

Friday 11/13/20

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Biden Wins US State of Georgia Ahead of Expected Ballot Recount, NBC Projects
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

NBC has predicted Democratic candidate Joe Biden has won the US state of Georgia in the November 3 US presidential election. Biden has already been declared the national winner by numerous TV networks, but no official statement has been made. NBC has also predicted US President Donald Trump will win North Carolina.

Georgia was one of several US states unable to declare a definitive winner in the US presidential race on the night of November 3. However, as more and more mail-in ballots get counted, NBC felt comfortable on Friday declaring that Biden had clearly won the state and its 16 electoral votes.

However, even as NBC makes the declaration, [Georgia officials are beginning a hand recount](#) of the nearly 5 million ballots cast, since Biden's lead over Trump in the state was just 14,000 votes on Friday morning, [according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#).

Meanwhile, NBC has also projected that Trump will take North Carolina and its 15 electoral votes. [According to the Associated Press](#), Trump leads Biden there by 73,620 votes. However, AP still has not declared Trump the winner.

As it stands, according to NBC, Biden has 306 electoral votes and Trump has 232. In the US election system, a presidential candidate must take 270 electoral votes, awarded by state on a winner-take-all basis, to be declared the winner.

Most mainstream networks declared Biden to be the evident winner on Saturday, and Biden gave a victory speech that day amid congratulatory messages from leaders around the globe. However, [Trump has so far refused to concede his defeat](#), filing a string of lawsuits in states across the country alleging mishandling of ballots, [malfunctioning systems, and other scandalous practices](#) that he says have nullified the election's outcome.

The victor will be sworn in on January 20, 2021.

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Trump's Pre-Election Rally Blitz Put Over 130 Secret Service Officers in Quarantine - Report
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

In the wake of the US presidential election and US President Donald Trump's 11th-hour rush to hold as many rallies as possible before the day of decision, more than 130 Secret Service

officers have reportedly been put into quarantine, either with COVID-19 symptoms or for close contact with someone who has them.

Three people familiar with agency staffing [told the Washington Post on Friday](#) that Trump's election rally blitz, which included 14 rallies in the three days prior to the November 3 vote, resulted in as many as 130 members of his security staff contracting or being suspected of contracting the novel coronavirus.

The Post further noted the pandemic has sidelined 10% of the Secret Service's entire force. To give an example of the manpower Trump's rally blitz demanded: on November 2, the day before the election, Trump had five separate rallies in Fayetteville, North Carolina; Scranton, Pennsylvania; Kenosha, Wisconsin; and Michigan's Traverse City and Grand Rapids. At each of those events, Trump dispatched several dozen Secret Service agents to screen spectators and secure the perimeter prior to the president's arrival.

In all, [Trump hit 17 rallies in eight states](#) in the four days before the election.

Of course, Joe Biden has his own Secret Service detail as well, but he made eight smaller stops during that time, and his events aren't known for proudly flouting safety recommendations by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[A study published on October 31](#) by four Stanford University economists traced outbreaks in locales across the country that corresponded to the time and place of Trump rallies between June and September to roughly 30,000 COVID-19 cases and 700 deaths.

The virus is spreading through the White House staff again as well. White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and Trump advisers Corey Lewandowski and David Bossie have also come down with the illness. The presidential mansion has hosted numerous events in recent months at which mask-wearing, while mandated by District of Columbia law in public places, [has nonetheless been scarce at best](#).

Trump put Secret Service staff at even greater risk last month when, during his stay at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for having contracted COVID-19 himself, [insisted on being taken for a ride outside](#) the hospital to wave at supporters.

The news comes amid the largest COVID-19 outbreak yet in the United States. On Thursday, [the CDC reported 143,000 new cases and noted](#) the seven-day moving average of new daily cases was 121,496. That's nearly double the previous highest peak on July 24, when the seven-day average was 66,960 cases per day.

Deaths, too, have spiked, with 1,479 deaths reported across the US from COVID-19 on Thursday and a seven-day average of 1,134 deaths. Since Election Day, 1.13 million new cases have been reported in the US, and 10,686 people have died from the illness.

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Trump: New York Won't Receive COVID-19 Vaccine in April With Other US States Until Governor Approves
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

US President Donald Trump said Friday that while Pfizer's SARS-CoV-2 vaccine will be forthcoming and mass-distributed by April, New York state would not receive shipments because Governor Andrew Cuomo has expressed criticisms of the Trump administration's vaccine rollout plan.

In his first public comments since the mainstream media declared Joe Biden the winner of the November 3 election, Trump updated the press on Operation Warp Speed in the White House Rose Garden.

No Vaccine for New York Without Cuomo Approval

Trump said his administration would work to secure emergency use authorization for Pfizer's vaccine against COVID-19, [which the company said on Monday had proven](#) to have a 90% effectiveness rate.

He also said the US had three other vaccines that would also be arriving in the next few weeks. "Millions of doses will soon be going out the door," Trump said. "As soon as April, the vaccine will be available to the entire general population, with the exception of places like New York state where, for political reasons, the governor decided to say - I don't think it's good politically, I think it's very bad from a health standpoint - but he wants to take his time with the vaccine. He doesn't trust where the vaccine is coming from ... We won't be delivering it to New York until we have authorization to do so."

"We can't be delivering it to a state that won't be giving it to its people immediately," Trump said. "The governor will let us know when he's ready."

Cuomo has long expressed [skepticism at Trump's vaccine fast-tracking, saying in September](#), after Trump claimed a vaccine would be out before the November 3 election, that an independent Clinical Advisory Task Force would evaluate the safety and effectiveness of any vaccine before allowing them to be administering in New York state.

The New York executive renewed those criticisms on Monday [in an interview with George Stephanopoulos on ABC's "Good Morning America."](#)

"And the Trump administration is rolling out the vaccination plan, and I believe it's flawed," Cuomo said. "I believe it learns nothing from the past. They're basically going to have the private providers do it, and that's going to leave out all sorts of communities that were left out the first time when COVID ravaged them."

No Lockdown Amid Skyrocketing Cases

Trump told reporters there would not be a new lockdown to stem the spread of COVID-19 cases in the country, despite historic highs in new cases being reported.

"This administration will not, under any circumstances, be going to a lockdown," Trump said, noting they cost the economy \$50 billion a day. "They cost lives."

However, he did say that once the vaccine is released, "you will see numbers going down within a matter of months."

Trump's words come amid by far the largest rise in COVID-19 cases yet. [On Thursday, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported](#) 143,000 new cases and noted the seven-day moving average of new daily cases was 121,496. That's nearly double the previous highest peak on July 24, when the seven-day average was 66,960 cases per day.

Since the election on November 3, the US has added 1.13 million new COVID-19 cases and 10,686 people have died of the illness, including 1,479 on Thursday.

Biden Team Also Against Lockdowns

However, Biden's COVID-19 response seems unlikely to be significantly different if he takes office on January 20, 2021: two leading members of Biden's COVID-19 task force indicated on Friday that they opposed any kind of widespread lockdowns like those seen in the spring or being reimplemented across Europe recently.

Celine Gounder, an infectious disease specialist at the New York University Grossman School of Medicine who sits on Biden's task force, [told CNBC that it was “not the opinion” of the group](#) to institute widespread closures. “We can be much more targeted geographically. We can also be more targeted in terms of what we close,” she said.

Dr. Vivek Murthy, a former US surgeon general who co-chairs the committee, [told “Good Morning America” on Friday](#). “We’re not in a place where we’re saying, ‘Shut the whole country down’ ... If we don’t do that, what you’re going to find is that people will become even more fatigued, schools won’t be open to children, and the economy will be hit harder.”

