

01/08/21 Friday

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'Lawless Bullying': Iran's Zarif Slams Trump Loyalists for Supporting Sanctions Against Iran by [Mary F.](#)

US President Donald Trump's administration this week imposed new sanctions on Iran's metal industry, targeting Iranian companies as well as subsidiaries in China, Germany and the UK. The administration accused the Iranian metals sector of financing a "range of nefarious activities" including the "proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."

In a Friday tweet, Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif noted that Trump's staunch supporters, who routinely encourage [economic sanctions on Iran](#), are only now denouncing Trump's attack on the rule of law.

"Those who succumbed to Trump's lawless bullying for 4 [years] — to protect their skin at OUR people's expense — now condemn his assault on the rule of law," Zarif tweeted.

"If you can't grow a spine, gain foresight — for your own sake," he added.

Zarif's tweet comes after Trump supporters on Wednesday breached the Capitol building in Washington, DC, to protest against the certification of the Electoral College, which would have decisively confirmed Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 presidential election.

Wednesday's riots left at least four protesters and one police officer dead and many others injured. As of Thursday, [more than 50 criminal cases](#) had been opened against pro-Trump loyalists who engaged in violence while storming the US Capitol Wednesday.

House Democrats are currently in the process of drafting new articles of impeachment against Trump, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) calling Trump's actions leading up to the deadly riot "dangerous and seditious."

"Today, following the president's dangerous and seditious acts, Republicans in Congress need to follow that example and call on Trump to depart his office — immediately," Pelosi wrote in a letter to House members Friday, [the New York Times reported](#).

"If the president does not leave office imminently and willingly, the Congress will proceed with our action," she added.

A growing number of lawmakers have also called for Trump to be removed from office through the [25th Amendment to the US Constitution](#), which permits the removal of a president who is "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office."

Tensions between the US and Iran have been especially high ever since Trump in 2018 withdrew the US from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran nuclear deal, and reinstated harsh sanctions against Iran. The JCPOA stipulated that Iran would receive waivers from sanctions if it agreed to limit its nuclear program.

Relations between Tehran and Washington have continued to deteriorate, with Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on Friday revealing that an underground missile base has been built at an undisclosed Persian Gulf location, [Reuters reported](#).

"The base is one of several bases housing the Guards' Navy's strategic missiles," Iranian state media quoted IRGC head Maj. Gen. Hossein Salami as stating.

Last month, the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control [sanctioned](#) four entities for "facilitating the export of Iranian petrochemical products by Triliance Petrochemical Co. Ltd. (Triliance)."

"Iran's petrochemical and petroleum sectors are primary sources of funding for the Iranian regime, which it uses to support its malign domestic and foreign agenda," US Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin said at the time. "The United States will act against persons who support illicit actors engaged in the movement of Iranian petroleum and petrochemical sales."

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Pompeo Meets With Biden's Secretary of State Pick for First Time to Facilitate 'Orderly Transition'

by [Mary F.](#)

US President-elect Joe Biden has tapped Antony Blinken to be the next US secretary of state. Blinken served as deputy national security adviser between 2013 and 2015 and as deputy secretary of state between 2015 and 2017 under then-US President Barack Obama.

On Friday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with Blinken for the first time since the latter received the nomination to lead the State Department.

In a Twitter statement, Pompeo confirmed the meeting, noting that he met with Blinken to "facilitate an orderly transition and to ensure American interests are protected abroad." Pompeo, a stalwart supporter of Trump, also called the meeting between the two "productive."

Blinken and Pompeo were first set to meet in mid-December, according to sources, [CNN reported](#). However, that meeting was canceled as a result of Pompeo going into quarantine after coming into contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19.

Pompeo received widespread backlash after claiming last November that Trump would remain in office for another term after a reporter asked him whether the State Department was planning to work with the Biden transition team.

"There will be a smooth transition to a second Trump administration," [Pompeo said during a briefing](#) on November 10, 2020, a week after the presidential election.

Although Pompeo has yet to acknowledge Biden as the president-elect in public statements, he appeared to hint at his departure in an [interview with Bloomberg News](#) this week.

"After four years, I think we're leaving the world safer than when we came in," Pompeo said during the interview.

"I hope that the policies that we put in place will have the capacity to continue and whoever the next secretary of state is will begin to follow down this path in a way that recognizes the threat from the Chinese Communist Party, that honors the work that we have done to push back against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the two states with the capacity to inflict real harm on the United States of America," he added.

Blinken was one of the first Cabinet nominees announced by Biden. However, his Senate confirmation hearing has not yet been scheduled.

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FBI Raids Homes, Offices of Several Tennessee Lawmakers in Mysterious Ongoing Investigation  
by [Mary F.](#)

Former Tennessee House Speaker Glen Casada resigned from his post in 2019 after it was revealed that he had previously exchanged sexually explicit text messages about women with Cade Cothren, his former chief of staff. Casada was reelected to the state's House of Representatives in November 2020.

FBI agents on Friday searched the homes and offices of several Tennessee state lawmakers and officials. Casada, Cothren and state Reps. Robin Smith and Todd Warner all had their residences and offices searched, according to David Boling, a spokesperson for the US attorney's office for the Middle District of Tennessee, [CBS reported](#). The FBI also searched the office of state Rep. Kent Calfee, [according to The Tennessean](#).

The exact scope of the investigation is unknown. Boling declined to provide any details on the raids, simply noting that none of them were related to the riots at the US Capitol on Wednesday. "I can only confirm the presence of FBI agents at these locations and cannot comment on the nature," [Boling told NBC News](#).

The state's current House speaker, Cameron Sexton, told reporters on Friday that the searches were part of an ongoing investigation related to Casada's former office.

"I have been, and I will continue to be in full cooperation with the authorities as their investigation continues," Sexton told reporters Friday, [WRCB-TV reported](#).

"This has been a trying week for our country, and this will be a difficult time for our state as well as we go down this road. Personally, these are our friends and colleagues of ours that we worked with for many years. It's important to remember that this is just the start of the investigation and the process, and not the end. Today does not necessarily imply guilt," Sexton added, [Fox News reported](#).

"On the advice of both Ethics and Legal Counsel, I am placing everyone that was subject to the execution of today's search warrants on administrative leave until further notice," Sexton continued.

[According to WMC-TV](#), Sexton has placed three state House employees, namely interim chief of staff Holt Whitt, legislative assistant Nadine Korby and legislative assistant Carol Simpson, on paid administrative leave until further notice.

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House Democrats to Charge Trump With 'Incitement to Insurrection' in New Impeachment Articles Monday  
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

The January 6 insurrection at the US Capitol building left five people dead, caused extensive property damage, sent lawmakers scrambling to safety, and had led to more than 100 arrests. More than 6,000 US National Guard soldiers have also been deployed to the Washington, DC, area to ensure order through the January 20 inauguration.

Articles of impeachment charging US President Donald Trump with high crimes and misdemeanors have been drafted by Reps. David Cicilline (D-RI), Ted Lieu (D-CA) and Jamie Raskin (D-MD) and are expected to be introduced in the US House of Representatives on Monday.

The motion will charge Trump with incitement to insurrection "by willfully inciting violence against the government of the United States," according to a draft of the articles supplied to NBC News on Friday.

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) [raised the call of impeachment](#) while the chaos was still unfolding at the Capitol on Wednesday. Since then, numerous other Democratic lawmakers have sounded off in support of the move.

"Donald J. Trump should be impeached by the House of Representatives & removed from office by the United States Senate," [Omar tweeted at the time](#). "We can't allow him to remain in office, it's a matter of preserving our Republic and we need to fulfill our oath."

However, [a top US federal prosecutor told reporters](#) on Friday that the Department of Justice would not be charging Trump with incitement to violence for the riotous storming and ransacking of the US Capitol by his supporters following a speech in which he encouraged them to "stop the steal."

The draft impeachment document notes that while Congress was convened to certify the Electoral College's votes for US president, Trump "addressed a crowd of his political supporters nearby. There, he reiterated false claims that 'we won this election, and we won it by a landslide.' He also willfully made statements that encouraged - and foreseeably resulted in - imminent lawless action at the Capitol."

"Incited by Trump, [a mob unlawfully breached the Capitol](#), injured law enforcement personnel, menaced members of Congress and the vice president, interfered with the Joint Session's solemn constitutional duty to certify the election results, and engaged in violent, deadly, destructive and seditious acts," the draft articles continue.

"Wherefore President Trump, by such conduct, has demonstrated that he will remain a threat to national security, democracy, and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office, and has acted in a manner grossly incompatible with self-governance and the rule of law. President Trump thus warrants impeachment and trial, removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States."

The January 6 insurrection [left five people dead](#), including one Capitol Police officer and one rioter whom an officer shot through the neck inside the building, and caused extensive damage to the building including smashed windows, doors and furniture, looting of items, and reportedly the smearing of feces in the corridors. More than 6,000 US National Guard troops have been

mobilized to restore order and will occupy the capital city and immediate environs through the January 20 inauguration of US President-elect Joe Biden.

