

Monday 09/14/20

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Action Heroes Gone Awry: UN Probing Failed Mercenary Group Who Offered Hit Jobs for Libya's Haftar

The United Nations is looking into a mercenary outfit that reportedly offered hit job services to Libyan General Khalifa Haftar last year, but was run out of the country after their plan fell apart. A Monday report on the Australian Broadcasting Company's ["Four Corners" investigative journalism program unveiled](#) that a former Royal Australian Air Force fighter pilot named Christiaan Durrant is believed to be the ringleader of a mercenary outfit that made a botched pitch to carry out hit jobs for Libya's Haftar and was forced to flee the war-torn country. According to the UN's investigation, infamous mercenary boss Erik Prince is also being investigated in connection to the outfit.

The UN's Panel of Experts will present its final report early next year. If Durrant is found guilty of breaching the European Union's arms embargo on Libya and an Australian court agrees, Durrant could face 10 years in jail or half a million dollars in fines.

The group called itself Opus Capital Asset Limited FZE and offered Haftar kidnapping and hit job services to take out his rivals. According to "Four Corners," the PowerPoint Presentation used to sell the offer to Haftar said Opus "can be effective within seven days ... with export of controlled items including helicopters, air ammunition, ground weapons, ground ammunition, and night vision."

"Opus will continue their aggressive deployment program [to] support the commander's strategic intent," the presentation said, with the UN indicating it believes Haftar to be "the commander." Haftar reportedly accepted, offering the group \$80 million.

The choppers would be key to Opus' success, but Durrant's plan to buy them from the Jordanian military fell through after Amman officials grew wary of his story. According to "Four Corners," the Aussie tried to pass himself off as "Gene Rynack," very close to the name of Mel Gibson's character in the 1990 comedy film "Air America," about two pilots flying cargo for the CIA who go off the rails.

When the Jordanians backed out, Durrant was forced to buy the helicopters from South Africa. [According to the Independent](#), Durrant called on Emirati contacts from his home in Dubai to get the choppers and ship them across Africa, meaning that when his crew arrived in Benghazi this past June, they didn't have the promised helicopters with them yet.

The choppers were reportedly at least one AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter and five [MH-6 "Little Bird" special forces choppers](#), and the crew was also going to have a LASA T-Bird agricultural plane adapted for surveillance and warfare.

"The general not seeing all his fancy gunships that he had paid for, was furious," US conflict journalist Robert Young Pelton told "Four Corners," relaying the story told to him by one of the hired guns.

"The general said, 'I paid \$80 million, where's my stuff?' And there were threats made against Durrant's life, personally by the general," Pelton said.

The men were reportedly forced to flee for their lives in two rubber boats, making the 400-mile trip across the Mediterranean to Malta under cover of night. Once in Malta, they claimed to have been oil industry consultants who'd fled a flare-up of violence, and were released without charge.

Durrant swore to "Four Corners" that the UN report was based on "false documents," telling the outlet: "We don't breach sanctions; we don't deliver military services, we don't carry guns, and we are not mercenaries."

"Some of your questions and previous reporting by others is built on dodgy investigations by the UN, influenced by a political agenda that goes way beyond me, and continues to be false and disappointing," Durrant said.

According to the Independent, the crew included five Britons, two of whom were former Royal Marines; 12 South Africans; an American; and the three Australians - all of whom received upwards of \$120,000 for what was supposed to have been a three-month job.

However, "Four Corners" also noted that Erik Prince, the founder of private security contracting outfit Blackwater - now rebranded as Academi - was also being investigated for possible connections to the operation.

According to the report, Durrant once worked for Prince, a former US Navy SEAL who formed his mercenary group in 1997 to pitch an "army in a box" to the US government and then to warlords around the globe. [The Intercept reported in 2016 how Durrant](#) had been helping Prince to refit two Ayres Thrush prop-driven crop dusters to be used as attack aircraft, describing him as a "longtime associate" of Prince and his "lieutenant."

Also interesting to note is that the converted crop duster-turned-attack plane Opus planned on taking to Libya had previously been presented at the 2017 Paris Air Show [by none other than Prince himself](#).

