipitation total was 26.30 inches, 0.94 inches above average.

October also brought severe weather events. Colorado experienced three of its largest wildfires in history - the Cameron Peak, Pine Gulch and East Troublesome fires - last month, with the East Troublesome fire spreading to more than 193,000 acres.

California was also plagued by hundreds of wildfires. Since the beginning of the year, wildfires have burned over [4 million acres in the Golden State](#).

In addition, there has been historic tropical storm activity in the Atlantic. According to the US National Hurricane Center, [five tropical cyclones](#) developed in the region last month. More recently, Hurricanes Zeta and Delta hit Louisiana in October just a few weeks apart in what has been considered one of the more active hurricane seasons by experts.

Record snowfall was also reported in some US locations, with portions of the West and Plains experiencing heavy snow last month.

Areas within the states of Montana, Minnesota, Washington, New Mexico, Texas and Kansas experienced their snowiest Octobers yet.

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BBC Opens Probe on Claim Princess Diana Was Tricked into Affair-Revealing Interview

The head of Britain's BBC revealed Monday that the corporation would be investigating how a journalist convinced the late Princess Diana to participate in a famous 1995 interview in which the princess admitted to an affair and divulged details about her marriage to Prince Charles, the heir to the throne.

This month, Diana's brother Charles Spencer alleged that Martin Bashir, who conducted the interview for the BBC's "Panorama" program, convinced her to participate by using fake

documents to make it seem that people connected to the British royal family were selling information about Diana.

According to Spencer, Bashir told Diana that she was being bugged by the security services and that two senior aides were being paid to divulge information about her. Bashir also allegedly provided fake bank statements to support his claims.

"Many people are, quite understandably, asking why I've waited till now to come forward with the truth about how the @BBCPanorama with my sister came about," Spencer [tweeted on Sunday](#).

"While I knew that Martin Bashir used fake bank statements and other dishonesty to get my sister to do the interview, what I only found out 2 weeks ago, thanks to journalist Andy Webb's persistent use of the Freedom of Information Act, is that the BBC also knew. Not only knew about it, but that they covered it up."

The BBC released a statement Monday stating that it takes the allegations "very seriously." "The BBC is taking this very seriously and we want to get to the truth," Tim Davie, the BBC's director general said in a statement about Spencer's claims, [Reuters reported](#). "We are in the process of commissioning a robust and independent investigation."

Bashir has yet to comment on the matter, and Reuters was unable to reach him. However, according to the BBC, the journalist, who is currently the corporation's religious affairs correspondent, is on sick leave after recovering from heart surgery and contracting the COVID-19 novel coronavirus.

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US Police Chief Resigns Over Apparent Calls for Violence Against 'Marxist Democrats' by [Evan Craighead](#)

An Arkansas police chief has resigned after he authored several posts on a right-wing social media website that called for violence against so-called "Marxist Democrats" in relation to US President Donald Trump losing the recent election, according to a recent statement from Marshall Mayor Kevin Elliott.

[Elliott announced in a Saturday news release](#) that he "strongly condemns" the online "bullying" and "threats of violence" tied to Lang Holland, the former police chief of Marshall, Arkansas.

"The Marshall community does not in any way support or condone bullying or threats of violence to anyone of any political persuasion! We condemn it!" he wrote.

The mayor's comments came on the heels of tweets exposing posts authored by an account using Holland's name and likeness on Parler, a social media website that [promotes "free speech"](#) and has a majority pro-Trump base.

"When this is over and Trump is president for 4 more years. Do not go to sleep," user @Langholland wrote on the website. "Do not forget what these Marxist Democrat bastards have tried to do. When you see one in public get in their face do not give them any peace."

Another post by the account declared, "Death to all Marxist Democrats."

The posts, as well as the @Langholland account, were removed from the platform hours later, [according to KATV News' Viktoria Capek](#).

A new profile, @Chieflangholland, was created soon after with private account settings.

[KATV reported](#) the new profile claimed to be "the real chief" and said the other account was an imposter, as he was a "protector of all citizens."

Both accounts were inactive as of Saturday, according to the outlet.

"Upon my meeting with Mr. Holland he resigned as Police Chief for the City of Marshall effective immediately. Mr. Holland is no longer employed with the city," Elliot wrote in the release.

Holland previously drew attention to the small city over the summer after he penned a news release stating his department would not be enforcing the face mask mandate imposed by Republican Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson.

"I Chief Lang Holland feel this order is a very large overreach of the powers given to State government by the citizens of the state of Arkansas," [he wrote in the July 17 release](#).

"It is a free country if you want to wear a mask wear one, if you do not want to wear one don't wear one."

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Photos: Docs Show Roger Stone's \$1.5 Million Tax Liens Forgiven After Presidential Pardon by [Evan Craighead](#)

Roger Stone, a former adviser for US President Donald Trump's campaign, has been granted a withdrawal of nearly \$1.5 million in federal tax liens after meeting "one or more" elements of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), according to a recent filing by the US Department of the Treasury.

An October 21 filing from the US Treasury's Internal Revenue Service (IRS) detailed the February 2012 federal tax lien against Stone had been withdrawn due to his satisfying [IRC section 6323\(j\)](#).

According to the IRC section referenced, the decision to withdraw could be related to Stone's compliance with an installment agreement or the IRS concluding that the withdrawal would be in the "best interests of the United States and the taxpayer."

The court document, stamped by a Miami Beach, Florida, court and republished Monday by [reporter Robert Snell](#), showed the former Trump campaign adviser was hit with liens in 2009 and 2010 for failure to file annual income tax returns for the tax periods ending in December 2007 and December 2008. Together, the liens totaled more than \$1 million.

A second document filed in Florida's city of Fort Lauderdale showed some \$500,000 in additional liens were also withdrawn, bringing the total to \$1,493,008.10.

While Stone's liens have been withdrawn, the IRS more frequently audits taxpayers in lower income brackets than him.

[The IRS website states](#) those who claim the earned income tax credit (EITC) - "a refundable tax credit for certain people who work and have earned income" - are generally "rural, lower income taxpayers." Audits of such taxpayers occur because they are more likely to claim the credit.

Commissioner of Internal Revenue Charles Rettig asserted in a [September 2019 letter](#) to Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) that it is cheaper for his agency to audit those who claim the EITC than their generally wealthier counterparts.

“The IRS cannot simply shift examination resources from single issue correspondence audits to more complex higher income audits because of employee experience and skillset,” he wrote. “A GS-8 tax examiner is not trained to conduct a high income, high wealth taxpayer audit.”

GS-8 refers to the eighth pay grade in the General Schedule (GS) payscale.

“Congress must fund and the IRS must hire and train appropriate numbers of RAs [revenue agents] to have appropriately balanced coverage across all income levels,” he concluded.