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Video: US Air Force Base Security to Start Patrolling Grounds With ‘Robot Dogs’
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

Security at one Florida air base will be the US Air Force’s first force to patrol their station with robotic dogs.

Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida has begun using robotic dogs to patrol parts of the base that don’t typically demand a human presence, [according to a base news release](#).

“These robot dogs will be used as a force multiplier for enhanced situational awareness by patrolling areas that aren’t desirable for human beings and vehicles.” Maj. Jordan Criss, 325th Security Forces Squadron commander at the base, said in the release.

[Tyndall also posted a video of the robotic rovers](#) on the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS).

The “dogs” superficially resemble [commercially-available devices built by Boston Dynamics](#) that went on sale earlier this year. However, the Florida base’s robots were developed by Philadelphia-based technology company Ghost Robotics. Prototypes were tested at Nevada’s Nellis Air Force Base in September and proved capable in support and reconnaissance roles, [Sputnik reported at the time](#).

An unmanned ground vehicle is tested at Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, Nov. 10, 2020.

Tyndall is one of the first military bases to implement the semi-autonomous UGV’s into their defense regiment, they will aid in reconnaissance and enhanced security patrolling operations across the base.

The four-legged computerized canines are semi-autonomous and carry cameras to track activities in front of them and inform people at base security headquarters about what’s going on. They are not intended to replace working dogs used by soldiers, but there have been [rumors the Pentagon is experimenting with robotic dogs of war](#) as well.

“We will be able to drive them via a virtual-reality headset within our Base Defense Operations Center,” Criss explained. “We will be able to see exactly what the robot dog is detecting through

its mobile camera and sensor platform if desired, we will also be able to issue verbal commands to a person or people through a radio attached to the dogs.”

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Cool Cat Shows Off Skateboarding Skills - Video Club

Yeti, a 4-month-old Himalayan cat living it up in Canada’s Vancouver, recently proved that it's not only cool bulldogs that can acquire the skills needed to ride on a skateboard.

Video shared by licensor ViralHog shows the young feline jumping atop the board while giving himself a quick boost. Ready to ride, the calm and collected cat coolly glides across the room into the hallway as his humans look on in shock.

“I skateboard frequently and sometimes mess around with my skateboard in our apartment,” Yeti’s human told the outlet in a statement. “Yeti’s fascination with the board led him to start using the skateboard as a cat toy, where he would roll from either side of our apartment.”

“There was no guidance needed as he picked it up naturally,” they added.

Watch out world, the next Tony Hawk of the animal kingdom is coming.

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COVID-19 Mutant Strain More Infectious, Susceptible to Vaccine Than Original

A new study published in the journal Science reveals that a mutated strain of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, replicates faster than the original strain of the virus that spread at the beginning of the pandemic from China.

The study found that the new virus strain, called D614G, which first emerged in Europe and has become the most prevalent strain in the world, is more transmissible because of the spike protein’s greater ability to open cells so that the virus can enter them. Spike proteins are viral membrane proteins responsible for cell entry.

However, the [study](#) also found that while the D614G strain spreads more quickly and replicates about 10 times faster than the original virus, it’s also more sensitive to neutralization by antibody drugs and was not linked to more severe cases of the disease.

“The D614G virus outcompetes and outgrows the ancestral strain by about 10-fold and replicates extremely efficiently in primary nasal epithelial cells, which are a potentially important site for person-to-person transmission,” Ralph Baric, professor of epidemiology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an author of the study, [said in a news release](#).

In fact, the study found that the D614G mutation causes a flap on the tip of the spike protein to open up, which allows the virus to more easily infect cells. However, by the same token, the flap more efficiently allows antibodies to impair the virus. This could make it more likely to be disabled by vaccine candidates currently in testing.

"The original spike protein had a 'D' at this position, and it was replaced by a 'G,'" study co-author Yoshihiro Kawaoka said in the news release. "Several papers had already described that this mutation makes the protein more functional and more efficient at getting into cells." The researchers drew their conclusions by inoculating hamsters with either the D614G mutated virus or the original virus strain. The researchers then placed eight uninfected hamsters in cages next to infected ones.

The researchers saw that the mutated virus transmitted to six out of eight hamsters within two days and to all the hamsters by the fourth day. With the original virus, there was no transmission on the second day. However, all the hamsters were infected by the fourth day.

"We saw that the mutant virus transmits better airborne than the [original] virus, which may explain why this virus dominated in humans," Kawaoka said.

The researchers also noted that both the hamsters infected with the mutant and original strains experienced the same viral load and symptoms, with the hamsters with the mutated strain losing slightly more weight while ill. The scientists thus concluded that while the mutated strain is more infectious, it doesn't cause notably worse illness in hosts.

The researchers noted that because COVID-19 is a new disease, its evolution is yet not completely understood. "SARS-CoV-2 is an entirely new human pathogen and its evolution in human populations is hard to predict," Baric concluded.

"To maximally protect public health, we must continue to track and understand the consequences of these new mutations on disease severity, transmission, host range and vulnerability to vaccine-induced immunity," Baric added.

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Travelers Turn to Black Market for Negative COVID-19 Tests to Dodge Restrictions

With COVID-19 cases surging around the world, a black market for false certificates of negative COVID-19 tests has emerged as more countries require travelers to prove their negative status before entering, according to a report by the Associated Press.

On November 6, officials in France said that seven people were arrested for selling such false certificates to travelers at Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport.

Six men and one woman between the ages of 29 to 52 were charged with forgery, use of forgery and complicity in fraud, [AP reported](#).

The prosecutor's office in Bobigny, a commune in France, also revealed that the fake certificates were being sold to travelers for between \$180 and \$360.

The arrests occurred following an investigation into a passenger who checked in for a September flight to the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa with a fake certificate showing negative test results.

If convicted, the suspects could face up to five years in prison and a maximum fine of \$445,000 each.

In South America, Brazilian officials also arrested four tourists who provided fake test results after flying into an island off the coast of the country, [the New York Post reported](#).

A man also recently told English newspaper the [Lancashire Telegraph](#) that he traveled to Pakistan by using his friend's negative COVID-19 test.

"You can simply get their negative test and change the name and birthdate to your own. You also put a test date on which is within the time limit required," the man, who didn't want to reveal his identity, told the outlet.

"You download the email, change it and then print it," he added.

"People are doing this as you can't get a COVID test if you have to travel to Pakistan in case of an emergency. It is difficult to get one unless you are a key worker," he continued.

The [latest data by Johns Hopkins](#) shows that there are more than 53 billion cases of COVID-19 worldwide and more than 1.3 billion related deaths.

Although [Russia became the first country](#) to develop a COVID-19 vaccine, latest updates from pharmaceutical company Pfizer have offered further hope for additional vaccine options. Last week, Pfizer Chairman and CEO Dr. Albert Bourla [announced that its COVID-19 vaccine](#) was more than 90% effective in preventing infection.

Publicly [addressing the nation](#) for the first time in several days, US President Donald Trump indicated that he anticipates the first doses of the Pfizer vaccine will be delivered to Americans starting in April. However, the president did note that the vaccine would not be delivered to the state of New York over "political" differences with the Empire State's Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

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Reunion Work By Grassroots Groups 'A Godsend' as US DoJ Abandons Separated Migrant Children - Lawyer

Carlos Castaneda, an attorney who specializes in immigration law, told Political Misfits Friday that years after the end of the "zero tolerance" border policy causing migrant children to be separated from their parents, most of the family reunions have been the work of grassroots groups, not the US Department of Justice.