The FBI is now also believed to be investigating, as Prince is a US citizen.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Video: China's Air Force, Army Show Off Joint-Strike Abilities in Tibet Amid Peace Talks With India

Undated footage shows China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Air Force (PLAAF) practicing joint high-altitude drills. However, Beijing is now engaged in peace talks with New Delhi about disengaging from a tense standoff on the Himalayan border they share.

New undated footage released by the PLA shows dramatic, large-scale integrated military drills involving special forces, tanks, rocket launchers, drones and strike aircraft.

"PLA is training attacking tanks in Tibet region," Hu Xijin, editor-in-chief of China's Global Times newspaper, said in a Monday tweet accompanying the video. "Yes, it targets China-India border situation. China hopes the five-point consensus reached between the two foreign ministers can

be implemented, but is ready to strike a heavy blow to Indian troops if they refuse to implement it.”

[According to the South China Morning Post](#), a Saturday report by Chinese state media revealed the Tibet drills were the first time joint air-ground exercises had been conducted “at an average altitude of 5,000 meters (16,400 feet).”

In the footage, special forces can be seen scaling rocky precipices, man-launched drones being used for targeting and reconnaissance and J-16 strike aircraft firing rocket barrages at target zones, as well as tanks, rocket artillery and self-propelled artillery firing en masse at armored targets.

The footage was notably released after Beijing and New Delhi agreed to resume negotiations aimed at reducing tensions near Pangong Lake, a territory high in the Himalayan mountains where India and China have disputed the location of the proper border for decades, thanks to imprecise maps created by the British Empire when it ruled India. Clashes there since May have seen dozens of soldiers on both sides injured or killed and [increasingly intense posturing](#). On September 10, Indian Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi [met in Moscow and released a joint statement promising](#) to abide by existing agreements and "maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas." The agreement was followed by [Chinese forces releasing five captured Indian men](#) who they had claimed were spies.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

UK Government Gives Initial Clearance to Johnson's Internal Market Bill

The British government has given initial clearance to a proposal by Prime Minister Boris Johnson that would roll back parts of London's commitments to the European Union made in January.

The Internal Market Bill [passed the House of Commons on Monday](#) by a majority of 77 MPs, with 340 supporting to 263 opposing. Several senior members of Johnson's Conservative Party notably abstained from the vote, [claiming the measure would break international law](#).

Introduced last week, the bill would [override parts of the withdrawal agreement the UK made](#) with the European Union that pertain to Northern Ireland, a part of the island of Ireland that remains in the UK. The rest of the island is the Republic of Ireland, and while the UK remained in the trading bloc, the border between the two countries was free and porous.

While the bill does not impose or bar trade restrictions, it would give British ministers the power to modify or "disapply" any new trade measures that might be put into place in January 2021. However, Johnson noted that if a new trade deal is signed with Brussels, then the most extreme and controversial parts of the bill will never need to be invoked.

Michael Gove, one of Johnson's senior cabinet ministers, urged prior to the vote that the EU had not always been fair in its negotiations with the UK, such as the issue of fishing rights, in which Brussels wanted to fish in British waters as if the UK was still a member state.

"The EU has not always been the constructive partner that all of us might have hoped," Gove said, according to Reuters. "We were told that we would get a Canada deal. That's not on the table."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

'Cultural Racism': US Errs in Assuming China Will Accept Number 2 Spot - Journo

The US considers China a "revisionist power" seeking to upend the post-Cold War world order, but what Americans misunderstand about China is that competition doesn't necessarily mean a fight to the death for supremacy, a journalist told Sputnik. In fact, Washington's reaction might just provoke China into chasing that goal.

Peter Lavelle, host of [RT's "CrossTalk,"](#) told [Radio Sputnik's Fault Lines](#) on Monday that what Westerners misunderstand the most about China is that they feel that having established itself as top dog around the world, the US then kicked the ladder out from under it, making it "against the rules" for a country like China to supplant it.

[Interview begins at 28:40]

"The Chinese are being told, 'Well you can rise, but you have to be number 2, and you have to play by our rules,' and the Chinese are thinking, 'Well that wasn't the case when you were coming up, and you changed the rules when you were on top. Why should we play by your rules if we're just as powerful - if not more powerful - than you are?'"