Trump was previously impeached in December 2019 on two charges - abuse of power and obstruction of Congress - for his role in allegedly pushing the Ukrainian government to open an investigation into the business dealings of Biden's son, Hunter Biden, and his subsequent attempts to frustrate a congressional probing of the incident. [Trump was acquitted by a strongly Republican Senate](#) in February 2020.

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Trump Says Won't Be Silenced After Twitter Blocks His Account For Good  
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

After briefly blocking his use of their social media app earlier this week, Twitter permanently banned US President Donald Trump from the platform on Friday citing fears he could use it to incite followers to further acts of violence.

The social media giant announced on Friday that Trump's personal Twitter account would remain forever suspended after the company's Safety department conducted a thorough review of both the content of Trump's recent posts as well as how they were being received by other users.

As a follow-up, the company also suspended the Trump campaign's account, @TeamTrump. The Twitter account [associated with Trump's office, @POTUS](#), remains active, but the account is sparsely used and contains only official statements by his office.

"In the context of horrific events this week, we made it clear on Wednesday that additional violations of the Twitter Rules would potentially result in this very course of action. Our public interest framework exists to enable the public to hear from elected officials and world leaders directly. It is built on a principle that the people have a right to hold power to account in the open," [the company wrote on its blog on Friday](#).

"However, we made it clear going back years that these accounts are not above our rules entirely and cannot use Twitter to incite violence, among other things. We will continue to be transparent around our policies and their enforcement," the blog continues.

The post goes on to detail several of Trump's recent tweets, explaining how in the context of recent events, Trump's language amounts to "glorification of violence," which is against Twitter's rules.

Following the move, Trump said that he was looking at "building out our new platform in the near future". The president has heavily relied on this very social media platform to communicate with the public throughout his presidency, having garnered nearly 90 million followers on his account.

"We have been negotiating with various other sites, and will have a big announcement soon," he said, according to one of the screenshots.

The tweets were, however, swiftly deleted by Twitter.

According to Twitter, Trump's earlier tweet that his supporters have a "GIANT VOICE long into the future" and that "They will not be disrespected or treated unfairly in any way, shape or form!!!" is being interpreted as a further indication that he does not plan to facilitate an orderly transition.

Moreover, Twitter said they have seen plans for future armed protests have begun to circulate on and off Twitter, including a second attack on the US Capitol and state capitol building on January 17.

Additionally, Trump's earlier tweet that he will not be attending President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20 could reportedly serve as an encouragement to individuals potentially considering violent acts that the Inauguration would be a "safe" target since he will not be there.

#### Account Suspended After Wednesday Tweets

Twitter's decision comes after Trump's account was temporarily shut down on Wednesday until 12 hours after he deleted three posts [that Twitter described as "repeated](#) and severe violations of our Civic Integrity policy." The tweets seemed to glorify the violence that occurred earlier in the day at the US Capitol, where [throng of his supporters stormed the national legislature](#) in a bid to block certification of election results Trump has claimed are fraudulent.

Facebook did the same to Trump's accounts on both Instagram as well as its namesake platform.

"Future violations of the Twitter rules, including our Civic Integrity or Violent Threats policies, will result in permanent suspension of the @realDonaldTrump account," [Twitter Safety said at the time](#).

Trump deleted the tweets and his account was returned to his control on Thursday. However, the incident caused Twitter's share value to decline by 1.8% afterward, [although Barron's reported that was also](#) related to perceived poor user performance by stock traders that was unconnected to the events at the Capitol.

Five people died in the insurrection and hundreds have been arrested, while [thousands of National Guard troops](#) have been stationed in and around Washington, DC, to ensure a smooth transition of power from Trump to US President-elect Joe Biden on January 20. House Democrats have pledged to [open impeachment proceedings against Trump](#) for incitement to insurrection next week.

#### A Long-Icy Relationship

Trump's troubles with Twitter rules began in the Spring of 2020 when the company flagged two May 27 tweets of his claiming mail-in ballots are inherently fraudulent and that if their use were widespread in an election it would delegitimize that election. Twitter added an information button below his tweets saying "get the facts about mail-in ballots."

Trump criticized Twitter for trying to "silence conservative voices" with the fact-checking tab and accused the company of meddling in the 2020 election, [threatening to "strongly regulate](#) or close them down."

Then, just days later, after militant protests against police brutality and anti-Black racism exploded across the country, Trump's tweets were flagged again [for glorifying violence after he threatened protesters](#) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with the phrase "when the looting starts, the shooting starts."

"We've taken action in the interest of preventing others from being inspired to commit violent acts, but have kept the Tweet on Twitter because it is important that the public still be able to see the Tweet given its relevance to ongoing matters of public importance," Twitter added below his tweet, blocking the public from interacting with it on the platform.

Trump's tweets were flagged numerous times between then and November for everything [from containing "deepfake" videos](#) to "spreading misleading and potentially [harmful information related to COVID-19](#)." However, the frequency greatly increased around the time of the November 3, 2020, election.

#### Dispute Over 2020 Election Results

A few days before the election, [on October 27, Trump's tweet about alleged discrepancies](#) and problems with mail-in ballots got flagged by Twitter with the line: "Some or all of the content shared in this Tweet is disputed and might be misleading about how to participate in an election or another civic process."

The flag became [a regular appearance on the president's account](#) over the next two months as Trump refused to concede results of the election showing his Democratic rival, now-US President-elect Joe Biden, as the winner, and claimed the results were fabricated by Democratic conspirators in several key battleground states. His posts alleging failures in voting machines and other misdeeds earned him rebuke not only from Twitter, but from [his own Department of Justice](#) and [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#), both of which rejected his claims. In response to Twitter's moves, Trump again raised a call for Section 230 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to be revoked, which he also demanded during previous rebukes on social media. [The provision protects internet companies from liability](#) related to content hosted on their sites by third parties, meaning they don't have to edit the content on it. Trump maintained that if companies like Twitter and Facebook were going to do so, then they should be able to be held accountable for how they do it.

Trump attempted to get the removal added to the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, the Pentagon's colossal annual funding bill, but when lawmakers sent it to his desk without a provision for removing Section 230, he vetoed it. [Congress subsequently overrode his veto](#) in the opening days of 2021 - the first time in his four-year presidency he received such a rebuke.

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Chinese Air Force Releases First Glimpse of H-20 Stealth Bomber Design in Promotional Video by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

A recent promotional video for the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) teases a glimpse of China's forthcoming H-20 stealth bomber.

The recruitment video, which was posted to YouTube on Tuesday by an account identified by YouTube as belonging to China Central Television (CCTV), tells the tale of a young Chinese fighter pilot who dreams of glory in the skies.

Most of the video is computer-generated and focuses on the Chengdu J-20 stealth fighter, China's rough counterpart to the US F-22 Raptor fighter, but also includes appearances by

other Chinese fighter jets, like the J-10. One notable scene harkens back to the PLAAF's first military action during the Korean War, when Chinese soldiers formed the People's Volunteer Army under North Korean command and [the PLAAF's advanced new MiG-15s](#) faced off against American fighters.

However, at the very end, viewers are rewarded with a glimpse of a mysterious advanced aircraft hidden under a sheet. The full aircraft is not seen, and this image is also just a computer-generated one and not an actual image of a completed H-20. However, the tease, which includes a moment in which the nose is revealed as the sheet begins to pull away, suggests that earlier reports of the H-20 copying the "flying wing" design of the US' B-2 Spirit and forthcoming B-21 Raider stealth bombers were accurate.

What else can be told about the H-20 is speculation, but the contours of the aircraft under the computer-generated sheet suggest two engines, as the B-2 has.

The video's ending effectively picks up where another 2018 promo video left off - [a video that itself aped a 2015 commercial](#) by Northrop Grumman used to tease the B-21, for which official concept art has since been released but which also has not been seen assembled yet.

Real [views of both the H-20 and B-21](#) seem [likely sometime this year](#), according to past reports. Both planes will be long-range strike aircraft capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear bombs as well as cruise missiles.

China's only existing long-range bomber, the Xian H-6, is a heavily modified version of the Soviet 1960s-era Tu-16 Badger with only half the purported 5,000-mile range of the forthcoming H-20. However, the PLA has gotten significant mileage out of the H-6, adapting it for various roles including maritime patrol and the hauling of extra-large payloads, such as drones [and air-launched ballistic missiles](#).

Rumors have also swirled about a second stealth bomber in development in China, which has been provisionally dubbed the J/H-XX, but little is known about the aircraft.

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Pentagon to Deploy More National Guardsmen to DC After Insurrection Than During BLM Protests

by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

While the cost of repairing the extensive damage done to the interior and exterior of the US Capitol in the Wednesday insurrection is not yet tallied, the bill will ultimately be footed by taxpayers because the historic structure is uninsured.

In the wake of the violent insurrection by supporters of US President Donald Trump who stormed and ransacked the US Capitol building on Wednesday, the Pentagon has moved thousands of troops into the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. They will reportedly stay through the end of the month to ensure a peaceful transition of power.