A new report shows [more than 600 migrant children](#) taken from their families at the US' southern border have still not been located, a finding that highlights the dangerous immigration policies of US President Donald Trump and his administration.

"The separation occurred as of two to three years ago and has still not been resolved," Castaneda told show hosts [Michelle Witte and Bob Schlehuber](#).

The US Justice Department and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a court document in October, calling the Trump administration's practice of separating children from their families between 2017 and 2018 "horrific."

"It is critical to find out as much as possible about who was responsible for this horrific practice while not losing sight of the fact that hundreds of families have still not been found and remain separated," Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project, [told NBC News at the time](#). "There is so much more work to be done to find these families."

According to NBC, the ACLU discovered that more than 1,000 parents were separated from their children just in 2017 under a pilot program for the Trump administration's 2018 "zero tolerance" policy, based on data provided by the Department of Homeland Security. However, only a fraction of those children have been reunited with their families.

"The groundwork effort by such organizations has been really a godsend for many families ... We've seen [a] lack of concern by the Justice Department when it comes to reuniting these families," Castaneda told Sputnik.

"This is by far not the only instance of a Trump administration policy that has negatively affected minors," Castaneda added.

"Earlier this year, with the coronavirus pandemic becoming a greater concern, what the Trump administration did, and this is very sneaky on their part, is that they used a CDC [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] order ... to essentially override different immigration laws that are in place regarding asylum, regarding the required treatment of minors who are without their parents, in order to essentially ignore these laws that have been bothersome for them in the first place and using the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to ignore it," he explained.

"And that is why in the case of children, for instance, many of them who would otherwise be subjected to laws that would benefit them in terms of treatment and in terms of their ability to seek a legal remedy in the US ... they were probably deported and unable to access those same legal protections," Castaneda continued.

According to the advocacy group [First Focus](#) on Children, the Trump administration has used COVID-19 to justify denying unaccompanied minors and immigrant families the opportunity to plead for asylum. In addition, since the start of the pandemic, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has refused to house migrant children in ORR facilities due to so-called public health concerns.

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Airbnb Denounces 'Hate Groups' After Banning Proud Boys Member From Platform
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Lodging marketplace Airbnb has announced business from "hate groups" is not welcome following its decision to cancel a booking reservation of a self-proclaimed member of the Proud Boys, a far-right, neo-fascist organization participating in the "Million MAGA March" in Washington, DC.

"Anyone affiliated with hate groups has no place on Airbnb," the lodging marketplace's official account [tweeted Wednesday](#).

The post came as a response to user @RuthlessWe, who inquired about the company's stance regarding "hate groups like the 'Proud Boys.'"

Screenshots accompanying the post showed a man named Ronald Gaudier offering up his rental to "a couple other guys" in town for the "Million MAGA March" scheduled to take place in DC this weekend.

"We've identified the reservation, cancelled it, and banned the user from our platform," Airbnb added in their November 11 tweet regarding Gaudier's associated reservation.

The DC-based event is organized by far-right and white supremacist groups and appears to be named after Minister Louis Farrakhan's 1995 "Million Man March" on the city for Black Americans.

Event management and ticketing website Eventbrite recently made headlines for removing an associated "March for Trump" protest. The company cited a violation of its terms of service regarding events that promote potentially harmful misinformation.

Amy Kremer, co-founder of the Women for Trump political action committee, accused "big tech" of trying to suppress the march, which touts a demand for "transparency" and a desire to protect "election integrity."

"We cannot let them shut us down," [she said](#). "It is time that WE THE PEOPLE rise up and have our voices heard."

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Twitter Says Around 300,000 Tweets About US Election Flagged, Labeled 'Potentially Misleading'

by [Evan Craighead](#)

An estimated 300,000 tweets related to the 2020 US presidential election were flagged for misleading content, according to an update issued by Twitter this week.

"Approximately 300,000 Tweets have been labeled under our Civic Integrity Policy for content that was disputed and potentially misleading," [Twitter announced](#) in its November 12 update on election policy.

"These represent 0.2% of all US election-related Tweets sent during this time period."

The advisories were implemented on October 27 and ran until November 11, one week before and after the November 3 presidential election, respectively.

The social media platform claimed, on average, 74% of Twitter users who viewed the flagged tweets did such after the label or warning was applied.

Exactly 456 tweets included in the estimated total also received a warning message and had certain engagement features limited. In turn, Twitter users could view and quote-tweet the posts in question, but not retweet, like or reply to them.

"We saw an estimated 29% decrease in Quote Tweets of these labeled Tweets due in part to a prompt that warned people prior to sharing," the social media outlet highlighted.

The platform's effort to combat the spread of election misinformation also included the addition of "pre-bunk" prompts backed by data provided from [a number of "official sources."](#)

Twitter flagged at least 50 tweets and retweets issued by US President Donald Trump to his nearly 89 million followers in the two-week period, [according to Newsweek](#).

"This claim about election fraud is disputed" accompanied a November 7 tweet from the president claiming he truly won the presidential election.

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Photos: 2,400 Vintage Images From NASA's Space Race Era Go Up For Auction
by [Victoria Teets](#)

Christie's is auctioning off 2,400 vintage original NASA photographs amassed by French collector Victor Martin-Malburet showcasing the space agency's history of manned space flight. Christie's Auction House has put the 2,400 extraordinary NASA images up for auction in a special online-only bidding due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The "artistic heritage of the golden age of space exploration when NASA, and its astronaut-photographers, captured the first forays into space and onto the surface of another world. The collection is the most comprehensive private collection of NASA photographs ever presented at auction, and spans every visual milestone of the space program," the auction house said in a [press release](#).

Christie's calls it the "most comprehensive private collection of NASA photographs ever presented at auction," including "every visual milestone of the space program, from the early days of Mercury, the technical advances of Gemini and Lunar Orbiter, to the triumphs of Apollo." Martin-Malburet, 39, worked to build the collection for more than 15 years, even snagging some photos from the astronauts themselves, according to [the Guardian](#).

Some of the images have never been shared publicly and could only be accessed by researchers visiting the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, according to CNN.

The "Blue Marble," the first fully illuminated photo of Earth taken by a human in 1972.

Among the rare images can be found the famous "Blue Marble" photo - the first fully illuminated image of Earth taken by a human, taken in 1972. It also includes the first selfie taken in space: a 1966 photo in which Buzz Aldrin's face appears to float above the curve of Earth.

The first 'selfie' self-portrait in space, taken by Buzz Aldrin in 1966.

Other photos are the first human-taken "Earthrise" photo showing the Earth rising over a barren moon in 1968, and the first-ever image of the far side of the moon, taken in 1959.

Crescent Earth rising beyond the Moon's barren horizon, 1971.

Arguably the cutest photo is that of Laika, the first dog to orbit Earth, while awaiting launch on the Soviet Union's Sputnik 2 in 1957.

The dog Laika, first animal to orbit the Earth, before launch, November 3, 1957.

The 2,400 images are spread across 700 lots on Christie's website, with bids starting at about \$132. Christie's estimates that some of the better-known images will reach in excess of \$66,000 each.

The forgotten frame taken right before Buzz Aldrin's most recognized image with the U.S. flag, captured by Neil Armstrong. Signed "Buzz Aldrin, Apollo XI LMP."

The only photograph showing Neil Armstrong walking on the moon is anticipated to go to the highest bidder at an estimated \$63,000, according to CNN. The "Blue Marble" photo is expected

to sell for up to \$31,500 and the "Earthrise" photo for up to \$37,800. Bidding closes on either November 19 or 20, depending on the item.