"I mean, ask any American, 'Is it okay if you are number 2?'; and they'll say, 'No.' Ask the Chinese people, 'Do you want to be forever number 2?'; and they'll say, 'No, why, why should we be?' So I think there's, you know - the US and its allies, it's really projecting a kind of cultural racism: 'We're The West, we're a great tradition, and no one can challenge us.' If you know anything about history, empires come and go," Lavelle told hosts Shane Stranahan and Jamarl Thomas.

The journalist noted that contrary to the US, China doesn't seek to challenge and supplant another nation as world hegemon, but to pursue its own path of development. Indeed, Chinese President Xi Jinping has only predicted China will surpass the underdevelopment caused by its "century of humiliation" between 1842 and 1949 [by the centennial of the communist victory in 2049.](#)

"The Chinese are not exporting their ideology to anywhere else in the world. They're not asking other countries and peoples to conform to their ways. I mean, they're amazingly non-interventionist. And the United States, because it's in its genetic code, it must rule, and anyone that challenges it is instantly an enemy. And the Chinese will say, 'That's not necessarily true, but if you want to up the ante, well, we can do it, and we have the wherewithal and the patience to do it,'" he said.

"Just imagine, you know, listen to some of the policy people around Joe Biden. And the Chinese Communist Party Politburo hears 'Oh, they want to go back into Syria, great.' When are these people in Washington going to learn? All they do is waste their treasury, waste their lives and destroy their reputation. All the while, the Chinese are building infrastructure, and they're

building the world's infrastructure now. But of course, the US must be number 1, and the only way the US can do that is through its military force. I mean, American taxpayers pay for it, make a small group of people very, very rich as the country's infrastructure crumbles. That's how I see it," Lavelle said.

He noted this pride can sometimes worsen domestic situations in the US, noting that while Russia has repeatedly offered to send to the US its specialized firefighting planes to help with the catastrophic wildfires ravaging the West Coast, Washington has always refused this offer. Meanwhile, the helicopters the Oregon National Guard would have been using to fight the fires [have instead been deployed to Afghanistan](#) to buttress the US' 19-year-long war there. He said the view from Moscow is that situations like this show "stupidity" and "a lack of maturity" on the part of the Americans.

"That is the view here: are you so proud that you won't even help your own people?" he asked. "I mean, where in the world is a forest fire political outside of the United States and Brazil?" "Everything is political in the US. Everything is added into the cultural war and the political struggle for power," Lavelle said, noting that this is seen in few other places.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Videos: US Air Defense System Downs Hostile Targets Over Baghdad Green Zone

A US air defense system has reportedly shot down several missiles near the US embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, early on Tuesday morning.

According to a correspondent with the Amman-based Al-Hadath news agency, at least 3 missiles were shot down by air defenses over the US embassy in the Green Zone, a fortified area of central Baghdad.

Video captured nearby shows air raid sirens roaring as the embassy's counter rocket, artillery and mortar (C-RAM) system, modified from the US Navy's Close-In Weapon System (CIWS), engages the incoming targets.

The US diplomatic hub in Iraq has [come under increasing attack in 2020](#), after a US drone strike near Baghdad airport in January killed Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, a central leader in Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, and Gen. Qasem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's elite Quds Force. The Green Zone was fortified during the US occupation of Iraq between 2003 and 2011, when US forces waged a counterinsurgency war against Iraqi insurgent forces.

Hours earlier on Monday, US convoys transporting military equipment in al-Diwaniyah and Babylon Governorate came under attack by several improvised explosive devices (IEDs), though they caused no casualties, [according to a statement given to Al-Noor News](#) by the Iraqi Prime Minister's Security Media Cell.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

'Very Strange Events': Researchers Baffled as Killer Whales Attack Boats Near Spain

Researchers are perplexed over a group of killer whales that has been attacking boats off the coasts of Spain and Portugal in the last few months.

According to a [report](#) by Tribune News Service, the whales have targeted sailboats traveling along the Strait of Gibraltar, a narrow waterway that connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, to Galicia, an autonomous community in Spain's northwest.

The attacks have been taking place over the last two months, damaging boats and injuring sailors. However, researchers are unsure what is causing the animals' behavior.

Sailor Victoria Morris described an experience to the Guardian in which nine killer whales surrounded a boat she was crewing in Spain on July 29.