On Thursday, [Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy told reporters](#) that by the end of the weekend, 6,200 National Guard troops will have been relocated to DC and parts of Maryland and Virginia around the capital city and will be staying for "no less than the next 30 days."

McCarthy noted that in addition to the entire DC National Guard, soldiers from Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and New York would be present. District of Columbia Mayor [Muriel Bowser confirmed the troops](#) would remain on the ground “through the inauguration” of US President-elect Joe Biden on January 20. She also extended the state of emergency declared on Wednesday for another 15 days, until January 21. By Friday, more than 850 troops had been stationed around the US Capitol building, around which they helped construct a 7-foot-high non-scalable fence similar to that [built around the White House](#) and Lafayette Park last June, when Black Lives Matter protests rocked the city. The January National Guard deployment is also more troops than were brought into the city last year, which [according to CNN](#) was roughly 5,000 guardsmen. However, Trump also personally ordered the deployment of [hundreds of federal police officers](#) to the city in addition to the regular DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officers, and the US Army stationed 1,600 active duty troops near Washington in addition to the guardsmen. Trump reportedly [wanted as many as 10,000 US troops](#) on the streets of the nation’s capital last June, but was advised against it by senior military and law officials.

On Thursday, the chief of US Capitol Police, [Steven Sund, tendered his resignation](#) after his force failed to prevent hundreds of Trump supporters from storming the national legislature the day prior. While the number of insurrectionists far exceeded the number of officers, [the Associated Press reported](#) that Sund had refused at least three offers from the Pentagon to buttress his defense of the Capitol with National Guardsmen in the days leading up to the riot. In late December, Bowser requested a small number of DC guardsmen be activated, but the roughly 340 troops present in DC on Wednesday were assigned to support roles with the MPD and had no jurisdiction to enter the Capitol grounds, [according to Military Times](#). Bowser’s requests for additional guardsmen during the height of the assault on the Capitol were reportedly delayed by the federal approval process for more than an hour.

After the failure of his supporters to halt the certification of election results by Congress that he had deemed fraudulent, [Trump denounced the insurrection](#) on Thursday and finally conceded his loss in the November 2020 vote, pledging himself to a peaceful transfer of power to “a new administration” on January 20.

The riot is widely seen as having been fanned by Trump’s explosive rhetoric, including encouraging his supporters to “stop the steal” by Democrats and that they “have to show strength.” However, the events of Wednesday only left him further isolated, as [US Vice President Mike Pence](#), central [Pentagon leaders and leading lawmakers](#) from his own party pledged to back a peaceful transition of power, and several administration officials resigned in disgust.

“Taxpayers will be on the hook for repairs to the Capitol,” Stephen Ellis, president of Taxpayers for Common Sense, [told Reuters, noting the building](#) and grounds are not insured. The cost of the damage, which includes broken windows and doors, broken furniture, stolen items, and even feces smeared on the walls, is not yet known.

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Biden Says Trump Not Fit to Serve as President, Accuses Him of Inciting Violence in DC

by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

US President-elect Joe Biden has denounced US President Donald Trump for the insurrection by his followers on Wednesday, accusing him of inciting the violence and saying he is unfit for the nation's highest office. Trump is due to step down in two weeks.

Speaking on Friday [from his transition headquarters](#) in Wilmington, Delaware, the 78-year-old president-elect called Trump "an embarrassment around the world."

"He is not fit to serve. He is one of the most incompetent presidents in the history of the US ... what 81 million people stood up and said [is] 'it's time for him to go,'" Biden said, referring to the total number of votes he received in the November 3, 2020, election that Trump has disputed. "He exceeded even my worst notions about him," Biden added. "He's been an embarrassment to the country."

However, he said there is still one thing he and Trump agree on: ["him not attending my inauguration."](#) However, Biden noted that US Vice President Mike Pence, who was not a party to Wednesday's violence, is still welcome to come. "We'll be honored to have him there and move forward with the transition," Biden said.

[Biden also reiterated his position](#) that the Trump supporters who stormed the US Capitol building and ransacked it in an attempt to halt Congress' certification of the 2020 election results are "domestic terrorists."

Concerning the calls for impeaching Trump, though, Biden said it is up to Congress to decide on the matter, while his three main priorities at this point and in the first days of his presidency are: containing the spread of COVID-19, vaccine distribution and facilitating the economic recovery. "What the Congress decides to do is for them to decide," Biden said.

Democrats Calling for Impeachment as Trump Concedes Election

Following the US Capitol siege on Wednesday as thousands of Trump supporters breached the complex forcing some lawmakers to hide in shelter, many Republicans reversed their earlier intentions to support the president's electoral challenge. At the same time, top Democratic lawmakers, including Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, have voiced efforts to oust Trump, either through invoking the 25th Amendment or initiating a procedure of impeachment.

The 25th Amendment allows for a temporary or permanent transfer of power from the US president to vice president if the majority of cabinet members certify to the congress that the president is unable to perform his duties. However, Vice President Mike Pence has reportedly opposed to the prospects of invoking the amendment.

On Friday, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) became the first GOP lawmaker to call on President Trump to resign in the wake of recent events.

"I want him to resign. I want him out. He has caused enough damage," she told the Anchorage Daily News.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo [also called on Trump on Friday](#) to step down or otherwise face impeachment.

The January 6 assault on the national legislature came immediately after a "Stop the Steal" rally hosted by Trump outside the White House at which Trump encouraged his supporters to take action to stop a fraudulent election result from going forward. US Capitol Police failed to stop the

crowds, which gained entry to the Capitol building but failed to stop the certification process, which resumed after they were cleared from the building.

Five people died because of the riot, including a Capitol Police officer and a female rioter who was shot by an officer.

While several Democratic lawmakers have [pledged to introduce articles of impeachment](#) against Trump for the incident next week, the Justice Department has declined to [press criminal charges against him](#) for incitement to violence.

According to NBC News, the newly drafted articles seek to oust Trump over "abuse of power" and "incitement of insurrection" charges.

On Thursday, Trump denounced the insurrectionists and called for their prosecution in a [video message posted on Twitter](#) in which he also finally conceded defeat to Biden. At the same time, he said that millions of his supporters would have "a giant voice long into the future."

"I continue to strongly believe that we must reform our election laws to verify the identity and eligibility of all voters and to ensure faith and confidence in all future elections," Trump said.

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US Justice Department Does Not Foresee Incitement Charges Against Trump Over Capitol Riots

by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

A top US federal prosecutor on Thursday remarked to reporters during a conference call that investigators had not fully ruled out the possibility of slapping US President Donald Trump with inciting violence charges after his repeated remarks at a Wednesday rally emboldened his supporters to storm the US Capitol.

Officials with the US Department of Justice announced Friday that they did not anticipate filing incitement charges against Trump or any other individuals who spoke at the "Stop the Steal" rally that was held hours before pro-Trump rioters made their way to the US Capitol.

The revelation was [declared via a conference call](#) with reporters by Ken Kohl, the acting principal assistant for the US attorney's office in Washington, DC.

"We don't expect any charges of that nature," Kohl said when asked during a phone briefing to elaborate on the possibility "that the president or the people who were on the stage with him at that rally could face potential charges related to inciting violence."

Kohl's clarification came after acting US Attorney for the District of Columbia Michael Sherwin [told reporters on Thursday](#) that the Justice Department was ready to file charges against "anyone who had a role" in the Wednesday riot. At the time, when asked whether charges would be extended to Trump, Sherwin stressed that investigators were eyeing "all actors."

Hours before the Capitol siege, Trump told supporters at the DC rally that he refused to concede the US election and called on the thousands of followers to keep fighting to prevent the election from being "stolen." At the time of Trump's bold remarks, congressional lawmakers were preparing to begin the certification of the Electoral College votes.

It wasn't too long after Trump's commentary that thousands of supporters eventually made their way to the US Capitol, breached security barriers and ransacked the federal building. Video footage of the scene shows rioters breaking down windows and doors, invading the offices of lawmakers and even taking with them congressional items.

A [Thursday statement from the US Capitol Police](#) noted over 50 officers had received injuries, and that rioters had attacked officers with metal pipes, chemical irritants and a variety of "other weapons."

At the height of the destruction, Trump issued a since-deleted video address via Twitter that called on supporters to leave the grounds; however, the message also continued to voice unsubstantiated claims that voter fraud caused Trump to lose his second bid for the White House.

It wasn't until hours later, after the National Guard and back-up police forces from neighboring jurisdictions arrived at the Capitol, that Trump [decided to condemn](#) the violent riots that had overtaken the Capitol. In a new address, Trump said rioters "defiled the seat of American democracy," and that moving forward, he would be focusing his attention on "ensuring a smooth, orderly and seamless transition of power" to the incoming administration of US President-elect Joe Biden.

Overall, the violent clashes between law enforcement officials and rioters prompted the deaths of at least five individuals, including [Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick](#).