Stone had his 40-month prison sentence, two-year probation and related \$20,000 fine revoked earlier this year via a [clemency order signed by the US president](#).

He [suggested in September](#) that ballots in Nevada be “seized by federal marshals and taken from the state.”

“They are completely corrupted,” he said, weeks before the presidential election took place on November 3. “No votes should be counted from the state of Nevada if that turns out to be the provable case. Send federal marshals to the Clark County Board of Elections, Mr. President!”

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Video: NASA Wraps Sampling on Bennu as Research Suggests Asteroid is Hollow, Destroying Itself

by [Evan Craighead](#)

NASA’s OSIRIS-REx spacecraft has successfully conducted a sampling mission on the carbon-heavy asteroid Bennu, shortly after researchers theorized the asteroid’s spin is responsible for its apparently soft, or even hollow, center.

NASA announced in an [October 21 news release](#) that OSIRIS-REx’s Touch-And-Go (TAG) sample collection event on Bennu - some 200 million miles away - returned 82 SamCam images over a five-minute period after touching down at sample site Nightingale.

Burns - Nightingale Hazard Map and TAG Location

The 82 images from the October 20 mission were later compiled and published in a video.

According to the release, the first image was taken at roughly 82 feet (25 meters) above Bennu’s surface, and the last included image was captured at approximately 43 feet (13 meters) in altitude.

“The team on Earth received confirmation at 6:08 p.m. EDT that successful touchdown occurred,” the release read.

[A study published in Science Advances](#) days prior to the TAG mission evaluated the strength of Bennu’s gravity field, as well as the gravity field measurement of the ejected particles that would temporarily orbit Bennu “before reimpacting the surface or escaping from the asteroid.”

The research findings - based on two years of OSIRIS-REx data - suggested “density heterogeneity” was present throughout Bennu, with some of the least dense spots being near the asteroid’s core.

“If its core has a low density, it’s going to be easier to pull the entire asteroid apart,” [detailed study lead Daniel Scheeres](#), a professor in University of Colorado Boulder’s Department of Aerospace Engineering Science.

Researchers believe this is due to the asteroid’s spin continuously pushing once-compacted material to Bennu’s surface.

“It’s as if there is a void at its center, within which you could fit a couple of football fields,” Scheeres explained.

“If you can measure the gravity field with enough precision, that places hard constraints on where the mass is located, even if you can’t see it directly,” co-author Andrew French noted. Scheeres claimed all of Bennu could end up “flying apart” in “maybe a million years or less.” However, that is simply his current estimate on Bennu’s fate.

“None of them have sat out there unchanging since the dawn of the solar system,” Scheeres said of asteroids. “They’re being changed by things like sunlight affecting how they spin and collisions with other asteroids.”

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French Couple Finds Carrier Pigeon Capsule With Message From WWI German Soldier
by [Victoria Teets](#)

A one-of-a kind, pocket-sized capsule from a century ago containing a message dispatched by a German soldier was discovered by a French couple out on a walk in a field in the east of France in September.

The unique artifact, described as a “super rare” aluminum capsule, was most probably lost by its carrier pigeon more than 100 years ago during the First World War, reports The Guardian.

The message, frozen in time, was sent from an infantry soldier based at Ingersheim and is written in German. It is barely legible and describes military maneuvers during the war.

According to Dominique Jardy, curator of the Linge Museum at Orbey in eastern France, the message was addressed to a superior officer.

The date on the letter is marked as July 16, although the year is not altogether clear, appearing to be written as either 1910 or 1916. The war lasted from August 1914 until November 1918.

Jardy asked a German friend to help decipher the message, which describes German maneuvers between Bischwihr and Ingersheim at a time when the latter – along with the rest of what was then called Alsace-Lorraine – was part of the German Empire.

The message reads: “Platoon Potthof receives fire as they reach the western border of the parade ground, platoon Potthof takes up fire and retreats after a while.”

“In Fechtwald half a platoon was disabled. Platoon Potthof retreats with heavy losses.”

The small paper and capsule will become part of the Linge Museum’s permanent display.

Novavax Says US Regulator Fast-Tracking Its COVID-19 Vaccine For Clinical Review

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - Novavax Inc said on Monday the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was fast-tracking its COVID-19 vaccine candidate NVX-CoV2373 for clinical review.

"The FDA's decision to grant Fast Track Designation for NVX-CoV2373 reflects the urgent need for a safe and effective vaccine to prevent COVID-19, and we look forward to working closely with the agency to accelerate access to this vaccine," Gregory M. Glenn, President of Research and Development of Novavax said in a statement.

Glenn said the regulatory review of the clinical program would be "expedited," but assured that the company "remains committed to a data-driven and scientifically rigorous approach in demonstrating safety and efficacy."

Earlier on Monday, Pfizer announced that it expected to produce up to 50 million doses of its coronavirus vaccine in 2020 and up to 1.3 billion doses in 2021.

According to Pfizer, the vaccine it developed jointly with BioNTech SE proved more than 90 percent effective in the latest trials.

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Biegun Says US Wishes to Find Way Forward, Explore Cooperation with Russia

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said on Monday Washington would like to find a way forward with Russia and explore areas of cooperation between the two nations.

"I do think there is some desire, here in the United States, to find and open a way forward to explore areas of cooperation between the United States and Russia, to get past the very low point that we find ourselves at in the post-Cold War relationship," Biegun said at the ninth annual Transatlantic Forum on Russia.

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US Ready to Sit Down With Russian Counterparts to Find Areas of Agreement - Biegun

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said on Monday he is prepared to sit down with Russian counterparts to explore possible areas of agreement.

"I'm a very practical person - I'm prepared to sit down with Russian counterparts and explore where we can find areas of agreement, even as we have areas of deep disagreement," Biegun said at the ninth annual Transatlantic Forum on Russia.

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US Deputy Secretary of State Says Russia 'Gambling' With Extension of New START

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said on Monday that Russia is 'gambling' with extending the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), awaiting a possibly better offer after the presidential inauguration.

"The Russian Federation is certainly making a calculation based on whether they want to lock into agreement with an extension now or wait until after January 20 to see if there is a better offer that they can possibly acquire," Biegun said. "I think that's still a little bit of a gamble, perhaps less so than... it might have been two weeks ago, but that's very much for the Russian Federation to agree."

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US Stocks Jump 5% on News of Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine Progress

NEW YORK, November 9 (Sputnik) - Stocks on Wall Street jumped as much 5 percent on Monday as progress in Pfizer's vaccine program for the COVID-19 spurred risk-taking across equity markets.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, the broadest stock indicator on the New York Stock Exchange, was up 4.6 percent at 29,638 by 9:49 a.m. ET (14:49 GMT).