"The noise was really scary. They [the whales] were ramming the keel, there was this horrible echo, I thought they could capsize the boat," Morris [told the Guardian](#). "And this deafening noise as they communicated, whistling to each other. It was so loud that we had to shout."

The boat had to be towed away because of the damage it suffered; the rudder was rendered unusable, and bite marks were left on the keel.

"For killer whales to take out a piece of a fiberglass rudder is crazy," said Rocío Espada, who works with the marine biology laboratory at the University of Seville and has studied the migratory population of orcas in the Strait of Gibraltar for years.

"I've seen these orcas grow from babies, I know their life stories, I've never seen or heard of attacks," Espada added.

"These are very strange events," Ezequiel Andréu Cazalla, a cetacean researcher, also told the Guardian. "But I don't think they're attacks," she added, noting that there may be other factors stressing the orcas, such as food scarcity and pollution.

Orcas, also known as killer whales, are among the world's most powerful predators and are capable of killing leopard seals and great white sharks, [according to National Geographic](#).

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

'Left Scrambling': Mom, 2-Year-Old Son Kicked Off US Flight After Toddler Snacks Without Mask

A woman flying to Chicago, Illinois, from Fort, Myers, Florida on Southwest Airlines over the weekend says she was escorted off her flight because her 2-year-old son wasn't wearing a mask while snacking before takeoff.

According to Southwest Airlines traveler Jodi Degyansky, 34, the Saturday removal unfolded after her son Hayes Jarboe took off his mask so he could eat some of the snacks that were served by flight staff.

As a result, flight attendants insisted on escorting her and her son off the plane, even though it had already left the gate. Even when Degyansky's son placed his mask back on, the flight attendants still insisted that they deplane.

Official guidelines by the [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) state that children aged 2 years and older should wear a mask over their nose and mouth if social distancing is not feasible.

"My toddler who literally turned 2 two weeks ago ... I know you have to draw the line, but let's be a little compassionate with everyone's individual circumstances," Degyansky recently told the [Fort Myers News-Press](#), also noting that she supports the wearing of masks but that she expected the airline to be more lenient.

"I'm sure other parents are going through this," Degyansky said. "I want people to either do their homework before they choose to fly or find an airline that has more leniency."

Degyansky also told the outlet that it was humiliating to be escorted off the plane.

Although airline staff did offer to find the mother another flight later in the day, none of the options were direct flights to Chicago, and the next such trip was scheduled for Monday. As a result, Degyansky had to book a \$600 flight on American Airlines.

"I just felt like I can't believe it happened," Degyansky said. "I was left scrambling - how the hell am I going to get home? What if I didn't have the resources to buy a \$600 ticket?"

Degyansky also said Southwest Airlines indicated it would refund her money for the ticket. As of Sunday, however, she had not been reimbursed.

In a statement to the News-Press, Southwest Airlines said it is investigating the situation to learn more about what transpired. The airline also said it is planning to reach out to Degyansky.

"If a customer is unable to wear a face covering for any reason, Southwest regrets that we are unable to transport the individual. In those cases, we will issue a full refund and hope to welcome the customer onboard in the future, if public health guidance regarding face coverings changes," Ro Hawthorne, a spokesperson for the airline, told the outlet.

"Caring for others with our Southwest Hearts is at the center of everything we do, which is especially important during this pandemic. We appreciate the ongoing support and spirit of cooperation among our customers and Employees as we collectively take care of each other while striving to prevent the spread of COVID-19," Hawthorne added.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

'What a Fool': Trump Stuns Netizens With 'It Will Cool Down' Remark Amid Devastating Wildfires

Netizens were furious Monday after US President Donald Trump denied climate change during a briefing on the raging California wildfires that have killed more than 20 people.

During the briefing with state and federal officials, California Governor Gavin Newsom told the president: "We feel very strongly the hots are getting hotter, the dries are getting dryer."

"Something has happened to the plumbing of the world, and we come from a perspective, humbly, that we assert that the science is in, and the observed evidence is self-evident that climate change is real. Please respect the difference of opinion out here with respect to the fundamental issue of climate change," [Newsom added](#), to which Trump responded "absolutely" before adding a few moments later: "It will start getting cooler, you just watch."

When one of Newsom's top aides retorted that science disagrees with Trump's statement, the president responded: "I don't think science knows."