In light of the siege and Trump's central role in encouraging supporters to prevent the theft of the election, multiple lawmakers have called for Trump to be removed from office either through impeachment proceedings or by invoking the 25th Amendment.

However, with US Vice President Mike Pence not on board with using the 25th Amendment to remove Trump, lawmakers have decided on drawing up impeachment proceedings, which would mark the second time that officials have done so during Trump's four years in the White House. The latest reports from Reuters indicate that at least one of the articles of impeachment against Trump related to the riots will be [introduced in the US House of Representatives on Monday](#).

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US Prosecutors to Initiate Murder Investigation Into Death of Capitol Police Officer - Report by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

Wednesday riots that saw the US Capitol overrun by unruly supporters of US President Donald Trump resulted in mass injuries to law enforcement officials - some severe enough to have prompted hospitalizations - and in the deaths of at least five people, including Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick.

Prosecutors in the US attorney's office in Washington, DC, have reportedly taken steps to open a federal murder investigation into the death of Sicknick, who died late Thursday after suffering fatal injuries during a clash with pro-Trump rioters who overtook the US Capitol earlier this week.

Citing three law enforcement sources, [ABC News reported](#) that the investigation will be aided by officials from the US Capitol Police. Reports previously emerged that Sicknick's death would be investigated by the homicide branch of the DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the Capitol Police and federal investigators.

A [statement from acting US Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen](#) revealed on Friday that a joint investigation would be initiated by the FBI and the MPD. "The Department of Justice will spare no resources in investigating and holding accountable those responsible," reads the release. Sicknick, a 42-year-old veteran who served in [Operation Desert Shield and Operation Enduring Freedom](#), died at approximately 9:30 p.m. local time on Thursday after succumbing to injuries he sustained "while physically engaging with protesters" at the US Capitol, [according to a release issued by the Capitol Police](#).

The notice adds that Sicknick was transported to a local area hospital after he had "returned to his division office and collapsed." Although it's unclear what specific injuries Sicknick sustained, the [New York Times reported](#) the officer was struck with a fire extinguisher during the Capitol siege.

According to the Times, Sicknick was only the fourth member of the Capitol Police to die in the line of duty since the force was founded on May 2, 1828, [at the direction of then-US President John Quincy Adams](#).

Overall, Sicknick's death is at least the fifth linked to the Capitol riots, which saw hundreds of Trump supporters break past police barricades on Wednesday and ransack the federal building as congressional lawmakers were in the middle of certifying the results of the Electoral College. Attempts to block the certification ultimately failed, as lawmakers later confirmed US President-elect Joe Biden as the winner of the 2020 election.

Aside from Sicknick, the four others who died included Ashli Babbitt, who was fatally shot in the neck while trying to jump through a shattered window near the House chamber, and Benjamin Phillips, Kevin Greeson and Rosanne Boyland - all three of whom died due to medical emergencies.

A [Thursday statement from the Capitol Police](#) notes that over 50 Capitol Police and MPD officers sustained injuries during the riots, with "several" Capitol Police officials "hospitalized with serious injuries." It also indicated that law enforcement officials were attacked with metal pipes, chemical irritants and a variety of "other weapons."

#### White House & Lawmakers React to Officer's Death

Following the announcement of Sicknick's death, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) ordered flags at the Capitol to be flown at half-staff to honor his 12-year service with the force.

"On behalf of the House of Representatives, I send our deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of Officer Brian Sicknick, who died after defending the Capitol complex and protecting those who serve and work here," [reads the statement](#) released by Pelosi's office.

"The perpetrators of Officer Sicknick's death must be brought to justice."

"The violent and deadly act of insurrection targeting the Capitol, our temple of American Democracy, and its workers was a profound tragedy and stain on our nation's history. But because of the heroism of our first responders and the determination of the Congress, we were not, and we will never be, diverted from our duty to the Constitution and the American people," Pelosi added.

[Dozens of lawmakers have filed statements lamenting Sicknick's death](#), including Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA), who called for Sicknick to [lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda](#).

Sidestepping the role Trump played in encouraging supporters to stop the election from being "stolen," White House Deputy Press Secretary Judd Deere [issued a statement](#) early Friday acknowledging Sicknick's death and offering condolences to the officer's family.

"Anytime a member of law enforcement dies in the line of duty it is a solemn reminder to us all that they run toward danger to maintain peace," he wrote.

Dismissals Prompted by Capitol Siege

Fallout regarding the riots have been swift, with [Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund](#) and both the [US House of Representatives](#)' and [US Senate's sergeants-at-arms](#) resigning from their posts in the wake of the massive security breach.

Capitol Police Union Chairman Gus Papathanasiou said in a statement obtained by ABC News that officers were "frustrated and demoralized by the lack of leadership."

"We have several protesters dead, multiple officers injured and the symbol of our Democracy, the US Capitol, desecrated," [Papathanasiou added](#). "This never should have happened."

The latest counts suggest that over 80 people have been arrested over their connection to the insurrection, [the Los Angeles Times reported](#), noting that the majority of the arrestees were charged for breaking the 6 p.m. curfew imposed on Wednesday by DC Mayor Muriel Bowser.

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Former Adviser Bolton Calls for Trump to Resign, Be Investigated on Inciting Capitol Riots  
by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

Since the Capitol riots on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump has been repeatedly slammed by officials for encouraging supporters to storm the federal building, where lawmakers were certifying the results of the 2020 election. Moments before the violent insurrection, Trump called on supporters to stop the US election from being "stolen."

Former national security adviser John Bolton remarked on Friday that Trump should resign from his presidential post, and that he should be investigated under sedition laws for inciting supporters to act out over the certification of the Electoral College results.

In an [interview with Channel 4 News journalist Matt Frei](#), Bolton indicated that the commander-in-chief should step down as president, although the former adviser acknowledged "there is absolutely zero chance" Trump will do so.

However, Bolton was neither thrilled with efforts to invoke the 25th Amendment nor moves to draw up impeachment articles against Trump - both measures that multiple congressional lawmakers have thrown their support behind.

"I think for those who advocate either invoking the 25th Amendment - for which this situation was not made - or impeachment, they have to be able to make the case that proceeding along either of those lines would make the situation for the next 12 days better than it is now, and I don't think they can make that case," he said.

Instead, Bolton hinted that officials should effectively let things play out until Inauguration Day.

"I'm not really all that concerned that he's going to do much in any sphere. I think we'd all be better if he got on Air Force One and flew to Florida and spent the next 12 days golfing," Bolton said, before adding, "I don't think we should overestimate the dangers here."

Earlier, Democrats and some Republicans came together and called for Trump to be removed through Section Four of the 25th Amendment, which would require US Vice President Mike Pence and the majority of Trump's Cabinet to agree Trump is unfit for office. But with Pence reportedly not supportive of the move, lawmakers have also focused efforts on starting impeachment proceedings for the second time.

[Reports emerged Friday](#) that articles of impeachment against Trump would be introduced in the US House of Representatives on Monday and charge the president with "willfully inciting violence against the government of the United States."

Although Bolton told Frei that Trump "should be investigated" for sedition, the likelihood is somewhat low, as Ken Kohl, the acting principal assistant for the US attorney's office in Washington, DC, revealed on Friday the US Department of Justice [would not be filing incitement charges against Trump](#) or any speakers present at the "Stop the Steal" rally held hours before the storming of the US Capitol.

'No Chance' Trump Will Run for Second Term

In his [sole statement condemning rioters](#) as individuals who "defiled the seat of American democracy," Trump also took the time to inform his "wonderful supporters" that their "incredible journey is only just beginning." The statement itself touched on past remarks by Trump that he might run again for a second term, more than likely during the 2024 presidential cycle.

However, according to Bolton, Trump may end up stepping away from the Oval Office for good. "Trump would like to keep it in the public mind that he would run again in 2024, but I think in fact there is ultimately no chance that he will do that because he doesn't want to lose again. And he knows he's lost," he said.

"He can claim it's stolen once, [but] you can't make that con twice."

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'Now He'll Be on Parler': Netizens Stunned as Twitter Permanently Suspends Trump  
by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

Earlier this week, in light of the role US President Donald Trump played in inciting the Capitol riots, several social media platforms including Twitter and Facebook blocked the president from accessing his accounts for violating company policies.

Moments after social media giant Twitter announced late Friday that Trump's personal account would remain permanently suspended, thousands of netizens were shook and left rejoicing the development.

[One user remarked](#) that the development was "like the Berlin Wall coming down, but for stupidity," whereas another netizen, [journalist David Begnaud](#), highlighted how Trump "still has the nuclear codes but no longer has a Twitter account ... because of his behavior."

However, others opted to look on the somewhat brighter side, explaining that the Twitter ban could prompt Trump to shuffle over to the microblogging, free speech-focused site Parler. It's worth noting that Parler is having some issues of its own, as Apple has threatened to ban the network for "failing to moderate incitements to violence and illegal activity," [according to the Wall Street Journal](#).