The S&P 500, a barometer for the top 500 US stocks on the NYSE, rose 3.6 percent to 3,635.

The Nasdaq Composite Index, which counts on the performance of US tech stock giants such as Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix and Google, gained 1.2 percent to 12,043.

Pfizer announced on Monday that a COVID-19 vaccine candidate it developed jointly with BioNTech SE proved more than 90 percent effective in the latest trials.

Pfizer also said it expected to produce up to 50 million doses of its vaccine in 2020 and up to 1.3 billion in 2021.

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Trump Hails Pfizer COVID Vaccine Progress, Biden Says Mask Use Still Needed

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - President Donald Trump hailed on Monday Pfizer's efficiency progress in its COVID-19 vaccine trials and production plans, while President-Elect Joe Biden said mask use was still needed in the United States as widespread vaccination was still a long way due.

"STOCK MARKET UP BIG, VACCINE COMING SOON. REPORT 90% EFFECTIVE. SUCH GREAT NEWS!" Trump tweeted, referring to the rally on Wall Street after Pfizer said the vaccine it developed jointly with BioNTech SE proved more than 90 percent effective in the latest trials. Pfizer also said it expected to produce up to 50 million doses of its coronavirus vaccine in 2020 and up to 1.3 billion doses in 2021.

Biden, who said in a statement that he learned of the progress of the Pfizer vaccine program on Sunday night from his public health advisers, congratulated the company but called for continued use of masks and social distancing practices — measures Trump has played down.

"It is important to understand that the battle against COVID-19 is still months away," Biden said. "Even if that is achieved, and some Americans are vaccinated later this year, it will be many more months before there is widespread vaccination in this country. Americans will have to rely on masking, distancing, contact tracing, hand washing, and other measures to keep themselves safe well into next year. Today's news is great news, but it doesn't change the fact."

Biden's response to the pandemic has been a striking contrast to that of Trump's. The president-elect wore a mask throughout his White House campaign, holding "drive-in rallies" at parking lots attended by people who honked their support from cars. Trump, who was infected by COVID-19 himself, did not wear a mask throughout his campaign and held rallies with thousands of people who also barely used facial coverings or practiced distancing.

Trump, who lost the November 3 election to Biden accounting to vote counts tallied so far, has refused to concede to the president-elect, filing multiple lawsuits to challenge the outcome.

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UN Palestinian Refugee Agency Has No Money to Pay Salaries This Month - Director-General

UNITED NATIONS, November 9 (Sputnik) - The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has run out of money to pay salaries to its staff in November due to significant cuts in funding, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini warned in a statement on Monday.

"Despite all of our efforts to raise the resources needed to keep our humanitarian and development programs running, it was with great regret that I informed our staff today that we don't have sufficient funding at this stage to honor their salaries this month," Lazzarini said.

Lazzarini noted that UNRWA urgently needs 70 million by the end of this month to ensure that 28,000 personnel receive full salaries for November and December.

In 2018, President Donald Trump decided to cut the \$300 million in annual funding the United States had provided UNRWA.

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US Sanctions Ex-Nicaragua President Aleman Over 'Significant Corruption' - Pompeo

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - The United States has designated former Nicaragua President Arnoldo Aleman over his involvement in significant corruption, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced in a statement on Monday.

"Today, I am announcing the public designation of former Nicaraguan President Arnoldo Aleman due to his involvement in significant corruption," Pompeo said. "In his official capacity as President of Nicaragua from 1997 to 2002, Aleman was involved in corrupt acts such as misappropriating millions of dollars of public funds for the benefit of himself and members of his family."

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US Senior Official Visiting Germany, UAE This Week to Discuss Key Priorities - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US Department of State Counselor Ulrich Brechbuhl will visit Germany, Switzerland, Romania and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) November 9-21 to discuss security, energy and economic collaboration, the Department announced in a release on Monday.

"During his travel, Counselor Brechbuhl will meet with foreign counterparts to discuss key policy priorities, including global security concerns, energy security, economic cooperation with our partners and the promotion of human rights," the release said.

The State Department said while in Berlin, Brechbuhl will meet senior German officials and speak with representatives of the World Uyghur Congress to highlight the egregious human rights abuses the Uyghur community in China.

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US Housing Secretary Ben Carson Tests Positive for Novel Coronavirus - Chief of Staff

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Ben Carson has tested positive for the novel coronavirus, his chief of staff Coalter Baker said in a statement on Monday.

"Secretary Carson has tested positive for the coronavirus," Baker said as quoted by ABC News. "He is in good spirits and feels fortunate to have access to effective therapeutics, which aid and markedly speed his recovery."

Carson was reportedly at the White House on Tuesday night for an election watch party along with other senior Trump administration officials.

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US Sanctions Ex-Nicaragua President Aleman Over 'Significant Corruption' - Pompeo

(Updates with additional information in paras 3, 4)

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"Today, I am announcing the public designation of former Nicaraguan President Arnoldo Aleman due to his involvement in significant corruption," Pompeo said. "In his official capacity as President of Nicaragua from 1997 to 2002, Aleman was involved in corrupt acts such as misappropriating millions of dollars of public funds for the benefit of himself and members of his family."

Pompeo said the designation concerns Aleman's acts during his time in office, but his corruption continues in Nicaragua today.

The State Department has also sanctioned the members of Aleman's immediate family, including Maria Fernanda Flores Lanzas, Maria Dolores Aleman Cardenal and Jose Aleman Cardenal.

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Biden Says Wants US to Become World Leader in Fight Against COVID-19

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US President-Elect Joe Biden said on Monday he wanted to restore America's global leadership in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic through the use of masks and other safeguards that follow the advice of public health scientists.

"We'll listen and learn lessons from their experience because we know that we won't fully defeat COVID-19 until we have defeated it everywhere," Biden said in a live-streamed announcement. "My advisory council also includes experts on global health security so that we can restore US global leadership to fight this pandemic."

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UN Chief Congratulates Biden, Harris on Election Victory in US - Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, November 9 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres congratulated Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris on their election victory in the United States, United Nations spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a press briefing on Monday.

"The Secretary-General congratulates the American people for a vibrant exercise of democracy in their country's elections last week," Dujarric said. "He congratulates the President-elect and Vice President-elect and reaffirms that the partnership between the United States and the United Nations is an essential pillar of the international cooperation needed to address the dramatic challenges facing the world today."

On November 3, the United States held its presidential and general elections. According to US media reports, Biden won the elections by gaining over 270 electoral votes and has already claimed his victory. President Donald Trump also claimed victory but said there has been a massive election fraud giving Biden the lead and he would contest the results in court.