Trump's comments were met with widespread backlash from Twitter users.

"What a fool," [one user commented](#) on a video of the exchange shared online.

"People took medical advice from anti science man," [another pointed out](#).

"He thinks climate and weather are the same thing," a third added.

Before Trump made his comments, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden criticized the Trump administration's response to climate change in a speech near his home in Wilmington, Delaware.

"The impacts of climate change don't pick and choose. That's because it's not a partisan phenomenon. It's science. And our response should be the same, grounded in science. Acting together, all of us. But like with our federal response to COVID-19, a lack of a national strategy on climate, on climate change overall, leaves us with a patchwork of solutions and made worse by the changes this administration has made," [Biden said](#).

Biden's latest comments come as at least 102 major fires have burned across 12 western states in the US, including California, Oregon and Washington, in recent weeks. At least [35 people across the country](#) have died because of the blazes, and dozens of others are missing. In addition, thousands of people have been evacuated as some US cities, like Los Angeles, experience their worst air quality in years.

According to the [Center for Climate and Energy Solutions](#), climate change is a key factor in increasing wildfires in the western US, with the number of wildfires in the region doubling between 1984 and 2015. Wildfire risk is associated with multiple factors including temperature and soil moisture, as well as the presence of potential fuel like trees and shrubs.

"All these factors have strong direct or indirect ties to climate variability and climate change," the organization notes.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Photo: Lock of Abraham Lincoln's Hair, Blood-Stained Telegram Fetch Over \$81,000 at Auction

A lock of 16th US President Abraham Lincoln's hair and a blood-stained telegram about his 1865 assassination were recently sold at an auction for more than \$81,000.

According to the RR Auction house in Boston, Massachusetts, the items were sold during a Saturday auction for \$81,250, which is more than the \$75,000 the auction house was hoping the items would fetch.

However, no information about the buyer was revealed.

The lock of hair was removed during Lincoln's postmortem exam after he was fatally shot at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC, by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, 1865. Lincoln died the next day.

According to the [auction house](#), the lock of hair was given to Dr. Lyman Beecher Todd, a Kentucky postmaster and cousin of Mary Todd Lincoln, Lincoln's widow.

The hair is attached to an official War Department telegram sent to Todd by George Kinnear, his assistant at the Lexington, Kentucky, post office. The telegram was received on the day Lincoln was shot.

The telegram includes a typed caption written by Todd's son, James A. Todd, that reads: "The above telegram ... arrived in Washington a few minutes after Abraham Lincoln was shot. Next day, at the postmortem, when a lock of hair, clipped from near the President's left temple, was given to Dr. Todd - finding no other paper in his pocket - he wrapped the lock, stained with blood or brain fluid, in this telegram and hastily wrote on it in pencil: 'Hair of A. Lincoln.'"

The telegram is framed alongside a letter from James A. Todd, and is especially important because it debunks a theory that then-US Secretary of War Edwin Stanton plotted to kill Lincoln due to political and personal differences.

While some have floated claims that said Stanton ordered military communications to be cut off at the time of the assassination, which allowed Booth to temporarily escape, the time stamp on the dispatch shows that military telegraph lines were not disrupted the night Lincoln was killed. The authenticity of the hair and telegram were both verified by RR Auction.

"When you are dealing with samples of Lincoln's hair, provenance is everything - and in this case, we know that this came from a family member who was at the President's bedside," Bobby Livingston, RR Auction's executive vice president, said in a statement [obtained by the Associated Press](#).

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Israel Aims to 'Shore Up' Arab Support With Peace Deals to 'Legitimize' Crimes Against Palestinians

The recent agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to normalize their relations is part of Israel's strategy to garner as much support as possible in the Arab world to legitimize its crimes in Palestine, Miko Peled, a human rights activist, told Radio Sputnik's By Any Means Necessary Monday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu departed for Washington, DC, on Sunday to attend a Tuesday ceremony at the White House, where he will sign agreements with ministers from the UAE and Bahrain to normalize Israel's diplomatic relations with the two Persian Gulf nations. The pacts will be Israel's third and fourth peace treaties with Arab countries, after those it signed with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

"Israel's strategy has always been to try to shore up as much support in the Arab world, one way or another, in order to legitimize its crimes in Palestine. And so they were able to do that through economic means, through selling arms and security systems and of course the peace deal with the Egypt, the largest Arab country, and then with Jordan," Peled, author of "The General's Son: Journey of an Israeli in Palestine" and "Injustice: The Story of the Holy Land Foundation Five," [told hosts Sean Blackmon and Jacquie Lugman](#).