Neil Armstrong Walk on the Moon, Apollo 11, taken by Astronaut E.E. Aldrin, July 31 1961.

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US Envoy Khalilzad, Turkish Officials Discuss Ways to Advance Afghan Peace Talks – Embassy

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) – US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad met with Turkish officials in Ankara to discuss ways that Turkey and the United States can speed up the Afghan peace process, the American embassy in Ankara said in a statement on Friday.

"In meetings with Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal, Presidency Special Advisor Ibrahim Kalin, and other senior Turkish officials, Ambassador Khalilzad thanked Turkey for its ongoing commitment and long-standing support to the Afghanistan peace process," the statement said. "Khalilzad and Turkish officials also discussed how Turkey, in concert with others in the international community, can encourage the two sides to accelerate their efforts to negotiate a political settlement that ends the war in Afghanistan.

The US envoy updated Turkish officials on the latest developments in the negotiations and recent progress in the talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Both the visiting envoy and his Turkish counterparts expressed serious concern about ongoing violence in Afghanistan and agreed on need for all sides to find a path to permanently ending bloodshed, starting with an immediate reduction in hostilities.

Khalilzad and Turkish officials also discussed regional economic opportunities that could arise following a political settlement in Afghanistan, particularly projects that link Afghanistan and Central Asia to South Asia and beyond, the embassy added.

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US Embassy in Ukraine Suspends Citizen Services Over COVID-19 Spike - Statement

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - The US Embassy in Ukraine has halted its routine services for American nationals over a sharp spike in coronavirus cases in the country, the diplomatic mission said in a statement on Friday.

"In response to the recent sharp increase of COVID-19 cases in Ukraine, US Embassy Kyiv has suspended routine American Citizen services until further notice," the statement said. "We will continue to provide limited emergency services as resources and local conditions allow."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who earlier tested positive for COVID-19, is now receiving treatment in hospital and continues to work from there, his office said on Thursday.

On Monday, Zelenskyy said that he had been diagnosed with COVID-19 and would self-isolate. The head of his office, Andriy Yermak, has also tested positive. Health officials in Ukraine have confirmed at least 527,808 cases, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

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Microsoft Says North Korean, Russian Hackers Target COVID-19 Vaccine Research

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) – North Korean and Russian hackers are allegedly targeting global pharmaceutical companies and COVID-19 vaccine researchers, Microsoft's security chief Tom Burt said in a statement on Friday.

"In recent months, we've detected cyberattacks from three nation-state actors targeting seven prominent companies directly involved in researching vaccines and treatments for Covid-19 ... the attacks came from Strontium, an actor originating from Russia, and two actors originating from North Korea that we call Zinc and Cerium," Burt said.

The cyberattacks have allegedly targeted research in various stages of clinical trials being conducted in Canada, France, India, South Korea and the United States, Burt added.

The cybercriminals used a variety of methods, including password spraying, brute force login attempts and phishing to steal login credentials, according to the Microsoft official.

The company is calling for malicious activity to stop and is urging governments to take action. In July, several Western nations accused Russia of standing behind hacker attacks they said were intended to steal information on vaccine development efforts. Moscow refuted the allegations, which were never substantiated.

Russia's Gamaleya Research Center head Alexander Gintsburg last month said that the center was subjected to hacker attacks some months back when it was developing the Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine, but refrained from judging their purpose.

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Whelan Family Dissatisfied With US State Dept. 'Lack of Action' - Statement

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - The family of US citizen Paul Whelan, who is serving a 16-year prison sentence in Russia for espionage, said in a statement on Friday that they are dissatisfied with the State Department inactivity in his case.

"The lack of action by the State Department and Washington is what has been consistent for the past two years. I hope that Secretary [of State Mike] Pompeo and his staff won't continue to sit quietly," Paul Whelan's brother David said in the statement.

The Whelan family expressed gratitude to the US Embassy in Moscow and to Russian human rights activists for their efforts to help Paul.

"So far, the only people not sitting quietly are all in Russia," the statement said.

The Whelan family expressed concern again about the conditions Paul has been subjected to in Russian prison.

"Paul left a voice mail message with our parents yesterday that the sleep deprivation continues," the statement said.

Whelan, who is also a citizen of the United Kingdom, Canada and Ireland, was arrested in Russia in December 2018 on charges of espionage and sentenced by a Moscow court on June 15. He denies being involved in espionage and insists he was in Russia to attend a friend's wedding.

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IMF Chief Says Crisis Not Over as Further Debt Relief, Fresh Financing Needed

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva warned on Friday that the global economic crisis has not gone away, saying the world's poorest countries would need further assistance, including debt relief and new financing.

Georgieva made the remarks after an extraordinary meeting of the G20, during which the group of nations agreed to a "common framework" to extend its temporary debt freeze until June 20, 2021 and negotiate new debt-repayment arrangements with the world's poorest countries.

"Let's be very frank here. We are not out of the woods. This crisis is not over. We need further support through debt relief and through fresh financing," Georgieva said after the deal was announced.

Georgieva said the deal to extend the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) would give some countries the "breathing space" needed to weather the crisis, but warned that other nations are currently saddled with unsustainable levels of debt.

"And this suspension time ought to be used to bring them to a sustainable level," she said. "This is where the timely Common Framework comes into play-a coordinated approach to debt treatment, a standardized approach, but with case-by-case resolution."

The G20 convened to put together the terms of debt restructuring for low-income countries struggling with the regular schedule due to coronavirus-related disruptions. Under the new framework, the restructuring process will be initiated at the request of a debtor country. The eligible debt includes all public and publicly guaranteed debts which have an original maturity of more than one year. The repayment period will be six years, of which one year counts for a grace period.

The G20 said the new framework had been endorsed by the Paris Club, an unofficial group comprising the largest creditor countries.

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US State Dept. Does Not Confirm, Deny Reports Pompeo Will Visit Golan Heights - Official

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - A senior State Department official said in a conference call on Friday that he does not confirm or deny reports US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will visit the Golan Heights during his trip to Israel in the coming days.

"I'm not going to confirm or deny beyond the countries that I said the Secretary was going to the individual locations where he's going to be stopping in those countries," the official said when asked to confirm reports Pompeo will visit the Golan Heights in the West Bank.

Pompeo is embarking on a trip to Europe and the Middle East on Friday with stops scheduled in France, Turkey, Georgia, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. In Israel, Pompeo will meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to discuss the implementation of the Abraham Accords and other security matters.

In November 2019, Pompeo announced that the United States no longer considered the construction of civilian settlements by Israel in the West Bank "inconsistent with international law," a reversal of the position held by the previous Obama administration.

The Golan Heights has been mostly under Israel's control since the country seized the area during the 1967 Six-Day War with neighboring Arab states. While Israel adopted a law that de facto annexed the territory in 1981, the United Nations declared that the move was void and without any legal effect.

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Pompeo Visit to Istanbul Will Not Include Meeting With Turkish Officials - US State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's upcoming trip to Istanbul will not include a meeting with Turkish officials due to conflicting schedules, a senior State Department official said in a conference call on Friday.

"On your question regarding Turkey, it is just a scheduling issue," the official said. "We're coming into Istanbul where the Ecumenical Patriarch is based and the schedule is very tight. I also understand that Turkish officials, including the president and foreign minister, have their own travel schedule and will not be there."

In Istanbul, Pompeo will meet with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople of the Eastern Orthodox Church, Bartholomew I and the Apostolic Nuncio to Turkey, Paul Russell, the official said.

Pompeo will use his visit to discuss religious issues and religious freedom, the official added.