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US Housing Secretary Ben Carson Tests Positive for Novel Coronavirus - Chief of Staff
(Updates with background in paras 4, 5)

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Ben Carson has tested positive for the novel coronavirus, his chief of staff Coalter Baker said in a statement on Monday.

"Secretary Carson has tested positive for the coronavirus," Baker said as quoted by ABC News. "He is in good spirits and feels fortunate to have access to effective therapeutics, which aid and markedly speed his recovery."

Carson was reportedly at the White House on Tuesday night for an election watch party along with other senior Trump administration officials.

On Friday, White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows tested positive for novel coronavirus. Media reported that Meadows told people he tested positive after Tuesday's election watch party.

President Donald Trump and his wife Melania contracted the virus at a ceremony in the White House in October but got well shortly after receiving treatment. Trump has said he is now immune to the coronavirus.

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Trump Says He Fired Esper, Appointed Christopher Miller as Acting US Defense Secretary

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump in a statement on Monday said he fired Defense Secretary Mark Esper and is replacing him with Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Christopher Miller.

"I am pleased to announce that Christopher C. Miller, the highly respected Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (unanimously confirmed by the Senate), will be Acting Secretary of Defense, effective immediately," Trump said via Twitter. "Chris will do a GREAT job! Mark Esper has been terminated. I would like to thank him for his service."

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Biden Says 200,000 More Americans May Die From COVID-19 Before Vaccine Made Available

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - Some 200,000 more people may die from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States before a vaccine become available, presumed US President-Elect Joe Biden said on Monday.

"This crisis claimed nearly 1,000 American lives a day, nearly 240,000 deaths so far," Biden said. "The projections still indicate we may lose 200,000 more lives in the coming months before a vaccine can be made widely available."

Earlier on Monday, Pfizer announced that the vaccine it is developing has been tested to be more than 90 percent effective and could file to register it in the United States as early as this month. Pfizer also said it expected to produce up to 50 million doses of the vaccine in 2020 and up to 1.3 billion in 2021.

On Sunday, Biden called the fight against the coronavirus pandemic a priority of his administration and promised to put together a team of experts to advise the new US government on lockdowns, mask mandates and other measures.

The Biden campaign's facility overseeing the transition of power announced in a press release earlier on Monday confirmed that a new advisory board will guide the new government's response to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

The US held its presidential election on November 3. While the official results of the 2020 US presidential election have not been declared yet, all major US media outlets have projected Biden as being the winner. President Donald Trump has said he won the election and added that it has been stolen from him. Trump is contesting the election results in court.

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Biden Says Wants US to Become World Leader in Fight Against COVID-19
(Updates with details and background, paragraphs 3-10)

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US President-Elect Joe Biden said on Monday he wanted to restore America's global leadership in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic through the use of masks and other safeguards that follow the advice of public health scientists.

"We'll listen and learn lessons from their experience because we know that we won't fully defeat COVID-19 until we have defeated it everywhere," Biden said in a live-streamed announcement. "My advisory council also includes experts on global health security so that we can restore US global leadership to fight this pandemic."

Biden's response to COVID-19 has been a striking contrast to that of incumbent president Donald Trump. The president-elect wore a mask throughout his White House campaign, holding "drive-in rallies" at parking lots attended by people who honked their support from cars. Trump, who was infected by coronavirus himself in early October before recovering, has played down the pandemic during most of this year, refusing to wear a mask and mandating one in public.

While Trump did accelerate vaccine initiatives for the virus through his Operation Warp Speed program, the president's continued defiance of public health experts' advice has led to mixed messaging in a country that has logged over 10,000 million COVID-19 cases and more than 237,000 deaths from the virus, and sees a record 100,000 new infections a day.

Biden did not announce any plan to mandate the use of masks in his Monday address, but appealed for the common sense of Americans to wear one.

"Do it for yourself. Do it for your neighbor. A mask is not a political statement, but it is a good way to start pulling the country together. I want to be very clear. The goal of mask-wearing is not to make your life less comfortable. It is not to take something away from you. It's to give something back to all of us, a normal life. The goal is to get back to normal as fast as possible and masks are critical. And it won't be forever."

The president-elect congratulated drug company Pfizer for its announcement on Monday that it had achieved 90 percent effectiveness in latest trials of its Covid-19 vaccine. But he maintained that it will take a while before such vaccines reach the people.

"It is important to understand that the battle against COVID-19 is still months away," Biden said in a statement issued earlier in the day. "Even if that is achieved, and some Americans are vaccinated later this year, it will be many more months before there is widespread vaccination in this country. Americans will have to rely on masking, distancing, contact tracing, hand washing, and other measures to keep themselves safe well into next year. Today's news is great news, but it doesn't change the fact."

Trump, who lost the November 3 election to Biden accounting to vote counts tallied so far, has refused to concede to the election, filing multiple lawsuits to challenge the outcome. Biden's inauguration as the 46th US president is scheduled for January 20.

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Trump Says He Fired Esper, Appointed Christopher Miller as Acting US Defense Secretary
(Updates with background in paras 3, 4)

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"I am pleased to announce that Christopher C. Miller, the highly respected Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (unanimously confirmed by the Senate), will be Acting Secretary of Defense, effective immediately," Trump said via Twitter. "Chris will do a GREAT job! Mark Esper has been terminated. I would like to thank him for his service."

Esper was expected to be let go since at least June after disagreeing with Trump on various issues such as opposing the US president's idea of using active-duty troops to quell unrest and riots since the wake of George Floyd's death in police custody in May, according to media reports.

Trump is also reportedly expected to fire FBI Director Christopher Wray and CIA Director Gina Haspel.

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Trump Weighing 2024 US Presidential Election Run - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump is considering a run for president in the 2024 election, Axios reported on Monday citing two sources familiar with the matter.

Trump has been discussing with advisers his idea to run for a second presidential term in 2024, the report said.

Major US media networks have declared Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden the winner of the 2020 election.

Trump claims he won the election and said the election was stolen from him amid a massive election fraud. Trump is contesting the election results in court.

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Anti-Islamic State Coalition to Discuss West Africa on November 10 - US State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - Members of the global coalition against the Islamic State terror group (banned in Russia) will discuss the situation in West Africa during their meeting on November 10, the US State Department said in a statement on Monday.

"The United States and Nigeria look forward to convening a virtual meeting with members of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS [Islamic State] on November 10 to affirm the Coalition's commitment to countering the threat of ISIS and its branches worldwide, including in West Africa, and to supporting ongoing international efforts in the region," the statement said.

The State Department said participants will discuss the Islamic State threat in the region and will focus on methods to strengthen the coalition's collective approach in specific areas, such as battlefield evidence and border security.

The United States and other 82 coalition members remain fully committed to defeat the Islamic State and its branches, the statement added.