It appears that the Trump administration may be looking toward normalizing relations between Israel and Morocco by introducing direct flights between them. The North African country, an

ally of the US, has long harbored close intelligence ties with Israel. According to [Daily Sabah](#), which cited Israeli television station N12, the flight route between the two countries could be a step toward enhanced relations. In addition, N12 reported Saturday that Washington plans to push for Oman and Sudan to also establish diplomatic ties with Israel.

Last Wednesday, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior White House adviser, Jared Kushner, told reporters that Saudi Arabia and Bahrain had also agreed to open their airspace to Israel.

"They [Saudi Arabia and Bahrain] agreed to open their airspace not just to flights from Israel to the United Arab Emirates and back, but to all eastward travel," Kushner said, [Times of Israel reported](#).

"Gradually, what they want to do is develop good relations with the Arab countries so as to say, look, these Palestinians just don't want peace, Peled explained. "The reality is, the Palestinians are being killed, they're being thrown out of their homes, they are living in an apartheid regime, the racism, the brutality, the violence that they are suffering at the hands of Israel ... and so Israel is going around and around trying to shore up support in as many Arab countries as possible as a strategy to defend itself."

"These Arab countries are slowly falling into this trap, some because they want access to America, some because they're quite happy to do business with Israel, so they don't really care about Israel crimes toward the Palestinians," he added.

"This is the reality in these countries, where the regimes find it profitable for them to do business with Israel, to normalize Israel. And really, mostly, this is because it's a stepping stone to America. This gives them access to America, better access to buy weapons and get weapons from America."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Graphic Videos: US Deputy Fired for Excessive Force, Probe Launched Over Viral Assault by [Evan Craighead](#)

A Clayton County, Georgia, sheriff's deputy has been terminated from the department over use of excessive force, shortly after viral footage uploaded to social media showed the cop repeatedly beating a man in front of small children.

"The Deputy who repeatedly struck Roderick Walker is being terminated from the Clayton County Sheriff's Office by order of Sheriff Victor Hill for excessive use of force. This is the administrative action," Clayton County Sheriff Victor Hill announced in a [Sunday news release](#), adding that a criminal probe has been initiated and "turned over to the Clay County District Attorney's Office."

Walker, a 26-year-old man, was seen in multiple videos recorded at the scene, including in footage reposted by Ben Crump, the attorney whose office is representing the families of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Jacob Blake and Ahmaud Arbery.

Be advised, the footage below contains scenes some audiences may find offensive.

The officer filmed repeatedly striking Walker is overheard in recordings repeatedly claiming that he was bitten by the 26-year-old. His allegations are denied in real time by the man recording. An image of Walker's face wounds has since made rounds on social media.

"Mr. Walker has received medical treatment to include x-rays (no fractures detected) of his head and is being monitored at the jail hospital by a doctor," the sheriff's office claimed in the news release.

Crump and initial reports on the viral video claimed that Walker was a passenger in a Lyft rideshare that was pulled over by police before he was beaten. However, [a company statement](#) obtained by the Washington Examiner said that the incident did not occur during a Lyft ride.

In the video Crump shared, a woman tells an officer that she and Walker were receiving a ride from a man, who is seen outside of his vehicle in the second clip above.

Hill's Sunday release noted that a signature bond courtesy was ordered for Walker, but he has yet to be released due to other legal matters.

"Mr. Walker has a felony probation warrant out of Fulton County for Cruelty to Children, Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon, and a Failure to Appear warrant out of Hapeville which resulted in Magistrate Court denying him a bond," the sheriff's office detailed.

"Mr. Walker's legal counsel will have to resolve these issues to secure his release."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Oregon Officials Confirm 10 Dead, 22 Missing Amid Raging Wildfires
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Oregon's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has announced that at least 22 individuals have been confirmed missing amid a series of wildfires estimated to affect "tens of thousands of people."