Earlier this week, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to Pompeo's planned visit, saying that the United States should first address domestic issues like the "requisite sensitivity towards human rights violations in the country such as racism, Islamophobia and hate crimes."

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Elon Musk Had No Contact to Pass COVID-19 to Dragon Space Mission Crew - NASA Chief

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - SpaceX entrepreneur Elon Musk, who said he had tested both positive and negative for the novel coronavirus had no contact with the crew of the Dragon mission to the International Space Station (ISS) to be launched on Saturday, NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstien told reporters on Friday.

"He [Musk] had no contact with the crew," Bridenstien told a press conference. "Contact tracing should be under way right now, This news just broke. If there are adjustments that need to be made, we will make them."

In several messages on Twitter earlier in the day, Musk said he had not been feeling well but had gotten both, two positive and two negative results from four separate fast antigen tests. Musk's SpaceX built the Dragon spacecraft that would carry the three US and one Japanese astronauts on their six month mission to the ISS.

Bridentine said astronauts Mike Hopkins, Victor Glover, Shannon Walker and Soichi Noguchi have all been in quarantine for several weeks in preparation for their mission.

Musk also said he planned to take the so-called PCR test - despite its record of high false positives - but will have to wait longer for the results.

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US Federal Regulators Expect 56 Private Space Launches in 2021 - Aviation Administrator

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - The US government expects to license 56 private sector space launches in the coming year of 2021, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) chief Steve Dickson told a press conference on Friday about the launch of the SpaceX Dragon manned mission scheduled the following day.

"We expect to license 56 private space launches in 2021," Dickson said.

The FAA chief also expressed optimism that the number of private enterprise space launches would grow rapidly, especially fueled by tourism flats.

"Once space tourism turns the corner, we expect 100 launches a year. ... We have [also] licensed 12 space ports and established an FAA office of space ports," he said.

The FAA has licensed Saturday's scheduled launch that is due to carry US astronauts Mike Hopkins, Victor Glover and Shannon Walker and Soichi Noguchi from Japan on a six month mission to the International Space Station.

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White House Operating Under Assumption Trump Will Have Second Term in Office - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - The White House is now operating under the assumption that President Donald Trump will have a second term in office, the US media reported on Friday.

"We are moving forward here at the White House under the assumption there will be a second Trump term," Navarro said in an interview with Fox Business.

The official result of the November 3 election has not been officially certified as counting is still underway in some states. Major US corporate media outlets have projected Democratic nominee Joe Biden to be the winner of the 2020 presidential election.

However, Trump has said was the winner but his victory was stolen via a massive election fraud. Consequently, Trump has asked for audits and recounts in several states and has filed lawsuits in state and federal court.

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US Still Hopes For 'Swap Seats' Deal With Russia to Carry Cosmonauts - NASA Chief

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - The United States still hopes to reach a deal with Russia's Federal Space Agency Roscosmos to fly cosmonauts into space on US private sector flights while Russia to continue flying US astronauts on its rockets, NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said on Friday.

"We want to have an exchange of seats where Russian cosmonauts can fly on [US] commercial crew vehicles and that is necessary," Bridenstine told a press conference. "Those discussions are ongoing. We don't have a resolution at this point but that is something we are working towards."

Bridenstine explained that such an agreement would benefit the space programs of both countries and give them much more flexibility and additional options in deploying crew members to the International Space Station.

On October 13, Bridenstine said that he remained hopeful that Russia would participate in NASA's plans to return humans to the surface of the Moon by 2024, also known as the Artemis program.

Bridenstine also said that Russian spacecraft bound for the Moon would be compatible to dock with the Lunar Gateway craft, which will facilitate future lunar missions.

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Trump Campaign Drops Lawsuit in Arizona Election Race - Court Document

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - President Donald Trump's re-election campaign has abandoned its lawsuit contesting the results of the counting of the state of Arizona vote in the November 3 presidential election, his lawyers acknowledged in a court filing on Friday. "Since the close of yesterday's hearing, the tabulation of votes statewide has rendered unnecessary a judicial ruling as to the presidential electors," the filing said. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden was projected on Thursday to win Arizona and its 13 votes in the Electoral College

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Trump Rushing Plans for Arctic Drilling Before Biden Inauguration - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump is rushing to enable drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge before the inauguration of Joe Biden as president of the United States, Bloomberg reported on Friday. The Trump administration is working to advance auctioning of drilling rights in the US Arctic National Wildlife Refuge before Biden, who pledged to block oil exploration in the Alaska wilderness, takes office, the report said.

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US Court in Pennsylvania Rejects Republican Effort to Block Late-Arriving Ballots - Filing

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - The US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit has rejected a Republican party lawsuit seeking to invalidate nearly 10,000 late-arriving ballots in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, a court document revealed on Friday. "Further, and independent of our holding on standing, we hold that the District Court did not err in denying Plaintiffs' motion for injunctive relief out of concern for the settled expectations of voters and election officials. We will affirm the District Court's denial of Plaintiffs' emergency motion for a TRO or preliminary injunction," the court document said.

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Michigan Judge Rejects Republican Request to Block Certifying Detroit Election Results

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - A Michigan judge has rejected a Republican party lawsuit seeking to block the certification of election results in the city of Detroit, a court document revealed on Friday.

"Plaintiffs are unable to meet their burden for the relief sought and for the above mentioned reasons, the Plaintiff's petition for injunctive relief is denied. The Court further finds that no basis exists for the protective order for the reasons identified above. Therefore, that motion is denied," Michigan's Third Judicial Circuit Court Chief Judge Timothy Kenny wrote in the opinion of the court.

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Pelosi Calls Facebook Part of Problem Regarding Election Misinformation

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Friday that Facebook became a "part of the problem" with respect to election-related misinformation. "I am not a big fan of Facebook, I do not know what they have been doing. But I know they have been part of the problem all along," Pelosi said during the press briefing when asked whether social media companies do enough to correct President Donald Trump's statements about election fraud.

The US media projected Democratic candidate Joe Biden to be the winner of the November 3 presidential election. However, Trump has said he is the winner and his victory has been stolen via a massive election fraud. Trump has requested audits and recounts in several US states as well as filed lawsuits in state and federal courts.

Pelosi said the election was "the most secure" in the US history and added that "there is no evidence that any voting system was deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or anyway compromised."

However, Pelosi called social media "a double-edged sword" in terms of communication during the election.

"I would hope that they would have some sense of responsibility because they were very much a part of causing this problem," she said.

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Trump to Deliver Update on Coronavirus Vaccine at 4 p.m. From Rose Garden - White House

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) – US President Donald Trump will update the nation on his administration's plan to produce and deliver the novel coronavirus vaccine, the White House said in an updated schedule for Friday.

"The President delivers an update on Operation Warp Speed at 4:00 p.m. [9:00 p.m. GMT]," the schedule said.

Operation Warp Speed, led by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Defense Department, is funding multiple vaccine candidates with the goal of producing an initial batch of 300 million doses by January 2021.

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US Extends Deadline for Sale of TikTok to November 27 - Court Filing

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - The US government has extended the deadline for the sale of the video-sharing app TikTok, owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, for another 15 days, a court filing revealed on Friday.

"At the November 4, 2020 hearing on Plaintiffs' renewed motion for preliminary injunction, the Court instructed the parties to keep the Court apprised of any developments in the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) process concerning Plaintiffs," the document said. "Pursuant to that request, Plaintiffs hereby notify the Court that on November 12, 2020, CFIUS granted an extension ... for an additional 15 days, specifically, from November 12, 2020 to November 27, 2020."