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US COVID-19 Cases Rise Above 10 Million - Johns Hopkins University

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - The number of COVID-19 cases in the United States jumped from 9 million to 10 million in just 10 days, data from the Johns Hopkins University revealed on Monday.

The US had confirmed 10,018,278 cases of COVID-19 by mid-afternoon, up from 9 million on October 30, the data showed. The death toll, meanwhile, had reached 237,742, according to the data.

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US Expands Hong Kong-Related Sanctions to Designate 4 Individuals - Treasury

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - The United States imposed Hong Kong-related sanctions on four Chinese nationals, the US Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) said in a notice on Monday.

"The following individuals have been added to OFAC's SDN [Special Designated Nationals] List: DENG, Zhonghua...LAU, Edwina...LI, Jiangzhou...LI, Kwai-wah," the notice said.

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UN Chief Congratulates Biden, Harris on Election Victory in US - Spokesman
(Updates with details in paras 3-6)

UNITED NATIONS, November 9 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres congratulated Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris on their election victory in the United States, United Nations spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a press briefing on Monday.

"The Secretary-General congratulates the American people for a vibrant exercise of democracy in their country's elections last week," Dujarric said. "He congratulates the President-elect and Vice President-elect and reaffirms that the partnership between the United States and the United Nations is an essential pillar of the international cooperation needed to address the dramatic challenges facing the world today."

Dujarric said the United Nations chief has not spoken directly to Biden and has not scheduled a time to talk to him yet.

"The secretary-general is always pleased when a woman-leader breaks yet another ceiling," Dujarric said referring to Harris.

When asked to comment on US President Donald Trump's allegations of election fraud, Dujarric responded that the United Nations has full confidence in the US institutions to see the legal process through.

On November 3, the United States held its presidential and general elections. US media outlets projected Biden to be the winner of the presidential election. Biden claimed he is the winner but so has President Donald Trump, who said the election has been stolen from him via a massive election fraud. Trump has contested the election results in court.

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US Sanctions Syrian Defense Forces, Petroleum Ministry - Treasury

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - The United States has targeted the Syrian Defense Forces and the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources in the latest round of sanctions against the Arab Republic, the US Department of the Treasury announced in the release on Monday.

"Today, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) took action against Syrian military officials, members of the Syrian Parliament, government of Syria entities, and Syrian and Lebanese persons attempting to revive Syria's deteriorating petroleum industry," the release said. "Specifically, OFAC added seven individuals and ten entities to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List, pursuant to Syria sanctions authorities."

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UPDATE -'Biden-Harris Transition' Unveils COVID-19 Advisory Board to Guide Fight Against Pandemic

(Updates with additional information in para 5)

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - The Biden campaign's facility overseeing the transition of power in the United States to Joe Biden and Kamala Harris announced in a press release on Monday that a new Advisory Board will guide the new government's response to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

On Sunday, Biden called the fight against the novel coronavirus pandemic a priority of his administration and promised to put together a team of experts to advise the new US government.

"Today, the Biden-Harris Transition announced the formation of the Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board, a team of leading public health experts who will advise President-elect Biden, Vice President-elect Harris, and the Transition's COVID-19 staff," the release said.

The Advisory Board is composed of a diverse and experienced group of doctors and scientists who have previous experience in tackling public health crises as part of government, the release said.

Experts on the Advisory Board include David Kessler, who served as Food and Drug Administration Commissioner under former presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton; Vivek Murthy, the Obama-era Surgeon-General; and Rick Bright, a vaccines expert fired by President Donald Trump after criticizing the Trump administration coronavirus policy.

"Dealing with the coronavirus pandemic is one of the most important battles our administration will face, and I will be informed by science and by experts," Biden was quoted as saying in the release.

The Advisory Board will work by engaging with state and local officials to determine what steps should be taken to address the spread of the novel coronavirus virus and the need for urgent relief to working families and the racial disparities pertaining to the matter, as well as the reopening of schools and businesses in a safe and effective manner, the release said.

As of Monday, the United States' cumulative toll has surpassed 9.9 million cases with 237,000 virus-related fatalities, according to the latest data compiled by the Johns Hopkins University.

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US Sanctions Syrian Defense Forces, Petroleum Ministry - Treasury

(Adds additional sanctions details, background in paras 3-5)

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - The United States has targeted the Syrian Defense Forces and the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources in the latest round of sanctions against the Arab Republic, the US Treasury Department said in a statement on Monday.

"Today, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) took action against Syrian military officials, members of the Syrian Parliament, government of Syria entities, and Syrian and Lebanese persons attempting to revive Syria's deteriorating petroleum industry," the release said. "Specifically, OFAC added seven individuals and ten entities to the

Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List, pursuant to Syria sanctions authorities."

The Treasury blacklist additions include Syrian Air Force intelligence chief Ghassan Ismail, Political Security Directorate head Brigadier General Nasr Al-Ali, parliamentarians Nabil Toumeh Bin Mohammed and Amer Taysir Khiti, OFAC also designated the Military Construction Establishment (MCE) and the Productive Projects Administration (PPA), the release said. Arfada Petroleum Private Joint Stock Company, Sallizar Shipping SAL, Al-Resafa Refinery Company Private JSC , Coastal Refinery Company Private JSC were also on the Treasury list, among others.

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US Envoy for Syria Jeffrey to Retire in November - Pompeo

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - US Special Envoy for Syria Engagement James Jeffrey will retire this month, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced in a statement on Monday. "Ambassador James F. Jeffrey, who has served for almost two and a half years as the Special Representative for Syria Engagement and Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, will retire from his roles this month," Pompeo said. "I have directed Joel D. Rayburn, currently Deputy Assistant Secretary and Special Envoy for Syria, to assume Ambassador Jeffrey's Syria engagement responsibilities."

Pompeo said he also designated Ambassador Nathan Sales, the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, as Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat the Islamic State (a terrorist group outlawed in Russia).

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US Imposes Hong Kong-Related Sanctions on 4 Chinese Officials - Treasury
(Adds sanctions details, background to headline, paras 3-6)

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"The following individuals have been added to OFAC's SDN [Special Designated Nationals] List: DENG, Zhonghua... LAU, Edwina... LI, Jiangzhou... LI, Kwai-wah," the notice said.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Edwina, Jiangzhou and Kwai-wah have been designated for implementing China's national security law in Hong Kong. Zhonghua, the Deputy Director of the Hong Kong & Macau Affairs Office, has been designated for his role in cracking down on protesters in Hong Kong, Pompeo said.

The Chinese government enacted the national security law in Hong Kong in late June. The law adjusts security policies in Hong Kong to Beijing's perception of crime and punishment concerning separatism, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign countries.

Beijing has urged those who have criticized the new law to cease their interference in China's internal matters.