Andrew Phelps, director of the Oregon OEM, revealed during a Monday news conference that the current and accurate number of confirmed missing individuals from the wildfires is 22, [KOIN reported](#). Citing law enforcement, he also announced at least 10 fatalities have been confirmed.

"We need to ensure we are providing a clear statewide picture of what we know," Phelps said. Democratic Oregon Governor Kate Brown called on US President Donald Trump to declare a major disaster. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) website, the ongoing Oregon wildfires have only been [classified as an emergency](#) since September 10.

Brown, like [Democratic California Governor Gavin Newsom](#), has argued that the intensity of the fires raging in Oregon, Washington and California is a clear sign of climate change.

"We saw incredible winds, we saw very cold hot temperatures, and of course we have a landscape that has seen 30 years of drought," Brown said on the [Sunday broadcast of CBS's "Face the Nation."](#)

"This is truly the bellwether for climate change on the west coast and this is a wake-up call for all of us that we have to do everything in our power to tackle climate change."

This comes contrary to remarks recently made by Trump, who was told by California Secretary for Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot that climate change needs to be recognized and "science is gonna be key."

"It'll start getting cooler," Trump, a longtime skeptic of climate change, retorted on Monday. "You just watch."

The Oregon OEM [announced on Sunday](#) that FEMA and additional federal partners had begun working together to carry out a coordinated wildfire response.

[More than 1 million acres](#) have been burned in Oregon - accounting for an area of destruction larger than the state of Rhode Island, KOIN noted. Some 40,000 individuals have been forced to evacuate their homes.

Sunday estimates published in the [Wall Street Journal](#) detailed that 3.3 million acres have been burned in California, where 16,700 firefighters were battling more the 24 wildfires over the weekend.

More than 665,854 acres have burned in Washington, the outlet noted, citing the National Interagency Fire Center.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Chinese Military Labels US 'Destroyer of World Peace' in Rebuke to Pentagon Report
by [Evan Craighead](#)

The Chinese military has pushed back against a recent Pentagon report delivered to the US Congress, arguing that it is Washington - not Beijing - that poses a major threat to world peace. "Many years of evidence shows that it is the US that is the fomenter of regional unrest, the violator of the international order and the destroyer of world peace," Col. Wu Qian, spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, asserted on Sunday, [as reported by the Associated Press](#).

He argued that the US military's presence and actions in Iraq, Syria and Libya have led to more than 800,000 deaths and the displacement of millions of individuals.

"Rather than reflecting on itself, the US issued a so-called report that made false comments about China's normal defense and military construction," he said.

"We call on the US to view China's national defense and military construction objectively and rationally, cease making false statements and related reports, and take concrete actions to safeguard the healthy development of bilateral military relations."

The Pentagon's [2020 China Military Power Report](#), delivered to the US Congress earlier this month, claimed "what is certain is that the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] has a strategic end state that it is working towards, which if achieved and its accompanying military modernization left unaddressed, will have serious implications for US national interests and the security of the international rules-based order."

Wu slammed the report on Sunday, calling it a "wanton distortion" of China's intentions, as well as of the People's Liberation Army's relationship with the Chinese public.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently drew attention to China's citizenry, arguing earlier this month to [Fox Business host Lou Dobbs](#) that a "Cold War analogy has some relevance" in regard to US-China relations, but the challenges posed by the "country with 1.4 billion people" are more "economic challenges."

Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Christopher [Wray declared](#) in July that the "greatest long-term threat to our nation's information and intellectual property, and to our economic vitality, is the counterintelligence and economic espionage threat from China."

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

'Helicopter Dog' Soars Over Tall Gate - Video Club

We all encounter obstacles in life. Animals are no exception, as a group of outdoorsy canines recently demonstrated.

Footage shared on Twitter captures a trio of doggos walking along with their owner out on their property in the countryside. Despite their path being blocked by the high bars of a fence, the dogs attempt to get through. After witnessing his pal unsuccessfully try to go under the fence, the middle pup suddenly and amazingly jumps right over, seemingly with no effort whatsoever. Who knew dogs could fly?

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Videos: Hurricane Sally to Strike US Gulf as Category 2 Storm, Bring Over 20 Inches of Rainfall by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

The US National Hurricane Center (NHC) on Monday announced that the tropical storm officials have been monitoring in the Gulf of Mexico has "rapidly" strengthened and has grown into a Category 2 hurricane, noting that the powerful cyclone will bring over 20 inches of rainfall to states along the US' southern coast.