TikTok was facing a deadline on Thursday to comply with the United States' order to sell its US operations or be shut down, although the ruling did not go into effect on time.

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US Court in Pennsylvania Rejects Republican Effort to Block Late-Arriving Ballots - Filing

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"Further, and independent of our holding on standing, we hold that the District Court did not err in denying Plaintiffs' motion for injunctive relief out of concern for the settled expectations of

voters and election officials. We will affirm the District Court's denial of Plaintiffs' emergency motion for a TRO or preliminary injunction," the court document said.

The US Supreme Court had previously mandated counties to segregate any ballots received three days after Election Day, within the period permitted for mail-in voting. Pennsylvania officials estimate that there are about 10,000 votes at stake and only a subset deal with identification corrections or missing information.

The court said the plaintiffs lack standing under the Elections Clause and Electors Clause to sue over alleged issues attributable to the state government's violations of the Elections Clause.

Major US corporate media outlets have projected Joe Biden to be the winner of the November 3 presidential election. However, incumbent President Donald Trump has said he won but victory was stolen from him via massive fraud.

Trump said he seeks that all legal votes are counted and all illegal ones discarded, and would seek redress through audits, recounting and legal action in state and federal court.

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Trump Campaign Drops Lawsuit in Arizona Election Race - Court Document

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - President Donald Trump's re-election campaign has abandoned its lawsuit contesting the results of the counting of the state of Arizona vote in the November 3 presidential election, his lawyers acknowledged in a court filing on Friday.

"Since the close of yesterday's hearing, the tabulation of votes statewide has rendered unnecessary a judicial ruling as to the presidential electors," the filing said.

Major media outlets have projected that presumed President-elect Joe Biden will win Arizona and its 11 votes in the Electoral College.

The filing indicates that the campaign recognized that the number of votes in dispute, just under 200, was not enough to overcome the margin between the two candidates.

According to the state's ongoing tally, Biden is ahead of Trump by nearly 11,000 votes.

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Trump Says May Visit Supporters' Rally in Washington on Saturday

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - President Donald Trump said he might attend supporters' rally, dubbed as the Million MAGA March, or the March for Trump, scheduled to take place on Saturday in the US capital.

"Heartwarming to see all of the tremendous support out there, especially the organic Rallies that are springing up all over the Country, including a big one on Saturday in DC," Trump said via

Twitter on Friday. "I may even try to stop by and say hello. This Election was Rigged, from Dominion all the way up & down!"

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Biden Wins US State of Georgia in Presidential Election - NBC Projection

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) – US Democrat Joseph Biden won the presidential election in the state of Georgia to clinch the state's 16 electoral votes, NBC projected on Friday. With 99 percent of ballots counted, Biden got a support of 49.5 percent or 2,472,154 residents. Current US President Donald Trump obtained 49.2 or 2,458,002 votes, NBC reported.

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Trump Says May Visit His Supporters' Rally in Washington on Saturday

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"Heartwarming to see all of the tremendous support out there, especially the organic Rallies that are springing up all over the Country, including a big one on Saturday in [Washington,] DC," Trump said via Twitter on Friday. "I may even try to stop by and say hello. This Election was Rigged, from Dominion all the way up and down!"

The rally in Washington and a number of other rallies in various US states' capitals on Saturday are expected to gather a significant number of people who will protest the results of what they say is a massive election fraud to steal the victory from Trump, according to media reports.

Counterprotests by groups like Antifa, Black Lives Matter and others are also expected.

The Washington authorities said they are preparing for big crowds and have announced the closure of some street.

The official result of the November 3 election has not been officially certified as counting is still underway in some states. Major US corporate media outlets have projected Democratic nominee Joe Biden to be the winner of the 2020 presidential election.

However, Trump has said was the winner but his victory was stolen via a massive election fraud. Consequently, Trump has asked for audits and recounts in several states and has filed lawsuits in state and federal court.

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Trump Wins US State of North Carolina in Presidential Election - NBC Projection

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - President Donald Trump has secured a victory in the state of North Carolina, the last race to be called in the 2020 US election, NBC News projected on Friday.

Trump won North Carolina 50 - 48.6 percent, according to results obtained by NBC News. Earlier, NBC projected Democrat Joe Biden would win the toss-up state of Georgia. This makes the final electoral vote count 306 for Biden and 232 for President Donald Trump, with 270 needed to win.

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Biden to Meet With National Security Experts Next Week - Transition Team

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - Projected US President Joe Biden will meet with national security experts next week, Biden transition team official Jen Psaki said in a press conference on Friday.

"He'll also be hearing from and being briefed by some national security experts, so that's what there is to look forward to next week," Psaki said.

Biden will also continue to talks with US lawmakers in the coming weeks about plans for US economic recovery and a new COVID-19 relief package. The transition team did not announce any scheduled talks with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Psaki said the Biden campaign will provide an update later on Friday on the ongoing litigation over the results of the US presidential election.

Major US corporate media outlets have projected Joe Biden to be the winner of the November 3 presidential election. However, the election results are disputed and have not been certified.

President Donald Trump has said he won but victory was stolen from him via massive fraud.

Trump is undertaking auditing and recounting in several US states and has filed lawsuits in state and federal courts to seek redress.

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Michigan Judge Rejects Republican Request to Block Certifying Detroit Election Results

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - A Michigan judge has rejected a Republican party lawsuit seeking to block the certification of election results in the city of Detroit, but the judge's order is not a final one and does not close the case, a court document revealed on Friday.

"Plaintiffs are unable to meet their burden for the relief sought and for the above mentioned reasons, the Plaintiff's petition for injunctive relief is denied. The Court further finds that no basis exists for the protective order for the reasons identified above. Therefore, that motion is denied," Michigan's Third Judicial Circuit Court Chief Judge Timothy Kenny wrote in the opinion of the court.

The court document said the plaintiff's interpretation of events is incorrect and not credible. Judge Kenney noted that his order is not a final one and does not close the case at hand. The lawsuit in Michigan relied on affidavits from witnesses, who, according to the Trump campaign, say that they saw election officials "counting ineligible ballots, counting batches of the same ballots multiple times, counting illegal late ballots and pre-dating them, accepting ballots deposited in drop boxes after the deadline and duplicating ballots illegally."

The complaint alleged "illegal and official intimidation and interference with lawful election challengers, harassment of Republican challengers tolerated or perpetrated by election officials, and arbitrary and unequal treatment of Republican challengers."

Major US corporate media outlets have projected Joe Biden to be the winner of the November 3 presidential election. However, incumbent President Donald Trump has said he won but victory was stolen from him via massive election fraud.

Trump said he seeks that all legal votes are counted and all illegal ones discarded, and is seeking redress through audits, recounting and legal action in state and federal court.

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Biden Wins Georgia, Trump Takes North Carolina in US Election - NBC Projection

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - Projected president-elect Joe Biden has won the state of Georgia while President Donald Trump has secured a victory in North Carolina, the last two races to be called in the 2020 US election, NBC News projected on Friday.

Trump won North Carolina 50 - 48.6 percent, according to results obtained by NBC News. Earlier, NBC also projected Democrat Joe Biden would win the toss-up state of Georgia. This makes the final electoral vote count 306 for Biden and 232 for President Donald Trump, with 270 needed to win.

If the results are certified, Biden will become the first Democrat to win the state of Georgia in 28 years.

Though nearly every major media outlet in the US is now projecting Biden's victory in the election, Trump has refused to concede the race, alleging without evidence that victory was "stolen" from him through fraud.