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Trump's Heritage May Weaken Biden's Foreign Policy Stance - Ex-US Envoy

WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - President Donald Trump's record of pulling out of many treaties and agreements may cripple his successor's efforts to work with other countries, former US ambassador and Assistant Secretary of Defense Chas Freeman told Sputnik.

Democratic Party nominee Joe Biden was projected the winner of the presidential election by all major US networks and media outlets this weekend. Trump, however, has filed several legal challenges and refuses to concede.

"Biden will find foreign countries much less inclined to accept what he says at face value or willing to bandwagon with the United States," Freeman said. "He and his entourage are about to undergo a painful learning experience as they come to grips with the disadvantageous realities they are inheriting from the era of Trump."

Freeman, a former US ambassador to Saudi Arabia, also said the "gang of Clinton and Obama retreads" who have attached themselves to Biden may be in for some surprises.

"The old human rights and democratization agendas of previous Democratic administrations no longer have much appeal abroad and it is not at all clear to what extent they played a role in electing Biden," Freeman said. "To advance such agendas, the US will have first to do so at home."

Freeman said some restoration of multilateralism will occur under Biden but the Senate is unlikely to resume approving treaties or US participation in international conventions. The last treaty the Senate approved was in 2008, Freeman noted.

Biden would fulfill his pledge to rejoin the Paris Climate Accords, for example, but otherwise little significant change in foreign policy was likely, Freeman advised.

"They are about to discover how much the Trump administration... has weakened its civil service and capacity to formulate and implement workable domestic and foreign policies. A great deal of expertise and institutional memory has bled away. Rebuilding governing capacity will take years if not decades," he said.

Freeman acknowledged that the tone of US foreign relations will be "less self-centered and abusive" but the substance, with few exceptions, is unlikely to change much.

Biden would seek to preserve existing arms control agreements with Russia but otherwise would encourage tensions and potential conflict in Eastern Europe rather than trying to reduce it, Freeman said.

"My guess is that Biden will embrace Putin's offer to continue current arms control agreements pending their renegotiation and renewal. Biden and his camp expect Europe to be anti-Russian

and will do what they can to sustain confrontation in Eastern Europe rather than promote diplomatic detente aimed at mutual accommodation," he said.

US relations with both Russia and China would continue at best to be wary and to lack reliable support from Cold War allies, Freeman concluded.

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Russian Debt Highly Popular Due to High Real Interest Rate - US Investor

*WASHINGTON, November 8 (Sputnik) - Russian debt continues to be very attractive among investors because of its real interest rate, Navigator Principal Investors Director Kyle Shostak told Sputnik.

"Russian debt remains highly popular amongst the investors due to high real interest rate (about 2 percent net of inflation)," Shostak said. "The rouble-denominated OFZ bond market is roughly 35% owned by the foreigners."

Shostak said Russia's share in JPMorgan's GBI-EM index, the main global benchmark for emerging market local currency bonds, has also grown to 8.3% from near 7% a couple of years ago and just 1.5% in 2007.

The investor added that Russian bonds earned more than 20% and equities more than 40% last year, while Russia's debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to be just 20% this year, less than a fifth of that of the United States, Britain or France and under a third of China's, thus remaining one of the strongest public balance sheets in the world.

"Any worsening in Russia's stand in the West (Georgia, Ukraine, Skripal, and now Navalniy) in the past has led to the weakening of the bond but also an opportunity for investors to get in cheaper," he said. "The trend, if it can be of any guidance, has shown that the Russian assets always traded back very nicely."

Commenting on possible sanctions policy of the new US administration towards Russia, Shostak stated, "The most damaging effect will be seen if the US will introduce a ban on owning Russian debt or Russian banks being cut off from the SWIFT global payment system."

"At the moment such risk remains high but not something that the new administration will rush to implement regardless," he said.

Last year, lawmakers introduced a measure targeting Russia's sovereign debt and banks. The legislation also calls for sanctions on Russian-owned energy projects outside the country. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the legislation was aimed at forcing competitive Russian companies out of the market. Russia has repeatedly rejected accusations of interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries.

Democratic Party candidate Joe Biden was projected the winner of the presidential election by all major US networks and media outlets this weekend. Trump, however, has filed several legal challenges and refuses to concede.

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Russian Debt Highly Popular Due to High Real Interest Rate - US Investor

*WASHINGTON, November 9 (Sputnik) - Russian debt continues to be very attractive among investors because of its real interest rate, Navigator Principal Investors Director Kyle Shostak told Sputnik.

"Russian debt remains highly popular amongst the investors due to high real interest rate (about 2 percent net of inflation)," Shostak said. "The rouble-denominated OFZ bond market is roughly 35% owned by the foreigners."

Shostak said Russia's share in JPMorgan's GBI-EM index, the main global benchmark for emerging market local currency bonds, has also grown to 8.3% from near 7% a couple of years ago and just 1.5% in 2007.

The investor added that Russian bonds earned more than 20% and equities more than 40% last year, while Russia's debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to be just 20% this year, less than a fifth of that of the United States, Britain or France and under a third of China's, thus remaining one of the strongest public balance sheets in the world.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY
WASHINGTON, November 10 (Sputnik) -

US DEVELOPMENTS

- * UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres congratulated Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris on their election victory in the United States, United Nations spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a press briefing on Monday.
- * The European Union is waiting for US President-elect Joe Biden to take office before commenting on the future bilateral relations, and hopes to address common challenges in cooperation, the European Commission's spokespersons said.
- * Biden said he wanted to restore the United States' global leadership in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic through mask mandates and other safeguards that follow the advice of public health scientists.
- * US President Donald Trump in a statement on Monday said he fired Defense Secretary Mark Esper and is replacing him with Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Christopher Miller.
- * US Special Envoy for Syria Engagement James Jeffrey will retire this month, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced in a statement.

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RUSSIAN HELICOPTER DOWNING IN ARMENIA

- * Russian helicopter Mi-24 was shot down in the Armenian airspace outside the combat zone, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said on Monday.
- * Azerbaijan admitted that it had accidentally shot down a Russian Mi-24 helicopter, Baku apologizes for the incident and expresses its readiness to pay compensation to Russia, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry said.
- * The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) expresses serious concern over the tragic incident in Armenia, in which Russian helicopter was shot down, the organization's spokesman Vladimir Zainetdinov told Sputnik.
- * The Armenian side will assist Russia in establishing the circumstances in connection with the crash of the Mi-24 helicopter, Armenian Defense Ministry spokeswoman Shushan Stepanyan told Sputnik.