Both Google and Apple have been facing pressure to deplatform the network, with Apple [reportedly giving Parler 24 hours to moderate](#) its content or face expulsion from the iPhone maker's App Store. Google announced that it would be removing the app from its store until Parler moderates its platform.

— Noreen Delaney Gould (@noreen\_gould) [January 9, 2021](#)

Others, however, have noted that Trump still has the ability to rely on the good ol' system of White House news releases, which presidents have historically tapped to release information, as [CNN political correspondent Abby Philip noted](#) online.

There was also an ironical suggestion from a Daily Wire reporter that the president might rely on the national alert system to reach out to every American.

Twitter [explained that the ban was imposed](#) out of fear that Trump could use the platform to incite his nearly 90 million followers to commit additional acts of violence in the wake of the events that unfolded on Wednesday at the US Capitol.

Others are apparently going to miss some "iconic" moments with Trump on Twitter.

The company's first actions following the insurrection came in the form of a 12-hour ban of Trump on Wednesday. Both Facebook and Instagram took similar steps by imposing an indefinite ban on Trump's accounts until at least Inauguration Day.

Trump's senior aide, Donald Trump Jr., slammed Twitter's move as a representation of Orwell's 1984 that "we are living", adding that "big tech" is pursuing double standards in who they choose to censor.

Trump Jr. echoed concerns of other social media users fearing that if tech giants are free to suspend accounts of high-ranking officials, including the president himself, they can actually control to a large extent what is being said on the Internet.

Ex-secretary of state Hillary Clinton also reacted to the news, apparently glad that her rival in the 2016 election was suspended, as she retweeted her post of that year, in which she urged Trump to delete his Twitter account.

Tensions between Trump and the social media giants have remained high for several months as the president's posts were repeatedly either flagged or removed for violating company policies and spreading false claims about the US election. In fact, over the last month, Trump kicked up efforts to remove legal protections afforded to Twitter and Facebook under Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, to no avail.

At present, the official @POTUS Twitter account is still active, but it's unclear whether Trump will shift to using the account for his remaining 12 days in office. The account is not typically used by the president, and only shares official statements released by his office.

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Kudlow to Take Vacation, Not Quit Amid Trump Cabinet, Administration Resignations  
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Larry Kudlow, the director of the United States National Economic Council, and US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin have both committed to fulfilling the remainder of their terms with US President Donald Trump's administration.

As Trump administration resignations continue to roll in, Kudlow [revealed to The Hill](#) Friday that he intends to be in his office "a few days a week" and will even take vacation time during the remainder of Trump's presidency.

Kudlow, who went from television financial news host to White House economic adviser in 2018, [previously emphasized to CNBC](#) that he will not quit the administration.

The White House economic adviser is not the only official who intends to remain in their role, as [Fox Business reported](#) Friday afternoon that Mnuchin will also ride out his full term under Trump.

A source told the outlet that the outgoing US Treasury secretary is planning to focus on "important work" that needs to be completed in the administration's final days.

Mnuchin's announcement comes alongside [new figures from the US Department of Labor](#) which revealed American employers lost 140,000 positions in December. This report marked the first time US employers have shed jobs since April.

At the same time, the unemployment rate has remained at 6.7% and did not fall for the first time since April 2020.

Several Trump administration and even Cabinet officials, such as [Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao](#) and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, have announced resignations in connection with the January 6 riots that took place in Washington, DC.

Pro-Trump demonstrations contesting the results of the November presidential election devolved into violence that [claimed the lives of at least five individuals](#), including a Capitol Police officer [whose death is now being investigated](#) by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and DC's Metropolitan Police Department. At least 82 individuals have been arrested so far by authorities in connection with the incident, [the Los Angeles Times reported](#).

The US Department of Justice [claimed Friday](#) that it would not be pursuing incitement charges against Trump, while earlier, acting US Attorney for the District of Columbia Michael Sherwin told reporters he was not ruling out potentially charging the president in connection with inciting violence at the US Capitol.

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Video: US Rep Apologizes for Saying 'Hitler Was Right,' Says She's 'Passionately Pro-Israel'  
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Rep. Mary Miller (R-IL), who was sworn into office earlier this week, tweeted on Wednesday that her recent reference to German Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler had been misconstrued and was

actually a "denunciation of evil dictators' efforts to re-educate young people and similar efforts by left-wing radicals in our country today."

Miller took to Twitter Friday to apologize for invoking Hitler during a Tuesday speech to "Moms for America," in which she claimed, "Hitler was right on one thing. He said, whoever has the youth has the future."

"Each generation has the responsibility to teach and train the next generation. You know, if we win a few elections, we're still going to be losing unless we win the hearts and minds of our children. This is the battle. Hitler was right on one thing. He said, whoever has the youth has the future," Miller said in the speech, for which she had to apologize later.

"Earlier this week, I spoke to a group of mothers about the importance of faith and guarding our youth from destructive influences. I sincerely apologize for any harm my words caused and regret using a reference to one of the most evil dictators in history to illustrate the dangers that outside influences can have on our youth," she wrote in her [January 8 statement](#). "This dark history should never be repeated and parents should be proactive to instill what is good, true, right and noble into their children's hearts and minds. While some are trying to intentionally twist my words to mean something antithetical to my beliefs, let me be clear: I'm passionately pro-Israel and I will always be a strong advocate and ally of the Jewish community."

She concluded her statement by noting that she's been in contact with "Jewish leaders across the country" regarding the situation.

Miller's apology came after she appeared to double down on her statement via Twitter.

A day prior to the apology, Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) reposted footage of Miller's comments and called for the incoming congresswoman to "resign immediately."

"To say that Adolf Hitler, the perpetrator of the worst genocide in world history, is 'right' about anything is disqualifying for any supposed 'leader' serving in Congress," she tweeted.

[Democratic Illinois Governor JB Pritzker](#) and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum have also rebuked the incoming congresswoman's comments.

"The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum unequivocally condemns any leader trying to advance a position by claiming Adolf Hitler was 'right,'" the museum expressed in a [statement provided to The Hill](#). "Adolf Hitler's Germany plunged Europe into the most destructive event in human history, World War II and the Holocaust resulting in the genocide of six million European Jews."

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Twitter Says Trump Account Permanently Suspended Over Risk He May Incite Further Violence

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - Twitter has permanently suspended President Donald Trump's account due to concerns he may further use the platform to incite violence, the company said in a statement.

"After close review of recent Tweets from the @realDonaldTrump account and the the context around them we have permanently suspended the account due to the risk of further incitement of violence," Twitter said on Friday.

Twitter said Trump's earlier tweet that his supporters have a "GIANT VOICE long into the future" and that "They will not be disrespected or treated unfairly in any way, shape or form!!!" is being interpreted as further indication that he does not plan to facilitate an orderly transition.

Moreover, Twitter said they have seen plans for future armed protests have begun to circulate on and off Twitter, including a second attack on the US Capitol and state capitol building on January 17.

Trump's earlier tweet that he will not be attending President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20 may serve as encouragement to individuals potentially considering violent acts that the Inauguration would be a "safe" target since he will not be there.

Trump heavily relied on Twitter to communicate with the public throughout his presidency. He garnered nearly 90 million followers on his account.

Trump has been blamed for inciting thousands of Trump supporters to violently storm the Capitol building on Wednesday in a bid to prevent Congress from certifying the election results. He has used Twitter to claim the US elections are fraud, despite his many court loses challenging the votes, and to attack his political opponents.

The protesters attacked Capitol police with metal pipes, chemical irritants, and other weapons, and damaged property before seizing the rotunda and inauguration stage. The attack, which came after Trump urged his supporters in a rally to keep fighting to overturn the election results, marked the most significant breach of US capitol grounds since the British set fire to it in 1814.

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'Russian' Arrested at US Capitol Identified as Portland Resident of Moldovan Descent

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - A woman detained in connection with Wednesday's protests at the US Capitol whose request for a Russian-language interpreter sparked wild conspiracy theories, turned out to be 54-year-old Portland resident Evgenia Malimon of Moldovan descent, BuzzFeed reported.

Earlier on Friday, US media reported that one of the arrested protesters asked the Washington, DC Superior Court for a Russian-language interpreter, touching a firestorm, with some online users suggesting that the protests were in some way linked to Russian security and intelligence services.

The Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia (MPDC) confirmed to Sputnik that such a woman was among the detainees. According to the arrest list provided to Sputnik, Malimon was charged with violating curfew and trespassing.

The Portland, Oregon resident was detained along with her daughter, Kristina, 28. The younger Malimon is the vice-chairwoman the Young Republicans of Oregon and Moldovan native, according to her social media profile.

"Malimon speaks Russian, and she and her family have ties to Moldova, but there is no evidence to support the baseless claims of well - known conspiracy theorists that she and her mother are Russian citizens," BuzzFeed writes.

Malimon and five other people were stopped near the Capitol an hour past curfew, and detained after refusing to disperse despite repeated warnings from law enforcement, OregonLive.com reported, citing a police report.