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US Army Assessing Israel's Iron Dome System to Plug Missile Defense Gap - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - The US Army said in a statement on Friday that it has started evaluation trials at Fort Bliss in the state of Texas on Israel's Iron Dome close range missile defense interception system on whether to adopt it to fill gaps in missile defense programs, Defense News reported.

Two air defense artillery batteries based at Fort Bliss will assess Iron Dome for integration into the US Army's missile defense architecture, the statement said, the report said.

The Iron Dome batteries will be deployed on the instructions of the US Congress to fill a gap in the US Army's defense systems against cruise missile attacks, the report said, adding that the Army is exploring a comprehensive long term program to eventually meet that need.

Israel sent its first Iron Dome battery to the US Army in October. The next battery is expected to be sent to Fort Bliss to start the evaluation program in December and the second should arrive in January, the report also said.

The testing procedures will be carried out at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, the Army's venerable missile and advanced weapons testing center, which is relatively close to Fort Bliss, the report added.

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US Extends Deadline for Sale of TikTok to November 27 - Court Filing

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"At the November 4, 2020 hearing on Plaintiffs' renewed motion for preliminary injunction, the Court instructed the parties to keep the Court apprised of any developments in the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) process concerning Plaintiffs," the document said. "Pursuant to that request, Plaintiffs hereby notify the Court that on November 12, 2020, CFIUS granted an extension ... for an additional 15 days, specifically, from November 12, 2020 to November 27, 2020."

TikTok faced a deadline on Thursday to comply with the United States' order to sell its US operations or be shut down, although the demand did not go into effect on time.

The Trump administration announced that the enforcement of the TikTok ban would be delayed, citing a decision by a federal court in Pennsylvania in October to block the Commerce Department order. The administration has appealed the judge's order that blocked restrictions on the application.

In August, the Trump administration threatened to ban the app in the United States, citing wider concerns about alleged Chinese government spying on data of Americans using China-originated social media.

The ban on TikTok was originally to take effect on September 20, but was later deferred to November 12 after the administration offered the company a way out by selling itself to a US entity.

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Michigan Governor Seeks Shutdown of US-Canadian Oil Pipeline - Statement

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer is moving forward with a plan to shut down a cross-border oil pipeline between the United States and Canada, the governor's office said in a statement on Monday.

"Today, Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Director Dan Eichinger notified Enbridge that the 1953 easement allowing it to operate dual pipelines in the Straits of Mackinac to transport petroleum and other products is being revoked and terminated," the statement said.

The Michigan government filed a lawsuit with the Ingham County Circuit Court to enforce the decision, the statement added.

The decision concerns a four-mile stretch of the pipeline through the Straits of Mackinac, which separates the state's lower and upper peninsulas and two of Great Lakes - Michigan and Huron. The governor contends that the Canadian energy giant Enbridge, which owns the pipeline, has routinely refused to take action to protect the waters of the lakes from the threat of oil spills that may devastate the environment and economy.

The Great Lakes supply drinking water to more than five million Michigan residents and support up to 350,000 jobs in the state.

The pipeline is a critical part of the Canadian energy industry, as it carries oil from Western Canada to refineries in Ontario and the United States.

Enbridge and Natural Resources Canada did not immediately respond to Sputnik's request for comment.

The notice, should it come into effect, will require Enbridge to cease operations of its Line 5 by May 2021.

Line 5 transports up to 540,000 barrels per day of light crude oil, light synthetic crude, and natural gas liquids (NGLs), which are refined into propane, according to Enbridge.

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Pennsylvania Will Not Recount US Presidential Election Votes - State Official

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - Pennsylvania will not order a recount of the presidential election votes cast in the state, as the margin between the two candidates is too large, the state's Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar's office said in a press release on Friday.

"Based on the unofficial returns submitted by all the counties to the Department of State, Secretary Boockvar has determined that she will not be ordering a recount and recanvass of the election returns in the counties, as no statewide candidate was defeated by one-half of one percent or less of the votes cast," the release said. "This includes the following races: President of the United States, Attorney General, Auditor General, and State Treasurer."

Biden has secured 49.86 percent of the vote against President Donald Trump's 48.9 percent, according to the state's latest tally. Biden has secured almost 60,000 more votes than Trump in the vote, according to the tally.

The release said the canvass by counties of ballots cast in the US presidential election is nearly complete. As of mid-day Friday, approximately 40,000 of the provisional ballots cast in the state have been counted or partially counted, with the numbers expected to grow over the next few days, it added.

Earlier on Friday, the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit rejected a Republican party lawsuit seeking to invalidate nearly 10,000 late-arriving ballots in the battleground state.

A post-election audit is underway in the toss-up state of Georgia, and state officials in the swing state of Wisconsin are preparing for a potential recount.

Major US media outlets have projected Biden to be the winner of the election, but Trump has refused to concede the race, alleging without evidence that victory was stolen from him through fraud.

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No Threats Identified in Reported Hostage Situation in Montreal - Police

WASHINGTON, November 13 (Sputnik) - The police have not identified any active threat as they respond to a reported hostage situation in Canada's Montreal, the city's police service (SPVM) said in a statement on Friday.

"No threat has been identified for now. We are currently evacuating the building," the police said via Twitter.

The police operation is still underway at Ubersoft company's offices in Montreal, with no injuries reported.

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California, Oregon, Washington Issue New COVID-19 Travel Advisories - Statement

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) - Three US states of California, Oregon and Washington - all on the United States' West Coast - issued new travel advisories urging residents to avoid so-called "non-essential" travel and to self-quarantine for two weeks due to novel coronavirus outbreaks, California Governor Gavin Newsom's office said in a statement.

"The travel advisories urge against non-essential out-of-state travel, ask people to self-quarantine for 14 days after arriving from another state or country and encourage residents to stay local," the statement said on Friday afternoon.

The governors of the three states recommended that residents limit interactions to immediate households and travel only for the purposes of work or study as well as for critical infrastructure and economic support and medical care, the statement said.

Oregon Governor Kate Brown said the coronavirus does not stop at state lines, noting that hospitals across the West Coast are stretched to capacity and the authorities must take steps to ensure travelers are not bringing this disease home with them.

"If you do not need to travel, you shouldn't," Brown said.

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Trump Says Coronavirus Vaccine Will Become Available for All Americans in April 2021

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump said in a press conference on Friday that a coronavirus vaccine will become available for all Americans as early as in April.

Trump said the coronavirus vaccine developed by Pfizer, which announced last week that it was more than 90 percent effective, will be approved "very, very quickly."

"The vaccine will be distributed to frontline workers, the elderly and high-risk Americans immediately, will be a matter of weeks," Trump said on Friday. "As soon as April, the vaccine will be available to the entire general population."

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Manned US Space Station Mission Delayed to Sunday Because of High Winds - NASA Chief

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) - The SpaceX Dragon Resilience manned mission to the International Space Station (ISS) will delay its launch until Sunday because of high onshore winds, NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said.

"NASA and SpaceX are targeting launch of the Crew-1 mission with astronauts to the Space Station at 7:27 pm EST [Eastern Standard Time] Sunday, November 15," Bridenstine said in a Twitter message on Friday. "The first stage booster is planned to be reused to fly astronauts on Crew-2 Launch America."

The launch is due to carry US astronauts Mike Hopkins, Victor Glover and Shannon Walker and Soichi Noguchi from Japan on a six-month mission to the International Space Station.

The original launch time was on Saturday evening.

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US Official Says 20M In Americans Can Be Vaccinated in December, 25M In Each Following Month

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) - The United States hopes to immunize 20 million residents in December and at least 25 million each month in 2021, Operation Warp Speed chief adviser Moncef Slaoui said in a news conference at the White House.