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US SANCTIONS AGAINST HONG KONG, SYRIA

- * The United States imposed Hong Kong-related sanctions on four Chinese nationals, the US Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) said in a notice on Monday.
- * The United States has targeted the Syrian Defense Forces and the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources in the latest round of sanctions against the Arab Republic, the US Department of the Treasury announced in the release.

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NAGRONO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

* Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev announced that almost 50 more settlements in Khojavend, Khojaly, Fizuli, Zengilan, Jabrayil, Gubadli and Lachin districts have been taken under control of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces.

* Russia intends to use all available opportunities to bring the parties to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh to the negotiating table as soon as possible, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

* The Azerbaijani armed forces have seized control over some more territories in Karabakh, President Ilham Aliyev said.

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US-RUSSIA RELATIONS

* US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said on Monday the United States would like to find a way forward with Russia and explore areas of cooperation between the two nations.

* Biegun said he is prepared to sit down with Russian counterparts to explore possible areas of agreement.

* Stephen Biegun said that Russia is 'gambling' with extending the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), awaiting a possibly better offer after the presidential inauguration.

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CORONAVIRUS VACCINE

* Pfizer said on Monday that it is expecting to produce up to 50 million doses of its coronavirus vaccine in 2020 and up to 1.3 billion doses in 2021.

* US Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson has tested positive for the novel coronavirus, his chief of staff Coalter Baker said in a statement.

* Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that he had tested positive for the coronavirus, but said that he was feeling well.

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Pompeo, Kuwait Foreign Minister to Meet on November 24 in Washington - US State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 10 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will meet with his Kuwaiti counterpart Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohamed Al-Sabah in Washington on November 24 to discuss cooperation after holding the new round of bilateral Strategic Dialogue, the Department of State said in a statement.

"The Strategic Dialogue will culminate with a meeting between Secretary Michael R. Pompeo and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohamed Al-Sabah on November 24 in Washington, DC," the statement said on Monday.

The State Department noted that the Strategic Dialogue started earlier on Monday in virtual format.

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Republican-Run States Call on US Supreme Court to Reverse Extending Mail Ballot Deadline

WASHINGTON, November 10 (Sputnik) - A coalition of ten state attorney generals from Republican-run states are calling on the US Supreme Court to reverse the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision to allow a three-day deadline extension for mail-in ballots in the 2020 election, a court brief revealed.

"The Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision overstepped its constitutional responsibility, encroached on the authority of the Pennsylvania legislature, and violated the plain language of the Election Clauses," the court brief said on Monday. "This Court should grant the petitions, grant expedited review, and reverse the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's judgment."

The attorney generals of Missouri, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, South Dakota and Texas signed the court brief supporting the Pennsylvania Republican Party's lawsuit against the state's Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar. Prior to the November 3 vote, the US Supreme Court rejected a Republican party attempt to eliminate the three-day deadline extension in Pennsylvania for the receipt of mail-in ballots. Incumbent President Donald Trump has been a major critic of the mail-in voting process, saying it opens the system to potential election fraud. Trump has claimed victory in the 2020 election, but said the election was stolen via a massive fraud perpetrated in various US states and is contesting the election results in court.

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Wall Street's Dow Jones Up Most Since June Based on Coronavirus Vaccine Progress

NEW YORK, November 10 (Sputnik) - Wall Street's Dow Jones Industrial Average index posted on Monday its biggest one-day gain since June after the reported progress in Pfizer's coronavirus trial vaccine, but technology stocks that favored stay-home activities like e-commerce and video-streaming fell.

The Dow, the broadest stock indicator on the New York Stock Exchange, settled up 3 percent at 29,157. This was the Dow's biggest percentage gain since June 5.

The S&P 500, a barometer for the top 500 US stocks on the New York Stock Exchange, rose 1.1 percent to close at 3,549.

The Nasdaq Composite Index, which counts on the performance of US tech stock giants such as Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix and Google, finished the day down 1.5 percent at 11,713. Pfizer announced on Monday that a coronavirus vaccine candidate it has developed jointly with BioNTech SE proved more than 90 percent effective in the latest trials. Pfizer also said it expected to produce up to 50 million doses of its vaccine in 2020 and up to 1.3 billion in 2021.

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US Congress to Move On With New Sanctions to Stop Nord Stream 2 Completion - Investor

WASHINGTON, November 10 (Sputnik) - The US Congress will proceed with a new round of sanctions before the end of the year in attempt to halt the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project, Kyle Shostak, director of Navigator Principal Investors, told Sputnik.

"The US Congress will in any case move on with the new set of sanctions before the end of 2020 aimed at disrupting the completion of the project," Shostak said about the pipeline that is planned to deliver Russian gas to Europe.

Shostak said unlike incumbent US President Donald Trump, the presumed President-Elect Joe Biden will have to pay more attention to the German opposition to the US sanctions against the pipeline.

"Under the circumstances, in my opinion, Germany is the one deciding whether Nord Stream 2 lives or dies," Shostak said.

Shostak pointed out the German stance is lingering and undecided while the pro-Russian position is weakened as a result of the Alexei Navalny case.

"Whoever wins Germany this time, be it the United States or Russia, will determine the future of the pipeline," he said.

In October, the US State Department broadened the scope of sanctions against the Nord Stream 2, enabling Washington to target companies that provide services or funding to vessels working on the project.

Russia has criticized the United States for imposing yet another set of sanctions against Nord Stream 2, saying the sanctions exemplify Washington's desire for unfair competition.

The US sanctions resulted in Swiss constructor Allseas, which participated in laying the pipeline in the Baltic Sea, to suspend its work in late December.

In January, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the Nord Stream 2 pipeline should be completed as expected.

The results of the 2020 US presidential election have not been certified yet, but all major US media have projected Biden to be the winner. While Biden claimed victory on Saturday, President Donald Trump also said he won, adding that the election had been stolen from him via massive election fraud. Trump has disputed the results and taken the matter to court.

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Trump Campaign Files Lawsuit in Pennsylvania Alleging Illegal Mail-in Voting System
WASHINGTON, November 10 (Sputnik) - The Trump campaign in a statement said it has filed a lawsuit in the key toss-up state of Pennsylvania alleging an illegal voting system for mail-in ballots.

"President Trump's re-election campaign today filed a lawsuit in Pennsylvania alleging the creation and implementation of an illegal 'two-tiered' voting system for the 2020 General Election," the statement said on Monday.

All major US media outlets projected Democratic candidate Joe Biden as the winner of the presidential election after the state of Pennsylvania crossed the threshold to avoid a run-off this weekend. Biden leads Trump by 0.7% with 98% of the vote counted, official results published by CNN showed on Monday. Trump has not conceded to Biden yet and has filed several legal challenges.