The mother-daughter duo was released after receiving an entry ban to Washington, DC, local newspaper OPB said.

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**Health Canada Says Will Probe All Serious COVID-19 Vaccine Events Amid Florida Doc's Death**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - Canadian public health officials will investigate all serious complications resulting from coronavirus immunization, Health Canada told Sputnik following an inquiry about a Florida doctor who died after receiving the Pfizer vaccine against the disease just weeks earlier.

On Tuesday, Heidi Neckelmann said in a social media post that her husband Gregory Michael, an obstetrician at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida, died after receiving the vaccine on December 18. Neckelmann explained that Michael developed petechiae - round spots that appear on the skin as a result of bleeding - three days after receiving the vaccine and died of hemorrhagic stroke weeks later.

"Canada has a robust vaccine safety monitoring system in place and all serious events will be investigated," Health Canada's media relations department said on Friday in response to Sputnik's question about the 56-year-old doctor's case.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said in a statement on Wednesday that it is "aware" of Michael's death.

Pfizer, which developed the vaccine in conjunction with German biotechnology company, BioNTech, told USA Today that it is "actively investigating this case," although said that it did not believe the vaccine played a role in the Florida physician's death.

The latest data from Health Canada indicates that nine out of 115,072 individuals who have received the vaccine have exhibited an adverse reaction to the shot, including five who experienced severe side effects. There have been reports of fatalities following immunization in Israel and Switzerland, however, no links have been established between the death and the vaccination.

Pfizer was the first vaccine against the deadly disease approved by Canadian health regulators and the first dose was administered on December 14 to a personal support worker in a long-term care home in Toronto.

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Lawmaker From US State of W. Virginia Among Charged in US Capitol Riot - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - A lawmaker from the state of West Virginia and an protester from Arkansas pictured in US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office are among the more than 50 people already charged over Wednesday's unrest at the US Capitol, with more arrests coming throughout the United States, the US Department of Justice announced. The Justice Department disclosed in a statement on Friday the names of 13 suspects charged so far in federal court in the District of Columbia "related to crimes committed at the US Capitol in Washington, DC, on Wednesday."

Another "approximately 40 individuals have been arrested and charged in Superior Court with offenses including, but not limited to, unlawful entry, curfew violations, and firearms-related crimes," it said.

Among the arrestees is West Virginia legislator Derek Evans who recorded himself at the Capitol on Wednesday.

"He [Evans] is charged with entering a restricted area and entering the United States Capitol," First Assistant of US Attorneys Office for District of Columbia Ken Kohl told reporters during a phone briefing.

The authorities brought charges of "theft of public money, property, or records" against Richard Barnett of Arkansas, who allegedly entered a restricted area of Pelosi's office and was pictured sitting at her desk.

Lonnie Coffman of Alabama was charged with possession of an unregistered firearm or destructive device after "11 explosive devices known as Molotov cocktails" were allegedly found in his car, the Justice Department said.

On Wednesday, a group of Trump supporters entered the US Capitol on Wednesday to protest the lawmakers counting electors in the 2020 election, given their claim that electors from several US states are invalid. The protesters clashed with police, seized the inauguration stage and occupied the rotunda inside the Capitol building.

The development took place after Trump urged his supporters during a speech earlier to maintain support to rectify the results of the 2020 presidential election. Trump has claimed he won the election but victory was stolen from him via a massive voter fraud and acts of impropriety. US state and federal courts rejected more than 60 legal challenges the Trump campaign and the Republican party filed in an attempt to challenge the election result.

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No Information That Russian Citizens Among Arrested, Injured at US Capitol - Embassy

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - The Russian Embassy in the United States said in a statement that it has no information about any Russian citizens being arrested or injured in the unrest that recently took place at the US Capitol.

Earlier, media reported that one of the supporters of President Donald Trump, arrested on Wednesday, allegedly asked for a Russian interpreter.

"The Russian Embassy in the United States is closely monitoring the situation in the capital district. The embassy had asked the US Department of State regarding the presence of Russian citizens among the detained or injured. So far, no such cases have been reported," the statement said on Friday.

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Biden to Receive Second COVID-19 Vaccine Dose on Monday - Psaki

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US President-elect Joe Biden will receive the second dose of the coronavirus vaccine on January 11 in accordance with public health guidance, Biden-Harris transition team spokesperson Jen Psaki told reporters.

"On Monday the President-elect will receive his second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in keeping the CDC guidance. This will be 21 days after he received the first dose," Psaki said during a virtual press briefing on Friday.

Both Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will receive the vaccine publicly and in separate locations, Psaki added.

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Draft Article of Impeachment Accuses Trump of 'Incitement of Insurrection' - NBC News

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US lawmakers have drafted article of impeachment against President Donald Trump accusing him of inciting insurrection in the Capitol Hill riot, according to a copy of the document obtained by NBC News.

"Wherefore President Trump, by such conduct, has demonstrated that he will remain a threat to national security, democracy, and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office, and has acted in a manner grossly incompatible with self-governance and the rule of law. President Trump thus warrants impeachment and trial, removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust, or profit under the United States," said the draft document published on Friday.

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#### SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) -

#### US POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

\* The US House of Representatives could move to impeach President Donald Trump as early as next week if he is not removed from office for inciting this week's deadly violence at the Capitol, Assistant US House Speaker Katherine Clark said on Friday.

\* Impeaching President Donald Trump for inciting this week's deadly riots at the Capitol would only further divide the United States, House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy said.

\* The US Department of Justice does not expect to file charges related to incitement against President Donald Trump following the Capitol unrest, Assistant US Attorney Ken Kohl told reporters on Friday

\* US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a letter to Democratic lawmakers that she has spoken with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley to discuss preventing Trump from having access to the nuclear launch codes and from starting any military hostilities.

\* The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Washington Metropolitan Police Department will jointly probe the death of a US Capitol police officer from injuries sustained during the recent riots, Acting US Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen said.

#### SAILORS KIDNAPPED IN GULF OF GUINEA

\* Sailors kidnapped from the Agisilaos tanker in the Gulf of Guinea, including one Russian national, have been released from captivity, the Russian Embassy in Benin and Togo said Friday.

#### OIL MARKETS

\* Brent crude oil futures on Friday briefly traded above \$56 per barrel for the first time since last February.

#### US SANCTIONS IRAQI MILITIA LEADER

\* The US government has sanctioned Iraqi militia leader and former national security adviser Falih al-Fayyadh under the Magnitsky Act, saying he was guilty of serious human rights abuses, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said in a statement on Friday.

#### CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

\* The White House coronavirus task force believes another highly infectious variant of the coronavirus may have evolved in the United States, NBC News reported on Friday, citing a document that was sent out to US states.

\* The World Health Organization (WHO) expects to receive the full data from Russia's Gamaleya Institute on the Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine within the month so as to publish full recommendations for countries and organizations, Assistant Director-General Mariangela Simao.

\* The amount of coronavirus vaccine doses contracted by the European Union so far is enough to cover 380 million people, or 80 percent of the population, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

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#### Biden Says Has Great Confidence in Secret Service to Ensure Inauguration 'Goes Off Safely'

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US President-elect Joe Biden said on Friday that he was confident in the ability of the Secret Service to ensure his inauguration into office on January 20 will go off safely.

"I have great confidence in the Secret Service. I have great confidence in their ability to make sure that the inauguration goes off safely and goes off without a hitch," Biden said in a press conference.

Biden also said that President Donald Trump's decision to skip the inauguration is a positive development, "one of the few things" they had ever agreed on.

"He exceeded even my worst notions about him," Biden said. "He's been an embarrassment to the country."

When asked about Vice President Mike Pence, Biden said he is welcomed to attend the ceremony.

"We'll be honored to have him there and move forward with the transition," Biden said.

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#### White House Fears Another New COVID-19 Variant Evolved in US - Reports

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - The White House coronavirus task force believes another highly infectious variant of the coronavirus may have evolved in the United States, NBC News reported on Friday, citing a document that was sent out to all 50 US states.

The report said the new strain is already surging in US communities alongside the variant first detected in the United Kingdom, and could be 50 percent more transmissible.

The task force report sent to states on January 3 said aggressive mitigation measures are necessary to contain the spread of the new strain, such as strict social distancing and using effective face masks.

The report said few details were available about the US strain, including how long it may have been circulating in the United States. The report did not mention if the US strain is more lethal. The United States has reported more than 21.7 million coronavirus cases and 367,143 virus-related deaths since January 2020, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

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**Biden Says Trump Impeachment Matter for US Congress to Decide**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - Impeachment proceedings against US President Donald Trump, accused of inciting unrest at the US Capitol on Wednesday, is a matter for legislators to decide, President-elect Joe Biden told reporters on Friday.

A number of Democratic US lawmakers have said that articles of impeachment may be brought against Trump following Wednesday's events.

"What the Congress decides to do is for them to decide," Biden said.