"We plan to have enough vaccine doses available for use in the US population to immunize about 20 million individuals in the month of December and another 25 to 30 million per month on an ongoing basis," Slaoui said on Friday. "As of the month February or March, if we have more vaccine approved...we may be able to immunize a larger number of Americans on an ongoing basis per month."

Slaoui said he hopes two vaccines in the final phase of clinical trials for the coronavirus vaccine will soon be approved for emergency use in December.

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Trump Says 'Time Will Tell' Who Takes Oval Office in January

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) – US President Donald Trump said time will determine who will take office on January 20 but his administration would not announce another lockdown despite COVID-19 surge.

"This administration will not be going into a lockdown. Hopefully, whatever happens in the future, who knows which administration it will be, I guess time will tell," Trump said during a press briefing on Friday.

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Trump Says He Will Not Deliver Coronavirus Vaccine to New York Until Governor Accepts It

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump said in a press briefing that his administration will not deliver the coronavirus vaccine right after it becomes available for general distribution to the state of New York until Governor Andrew Cuomo indicates his readiness to accept it.

"As soon as April, the vaccine will be available to the entire general population, with the exception of places like New York state, where... [Governor Cuomo] doesn't trust with the vaccines coming from the greatest companies," Trump said on Friday.

Cuomo said in September that he would not trust the US federal government's opinion on the safety of the coronavirus vaccine and New York will review the vaccine after it is approved. Trump said he believed that Cuomo's mistrust was based on the fact that the vaccine is being developed under his administration.

"He doesn't trust the fact that it's this White House, this administration, so we won't be delivering it to New York until we have the authorization to do so," Trump said. "I hope he doesn't handle this as badly as he's handled the nursing homes."

On Monday, Pfizer announced that the coronavirus vaccine it was developing with BioNTech had been tested to be more than 90 percent effective. Both companies expect the process of the vaccine's registration to start in the United States in November.

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US May Approve Emergency Authorization for 2 Coronavirus Vaccines in December - Official

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) - The US authorities may approve for emergency use two coronavirus vaccines in December, Operation Warp Speed chief Moncef Slaoui said during a press briefing at the White House.

"The two vaccines that are completing their Phase 3 trial are likely to be... [filed with] the FDA [Food and Drug Administration] for potential emergency use authorization within few weeks and, hopefully, if approved, they could be used for immunization in the month of December," Slaoui told reporters on Friday evening.

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"We plan to have enough vaccine doses available for use in the US population to immunize about 20 million individuals in the month of December and another 25 to 30 million per month on an ongoing basis," Slaoui said on Friday. "As of the month February or March, if we have more vaccine approved...we may be able to immunize a larger number of Americans on an ongoing basis per month."

Slaoui said he hopes two coronavirus vaccines in the final phase of clinical trials developed by Pfizer and Moderna will soon be approved for emergency use in December.

President Donald Trump said a vaccine will be more widely available for the US public by April of 2021.

The United States has reported more than 10.6 million coronavirus cases and more than 243,400 virus-related deaths as of Friday afternoon, according to the latest data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

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Pennsylvania Courts Reject 2 More Trump Campaign Lawsuits Seeking to Invalidate Ballots

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) - US courts in the state of Pennsylvania have rejected two more Trump campaign lawsuits seeking to invalidate more than 5,000 mail-in ballots cast in the 2020 presidential election, court documents revealed.

The Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery County denied the Trump campaign's lawsuit seeking to invalidate about 600 mail-in ballots, a court document showed on Friday.

A separate court document on Friday showed that the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County rejected the Trump campaign's effort to invalidate 4,466 mail-in ballots.

Earlier on Friday, the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit rejected a Republican party lawsuit seeking to invalidate nearly 10,000 late-arriving ballots in the battleground state.

Major US media outlets have projected Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden to be the winner of the election. However, President Donald Trump said he won but his victory was stolen via massive election fraud. Trump is challenging the election result by seeking audits and recounts as well as filing lawsuits in state and federal courts.

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Biden Considers Independent Senator King to Head US Intelligence - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) - Projected President Joe Biden is looking at Independent Maine Senator Angus King as a candidate to head the US intelligence services, Politico reported.

Biden is looking at King, a longtime Senate colleague who caucuses with and generally supports the Democrats though remaining an Independent, to oversee the 17 main US intelligence agencies in the position, which President George W. Bush created in 2005, the report said on Friday.

Politico cited three sources whom it described as being familiar with the discussions on the appointments being currently held by the Biden's transition team.

King was a member of the US Senate Intelligence and Armed Services committees. King has been a critic of President Donald Trump and has accused him of politicizing the position Director of National Intelligence.

Biden has told some of his advisers that he wants the US intelligence services to be run by individuals with long experience and visibility in holding such posts before.

While Biden has been projected by most US media outlets to be the next president of the United States, the election results have not been certified and are disputed. Trump has said he won the election but victory was stolen from him via a massive election fraud. Trump is now demanding audits and recounts in several US states and is filing lawsuits in state and federal courts to seek redress.

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US Laboratory Awarded \$133Mln to Conduct Hypersonic Flight Experiments - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) - The US Navy has awarded a research contract worth more than \$133 million to a laboratory near Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to carry out new experiments into hypersonic guidance, navigation and control, the Department of Defense said in a press release.

"The Charles Stark Draper Laboratory [in] Cambridge, Massachusetts is awarded \$133,473,389 in options ... to provide technical and engineering services to support the guidance, navigation and control system that will support the Navy's hypersonic flight experiments," the release stated on Friday.

The Defense Department said more than 80 percent of the work on the contract will be performed in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the rest in El Segundo, California, with an expected completion date of September 30, 2021.

The Draper Laboratory will also conduct research under the contract into the applications of technologies to meet guidance requirements for operations on the Common Missile Compartment for the US Columbia-class program and the United Kingdom Dreadnought-class program, the release said.

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Biden, Italian Prime Minister Vow to Boost Ties, Revive NATO, EU - Transition Team

WASHINGTON, November 14 (Sputnik) - Presumed President-Elect Joe Biden held a phone conversation with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in which the two agreed to work together to improve bilateral relations and revitalize the Transatlantic Alliance working through NATO and the European Union, according to a readout of the conversation.

"President-elect Joe Biden spoke this afternoon with Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte of Italy," the readout said on Friday. "The President-elect thanked Prime Minister Conte for his congratulations, conveying his commitment to strengthen relations with Italy and revitalize the trans-Atlantic relationship, including through NATO and the European Union."

Biden told Conte that he looked forward to working together during Italy's chairmanship of the G20 next year, the readout said.

Biden welcomed the opportunity to cooperate with Italy on a range of shared interests, including containing the novel coronavirus and improving global health security, pursuing a sustainable economic recovery and tackling the threat of climate change, the readout added.

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US Sets New Daily Record With Over 177,000 COVID-19 Cases – Reports

MOSCOW, November 14 (Sputnik) – The United States has registered more than 177,000 new coronavirus cases within the past 24 hours marking the largest daily increase in any country since the start of the epidemic, The Washington Post newspaper reported.

The number of new cases has reportedly risen in all 50 US states, with at least 10 states reporting the record daily increase within the past day.

The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic on March 11. To date, more than 53.2 million people have been infected with the coronavirus worldwide, with over 1.3 million fatalities, according to Johns Hopkins University (JHU).

The United States remains the worst-hit nation both in terms of the number of cases (over 10.7 million) and fatalities (more than 244,000), JHU adds.