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US-China Trade War Likely to Hit Pause Under Biden - Investor

WASHINGTON, November 10 (Sputnik) - The trade war between Washington and Beijing would likely be halted under a Joe Biden administration, although the United States would continue to confront China on other fronts, Kyle Shostak, director of Navigator Principal Investors, told Sputnik.

Biden was projected the winner of the presidential election by all major US networks and media outlets this weekend. Trump, however, has filed several legal challenges and refuses to concede.

"Chinese blue chips gained 0.8%, on a hope that Biden might reverse some of Trump's trade war tariffs. While it is reasonable to expect that experienced in foreign relations Biden will cool off some of the harsh rhetoric, the general direction of containing and confronting China will not change as it based on a bi-partisan consensus," Shostak said. "There will probably be more professional set of officials in charge of handling China relations and so the trade war will take a pause."

Shostak stressed, however, that rebuilding mutual trust between the two nations will be extremely difficult.

The US and China resuming joint initiatives on vaccines, fighting the pandemic and climate change would be helpful, the investor added.

Global markets, he added, have so far reacted very positively to Biden's expected official win. "Shares in Asia Pacific have climbed to their highest point for nearly three years as Joe Biden edged closer to becoming the next president of the United States," the investor said. "MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares (excluding Japan) climbed 1.3% to reach its highest since February, 2018. Japan's Nikkei rose 1.1% to a nine-month top and South Korea put on 1.5%. Australia's ASX200 was also up more than 1%."

Investors believe markets will continue to be aided by the sizable government stimulus while the declared tax increases will be fought against by the Republicans-controlled Senate, he added. The tariff war between the United States and China started after US President Donald Trump decided in June 2018 to impose 25-percent tariffs on \$50 billion worth of Chinese goods in a bid to fix the US-Chinese trade deficit. Last May, the United States more than doubled import duties on \$200 billion of Chinese goods. Beijing retaliated by increasing tariffs on US imports later that year.

At the beginning of 2020, the United States and China struck the Phase 1 trade agreement in which Beijing agreed to increase purchases of US goods and services by \$200 billion over the next two years. In February, China reduced by 50 percent tariffs it had imposed on a number of US goods.

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Pompeo, South Korean Foreign Minister Discuss Efforts to Ensure Regional Peace -
Spokesman

WASHINGTON, November 10 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha and addressed the two countries' coordination in

ensuring peace on the Korean Peninsula, US Department of State spokesperson Cale Brown said in a statement.

"Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo met today with Republic of Korea Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha in Washington," Brown said on Monday. "During the meeting, Secretary Pompeo and Foreign Minister Kang discussed bilateral and regional priorities, including coordination on ensuring peace on the Korean Peninsula."

Pompeo and Kang also discussed expanding cooperation through the US Indo-Pacific Strategy and South Korea's New Southern Policy.

The two officials reaffirmed the importance of the US-South Korea alliance regarding ensuring peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region and the two countries'

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Barr Authorizes Inquiries of Substantial Allegations of Voting Irregularities - Memorandum

WASHINGTON, November 10 (Sputnik) - US Attorney General William Barr has authorized federal attorneys to launch inquiries into credible allegations of voting irregularities before the 2020 presidential election results are certified, a memorandum obtained by Sputnik revealed. "I authorize you to pursue substantial allegations of voting and vote tabulation irregularities prior to the certification of elections in your jurisdictions in certain cases, as I have already done in specific instances," Barr said in the memorandum on Monday.

Barr added that inquiries and reviews may be launched if there is clear and credible allegations of voting irregularities, that if true, could possibly impact the outcome of a federal election in a US state.

Barr said serious allegations of voting and vote tabulation irregularities should be handled with great care, adding that allegations that are speculative or far-fetched claims should not be a basis for initiating federal inquiries.

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US-Russia Trade to Increase Under Biden If Anti-Russian Rhetoric Muted - Investor

WASHINGTON, November 10 (Sputnik) - Trade between the United States and Russia will increase under the administration of presumed President-Elect Joe Biden if the anti-Russian rhetoric is muted to accommodate business interests, Kyle Shostak, director of Navigator Principal Investors, told Sputnik.

"If the anti-Russian rhetoric is to be somewhat muted to accommodate business interests, we shall see more mutual trade, the reinvigoration of the bilateral Government Committee on Trade, but most importantly, more active private business initiatives, investments in research

and development, capitalization of already existing Russian subsidiaries of US companies, especially consumer-oriented, and hopefully opening of new ones," Shostak said.

The investor pointed out that an increase in bilateral trade will be a function of how much economic growth the Russian economy can demonstrate and sustain.

A number of US businesses are genuinely interested in developing a footprint in the Russian market and they hold no political biases, he said.

"For many, it is a case of the major emerging markets, largely overlooked and underappreciated, cheap and artificially isolated," Shostak said. "Doing business in Russia for consumer products companies is completely outside of sanctions and so is investing in Russian equities and debt (at least thus far). For that reason, I believe trade may have a good chance to pick up so long as the natural economic fundamentals support it."

Shostak noted that Russia is the 26th largest US trading partner in goods totaling \$28 billion last year whereby goods exports totaled \$5.8 billion and goods imports \$22.3 billion.

"The US goods trade deficit with Russia was \$16.5 billion in 2019," he said.

Shostak said US-Russia economic and trade relations hit a low during Donald Trump presidency primarily because of the rapid build-up of anti-Russia sanctions - mostly introduced by the US Congress - amid a bi-partisan consensus that Russia was the United States No. 1 enemy.

As a result, US businesses have been reluctant to invest in Russia as many expected the country's economy to be "sanctions-contained and also shrinking as a result of its own domestic troubles."

"The change of command at the white House doesn't necessarily impact bilateral trade as it already is at a record-minimum level," Shostak said.

Shostak pointed out that the Russian debt continues to be highly popular amongst investors due to the high real interest rate, which is about 2 percent net of inflation.

"The ruble-denominated OFZ bond market is roughly 35 percent owned by the foreigners," he said.

Shostak noted that Russia's share in JPMorgan's GBI-EM index, the main global benchmark for emerging market local currency bonds, has also grown to 8.3 percent from the nearly 7 percent a couple of years ago and 1.5 percent in 2007.

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Commenting on possible sanctions policy by the presumed new Biden administration toward Russia, Shostak said the greatest damaging effect would be if the United States introduces a ban on owning Russian debt or cutting off Russian banks from the SWIFT global payment system.

"At the moment, such risk remains high but not something that the new administration will rush to implement," Shostak said.

The official results of the 2020 US presidential election have not been certified yet and are disputed, but all major US media have projected Biden to be the winner. While Biden claimed victory on Saturday, Trump also claimed he won the election. However, Trump said the election has been stolen from him via a massive fraud and consequently he is disputing the election result, asking for audits and recounts and taking the matter to court.