Biden said that his three main priorities at this point and in the first days of his presidency are: containing the spread of COVID-19, vaccine distribution and facilitating the economic recovery. Biden's 306-232 Electoral College vote victory was certified in a late-night session of Congress after a group of Trump supporters entered Congress in a bid to protest the ceremonial count.

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**White House Fears Another New COVID-19 Variant Evolved in US - Reports**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - The White House coronavirus task force believes another highly infectious variant of the coronavirus may have evolved in the United States, NBC News reported on Friday, citing a document that was sent out to US states.

The report said the new strain is already surging in US communities alongside the variant first detected in the United Kingdom, and could be 50 percent more transmissible.

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**Health Canada Says Looking Into Death of Florida Doctor Who Received Pfizer Vaccine**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - Canadian public health officials are investigating the death of a Florida doctor who received the Pfizer vaccine against the novel coronavirus just weeks earlier, Health Canada told Sputnik on Friday.

On Tuesday, Heidi Neckelmann said in a social media post that her husband Gregory Michael, an obstetrician at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida, died after receiving the vaccine on December 18. Neckelmann explained that Michael developed petechiae - round spots that appear on the skin as a result of bleeding - three days after receiving the vaccine and died of hemorrhagic stroke weeks later.

"We're looking into this. Stay tuned," Health Canada's media relations department said in an email.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said in a statement on Wednesday that it is "aware" of the death of Michael.

Pfizer, which developed the vaccine in conjunction with German biotechnology company BioNTech, told USA Today that it is "actively investigating this case," although said that it did not believe that the vaccine played a role in the Florida physician's death.

The CDC has logged 21 cases where individuals experienced anaphylaxis - a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction that can occur after vaccination - after vaccination between December 14 and 23, according to a report made public on Wednesday. There have been reports of fatalities following immunization in Israel and Switzerland, however, no links have been established between the death and the vaccination.

Pfizer was the first vaccine against the deadly disease approved by Canadian health regulators and the first dose was administered on December 14 to a personal support worker in a long-term care home in Toronto.

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**Biden Says Will Introduce Immigration Bill Immediately After Taking Office**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US President-elect Joe Biden said during a press conference on Friday that he will introduce an immigration bill immediately upon taking office on January 20.

"I will introduce an immigration immediately," Biden told reporters.

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**Lawmaker From US State of W. Virginia Among Newly Charged in Capitol Riots - Justice Dept.**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - A lawmaker from West Virginia has been charged with illegally entering the Capitol Building, First Assistant of US Attorneys Office for District of Columbia Ken Kohl said in a conference call on Friday.

"I just received word that we have a now assigned complaint also against a delegate who serves in the West Virginia legislature," Kohl said. "He is charged with entering a restricted area and entering the United States Capitol. The Defendant's name is Derek Evans."

Kohl said there are 15 new indictments related to the Capitol Hill unrest, including charges against men who had firearms in their possession.

Thousands of Trump supporters violently stormed the Capitol building on Wednesday in a bid to prevent Congress from certifying the election results. The protesters attacked Capitol police with metal pipes, chemical irritants, and other weapons, and damaged property before seizing the rotunda and inauguration stage. The attack, which came after President Donald Trump urged his supporters to keep fighting to overturn the election results, marked the most significant breach of US capitol grounds since the British set fire to it in 1814.

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Ex-CIA Official Says Trump Could Be Removed to Avoid War With Iran

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump could be removed from office before President-elect Joe Biden's scheduled inauguration on January 20 to prevent the risk of him declaring war on Iran, former CIA official Philip Giraldi told Sputnik on Friday. Earlier in the day, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced she had discussed with US military chiefs precautions to ensure Trump cannot access launch codes to start a nuclear war. This came on the heels of the pro-Trump mob riots on capitol hill earlier this week that aimed to prevent congress from certifying the presidential election results.

"My concern is that he is unbalanced enough to start a war with Iran," Giraldi, head of the Council for the National Interest, said. "I think he is demonstrably mentally unbalanced and could be removed on that basis through the 25th amendment."

However, despite statements by Democratic House leaders that they were going to launch an impeachment process, Giraldi expressed skepticism that enough Republicans in the Senate would be willing to vote for any impeachment articles against Trump.

Giraldi explained that he did not believe the Democrats could establish a clear case that Trump had called for an insurrection.

"To impeach Trump they would have to demonstrate that his comments amount to a call for insurrection. I doubt if they can make that case unambiguously and few Republicans will support it in any event," he said.

Also, the launching of any new impeachment process against the president would further divide the country at a time when both Democrats and Republicans were calling on a united front to reduce partisan tensions and the threat of political violence, Giraldi noted.

"There is the political consideration which is that if the Democrats are successful that would make Trump a martyr, which is precisely what is not needed at the moment," he said. "Rioters, if they can be identified, will likely face minimal punishment as it is in everyone's interest politically speaking to make this go away."

Yet many questions remained open about the ease with which the rioters were able to storm the Capitol, Giraldi advised.

"The whole episode was disgusting and we will likely never learn of the connivances whereby the demonstrators were allowed to enter the building," he said.

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Pompeo Meets With Biden Nominee Blinken to Facilitate Orderly Transition - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met on Friday with his nominated successor Antony Blinken to discuss "an orderly transition" as Joe Biden's administration prepares to take helm, a senior State Department official told reporters. "Today, Secretary Michael R. Pompeo met with President-Elect Joe Biden's Secretary of State nominee, Antony Blinken, in order facilitate an orderly transition, and to ensure American interests are protected abroad," the official said. "Their meeting was very productive. Pompeo and Secretary-nominee Blinken, as well as their teams, will continue to work together on behalf of America throughout the transition."

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US Court Orders Russia's Osipova to Bring Her Kids to America or Face Jail Time - Attorney

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - Russian national Bogdana Osipova must bring her children back to the United States or will face a prison term as early as February, Assistant US Attorney Jason Hart said during a court hearing concerning replacement sentencing on Friday. Earlier on Friday, another US court conducted a separate hearing during which Osipova was ordered to bring her children back to her former husband Brian Mobley in the state of Kansas by February 24 or to appear in the prison on the charge of contempt of court.

US District Judge Eric Melgren sentenced Osipova to the term she already served.

Melgren also ordered Osipova to urge Russian authorities to allow her children leave the country. He granted attorneys petition to claim annulling her guardianship over children in Russia. He also called on Russian government to allow them enter the US.

Osipova repeatedly said that she can not force work upon Russian government decisions, but US court found these statements insincere.

In 2014, Osipova left the United States with her child without former husband Mobley's consent while she was pregnant with another child. Osipova was arrested upon returning to the United States in 2017 and sentenced to seven years in prison for child abduction and extortion.

In August, the Kansas Court of Appeals cleared Osipova of the extortion charges and ordered a revision of the verdict. Abduction of a child by one of the parents is punishable by a sentence of three years in prison - the amount of time Osipova already served.

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Incitement Charges Not Expected Against Trump Over US Capitol Unrest - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - The US Department of Justice does not expect to file charges related to incitement against President Donald Trump following the Capitol unrest, Assistant US Attorney Ken Kohl told reporters on Friday. "We don't expect any charges of that nature," Kohl said when asked during a phone briefing to elaborate on the possibility "that the President or the people who were on the stage with him at that rally could face potential charges related to inciting violence."

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Canada's WestJet Slashes 1,000 Jobs After Gov't. Introduced 'Rushed' Entry Requirements

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - Canadian air carrier WestJet is reducing its staff capacity by 1,000 positions after the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweaked entry requirements mandating negative COVID-19 tests in order to board an inbound flight, the company said in a statement on Friday.

The company will remove 30 percent of flights from its schedule for February and March - an 80 percent reduction year over year - after the federal government announced that all incoming airline passengers must present a negative COVID-19 test result administered no later than 72 hours prior to takeoff in order to be allowed to board the plane.

"As a result of the reduction in capacity, the equivalent of 1,000 employees across the WestJet Group of Companies will be impacted through a combination of furloughs, temporary layoffs, unpaid leaves and reduced hours," WestJet said in a press release, which called the new testing regime "rushed."

WestJet President and CEO Ed Sims called the government's travel policy "incoherent and inconsistent," saying that officials have had ten months to get the testing regime right. Sims' comments echo other industry leaders, including National Airlines Council of Canada President Mike McNaney, who said in an interview last week that the new directive has the industry flying blind, without guidance or information needed to implement an overly complex policy.

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Impeaching Trump Would Only Further Divide US People - House Republican Leader

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - Impeaching President Donald Trump for inciting this week's deadly riots at the Capitol would only further divide the United States, House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy said on Friday.

"Impeaching the President with just 12 days left will only divide our country more," McCarthy said in a statement.

McCarthy said he had already contacted President-elect Joe Biden and planned to discuss with him ways in which Republicans and Democrats could cooperate to reduce political passions and ensure constructive cooperation.

"I've reached out to President-elect Biden today & plan to speak to him about how we must work together to lower the temperature and unite the country to solve America's challenges. ... To deliver a better America, partisans of all must first unite as Americans and show our country that a peaceful transition of power has occurred," he said.