The NHC's [latest update](#) indicates that Category 2 Hurricane Sally is currently situated about 105 miles from the mouth of the Mississippi River with maximum sustained winds of 100 mph. At present, the growing storm is moving west-northwest at a pace of 6 mph.

Forecasters anticipate that the storm will make landfall near southeastern Louisiana late Tuesday into Wednesday. Sally's hurricane-force winds extend some 25 miles from the hurricane's center, whereas its tropical storm-force winds extend out 125 miles.

"It's going to be really close," Mike Efferson, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service's Louisiana office, [told the Wall Street Journal](#). "Right now we have it as a strong Category 1, but we're trying to message people to prepare for a Category 2."

The NHC states in its Monday update that Sally is expected to undergo "additional strengthening" throughout the day.

Forecasters warn that residents living in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and along the Florida Panhandle may experience a storm surge of anywhere between 1 and 11 feet, should the peak surge occur at high tide.

“Overtopping of local levees outside of [New Orleans] Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System is possible where local inundation values may be higher [than predicted storm surges],” the NHC notes.

Efferson told the Journal that while the levee protection system in New Orleans, Louisiana, isn’t likely to be impacted by the hurricane’s rushing waters, the storm is definitely going to “give those pumps a good test, for sure.”

In 2005, when Category 5 Hurricane Katrina struck the US’ Gulf Coast, the levee system protecting the city of New Orleans faltered, with officials later recording over 50 failures of the levees and flood walls. Citing satellite imagery, [NASA reported at the time](#) that some 80% of New Orleans was flooded by the powerful storm.

Sally, a slow-moving system, is likely to produce between 8 and 16 inches of rainfall, with isolated amounts of 24 inches in certain areas, after making landfall. Heavy rain is forecast to fall on parts of Tennessee, northern Georgia and western parts of North and South Carolina from Thursday into Friday as the storm works its way inland.

Within the last 24 hours, the [governors of Mississippi](#) and [Louisiana declared states of emergency](#) and requested federal assistance ahead of Sally’s anticipated landfall in the region. New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell also issued a [mandatory evacuation order to residents](#) located outside of the city’s levee protection system.

Hurricane Sally’s arrival to the region comes less than a month after [Category 4 Hurricane Laura made landfall near Cameron, Louisiana](#), bringing with it catastrophic 150-mph winds. The August storm [killed at least 14 individuals](#), many of whom died as a result of fallen trees and carbon monoxide poisoning from the use of power generators.

This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Federal State Unitary Enterprise Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency, and additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade Goes Virtual Amid COVID-19 Pandemic
by [Victoria Teets](#)

New York City has had to greatly revise the plans for the 2020 edition of its nearly century-old, iconic Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

This year’s parade will be much different than those that preceded it, as Macy’s department store will stage a televised-only event in Herald Square, filmed over two days, according to a [statement](#) released on the company’s website Monday.

“The iconic holiday event will be reimagined safely for a national television presentation. Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade will air nationwide on NBC-TV Thursday, November 26 from 9 a.m. – Noon, in all time zones.”

“For more than 90 years, Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade has kicked off the holiday season with its signature entertainment spectacle, making it one of the world’s most beloved events,”

reads the statement. "Following our successful, safe and innovative production of Macy's 4th of July Fireworks, it is our intention to similarly reimagine Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade this November. Stay tuned for more details later this fall."

The event will still feature its famous enormous parade balloons - although watching the massive inflatables from the surrounding streets will not be allowed for the first time. Macy's is swapping the balloons' human handlers for specially rigged vehicles to anchor them. The number of participants, including performers and workers, is being cut to around 25% of the norm.

Additionally, no one under 18 will be allowed to participate in the parade, including performances by high school and college marching bands; only "locally based professional marching and musical ensembles" will play, Macy's stated.

Those band members who won't get to participate this year due to the pandemic-related measures will be allowed to join next year, according to the retailer.

The parade was first held in 1924 and has been televised nationally on NBC since 1953. New York City has hosted the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade nearly every November since it was created. The event has [only been canceled three times](#) in its 96-year history, due to helium shortages during World War II in 1942, 1943 and 1944.