The task ahead for the next Congress and incoming Biden administration could not be more momentous. But to deliver a better America, partisans of all kinds must first unite as Americans, McCarthy said in his statement.

Trump supporters violently stormed the US Capitol on Wednesday in a bid to prevent Congress from certifying the election results. The attack came shortly after Trump urged his supporters to march on the Capitol and "fight much harder" to overturn the election results. Five people died as a result of the ensuing violence.

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### UN Estimates Some 2.3 Million People in Ethiopia's Tigray Need Urgent Aid - Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, January 8 (Sputnik) - The United Nations estimates that 2.3 million people in Ethiopia urgently require humanitarian assistance, a figure arrived at after the completion of assessment missions into previously inaccessible areas of the Tigray province, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a press briefing on Friday.

"We, along with our partners, have been able to access areas that have been previously inaccessible," Dujarric said. "We estimate that 2.3 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in Tigray, including 1.3 million additional people due to conflict, and over 950,000 people already there, including refugees."

Dujarric noted that the figures will likely change in the days ahead as further information becomes available, adding that access to most parts of North-Western, Eastern, and Central Tigray remains limited due to insecurity and bureaucratic hurdles.

The spokesman explained that the missions were not able to access two of the four refugee camps in the region. They also reported that localized fighting and insecurity has continued in rural areas around the cities of Mekelle, Shiraro and Shire.

The United Nations and humanitarian partners have earlier appealed for \$116.5 million to address the immediate needs of Ethiopia's vulnerable populations until January 31.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has also requested \$155.7 million to address the needs of 115,000 projected refugees by June.

The situation in Tigray has been volatile since early November when the Ethiopian federal government accused the Tigray People's Liberation Front - the province's ruling party - of attacking a local military base and launched a security operation.

According to the United Nations, at least 90,000 people have since been displaced, including 55,500 refugees who fled into neighboring Sudan.

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### US Sanctions Ex-Iraq National Security Adviser Under Magnitsky Act - Pompeo

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - The US government has sanctioned Iraqi militia leader and former national security adviser Falih al-Fayyadh under the Magnitsky Act, saying he was guilty of serious human rights abuses, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said in a statement on Friday.

"Today, the United States is designating Falih al-Fayyadh, Chairman of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Commission (PMC) and former National Security Advisor to the Iraqi Prime Minister, for his role in violence against Iraqi protesters in 2019," Pompeo said.

Al-Fayyadh is being designated under Executive Order 13818, which expands and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, the statement explained.

"Iran-aligned PMC forces continue to wage a murderous campaign against political activists in Iraq who are calling for free and fair elections, respect for human rights, and transparent and accountable governance. Many of these elements have established fictitious organizational cover names to hide their culpability for ongoing attacks," Pompeo said.

Al-Fayyadh was the head of the PMC when its forces fired live ammunition at protesters killing Iraqi civilians. He was also a member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Force Qods Force (IRGC-QF) supported crisis cell that included previously sanctioned militia leaders Qais al-Khazali and Hussein Falah al-Lami, Pompeo added.

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Guterres, UN Staff in New York Will Rely on National Authorities for Vaccine - Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, January 8 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will rely on New York City health authorities to receive the coronavirus vaccine, United Nations spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a press briefing on Friday.

"We plan to follow the protocols of our host city, of our host state," Dujarric said. "The staff that works in large duty stations like New York or Geneva or Vienna will rely on national health authorities for the vaccine."

Dujarric said that Guterres, 71, and other senior UN officials based in New York City will receive the vaccine when it is available for distribution to people of their age group.

According to New York's vaccine distribution plan, people aged 65 to 74 will be vaccinated during the third phase, which will likely begin in March-April. Currently, the city is vaccinating health care workers and nursing homes residents, and in mid-January will proceed with the second phase targeting education workers, first responders and people aged 75 and older. Dujarric also said that the UN chief has no objections to receiving the coronavirus vaccine publicly.

During a speech at the UN General Assembly in September, Russian President Vladimir Putin offered all UN employees to receive the Russian Sputnik V vaccine against coronavirus free of charge.

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#### **Aide to US Speaker Pelosi Says Laptop Stolen During Riots Was Only Used For Presentations**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - Rioters stole a laptop from US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office during this week's riot at the Capitol Building, but the machine was only used for presentations, Deputy Chief of Staff Drew Hammill said in a statement on Friday.

"A laptop from a conference room was stolen. It was a laptop that was only used for presentations," Hammill said via Twitter.

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#### **Pelosi Says Spoke to Military Chief About Preventing Trump From Accessing Nuclear Codes**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a letter to Democratic lawmakers on Friday that she has spoken with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley to discuss preventing President Donald Trump from having access to the nuclear launch codes and from starting any military hostilities.

"This morning, I spoke to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley to discuss available precautions for preventing an unstable president from initiating military hostilities or accessing the launch codes and ordering a nuclear strike," Pelosi said.

Pelosi also said that she and Senator Chuck Schumer called to Vice President Mike Pence to discuss invoking the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office, adding that they are waiting for his response.

Pelosi explained if Trump is not removed from office immediately, Congress will proceed with legislative action to remove him.

The speaker's letter to Miley comes after a group of Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol on Wednesday to protest the lawmakers counting electors in the 2020 election, given their claim that electors from several US states are invalid. The protesters clashed with police, seized the inauguration stage and occupied the rotunda inside the Capitol building.

The development took place after Trump urged his supporters during a speech earlier to maintain support to rectify the results of the 2020 presidential election. Trump has claimed he won the election but victory was stolen from him via a massive voter fraud and acts of impropriety. US state and federal courts rejected more than 60 legal challenges the Trump campaign and the Republican party filed in an attempt to challenge the election result.

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FBI, Police to Probe Death of Officer From Injuries During Capitol Riots- US Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and the Washington Metropolitan Police Department will jointly probe the death of a US Capitol police officer from injuries sustained during the recent riots, Acting US Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen said in a statement on Friday.

"The FBI and Metropolitan Police Department will jointly investigate the case and the Department of Justice will spare no resources in investigating and holding accountable those responsible," Rosen said.

Earlier in the day, the Capitol police confirmed that officer Brian Sicknick died from injuries sustained while on-duty. Sicknick was injured on January 6 while physically engaging with protesters.

A group of Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol on Wednesday to protest the lawmakers counting electors given their claim that electors from several US states are invalid. The protesters clashed with police, seized the inauguration stage and occupied the rotunda inside the Capitol building.

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### Over 30,000 People Flee CAR in Neighboring Countries Amid Election Violence - UNHCR

UNITED NATIONS, January 8 (Sputnik) - More than 30,000 people were forced to flee the Central African Republic (CAR) due to election-related violence, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesperson Boris Cheshirkov said in a press briefing on Friday. "The UN Refugee Agency is concerned that violence and insecurity surrounding the 27 December general election in the CAR has forced over 30,000 people to flee into neighboring Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Republic of Congo," Cheshirkov said.

The CAR held the presidential and legislative election on December 27. The week before the election was marked by violence between the forces backing incumbent President Faustin Archange Touadera and supporters of former President Francois Bozize.

Touadera won a second term, but the outcome of the election still needs to be certified by the republic's Constitutional Court.

Inside the country, 185,000 people have fled into the bush and forests since December 15, Cheshirkov said. Some 112,000 have since returned to their homes, but some 62,000 people remain displaced.

Over 24,000 crossed into the Democratic Republic of the Congo, nearly 4,400 arrived in Cameroon, a further 2,200 in Chad and about 70 in the Republic of the Congo.

The spokesman said that those displaced to the neighboring countries urgently require humanitarian assistance, including water, sanitation to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and shelter. The UNHCR in coordination with national and local authorities is providing support to the most vulnerable.

According to UNHCR, almost a quarter of CAR's population of 4.7 million was uprooted by the end of 2020.

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### Individual Arrested During US Capitol Riots Asked for Russian Interpreter - Reports

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - One of the pro-Trump supporters arrested at the US Capitol on Wednesday allegedly asked for a Russian interpreter, the Washington Post reported on Friday.

According to the report, 40 defendants were charged in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia with unlawful entry of public property.

The outlet claimed that an individual required the services of Russian interpreter while appearing before a judge and said, "I don't know what unlawful entry you are referring to."

A group of Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol on Wednesday in a bid to prevent Congress from certifying the election results they believe contain fraudulent elector slates. The situation developed shortly after Trump urged his supporters to march on Congress during the elector count. Five people died as a result of the ensuing violence.

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#### Trump Says Will Skip Biden's Inauguration on January 20

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump said on Friday that he will not attend his successor Joe Biden's inauguration later this month.

"To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the Inauguration on January 20th," Trump said via Twitter.

Trump will be the fourth president in US history not to attend a successor's inauguration and the first since 1869, according to media reports.

In the wake of the congressional certification of Biden's win marred by the unrest, Trump gave up efforts to rectify the election result after claiming victory was stolen from him and promised to focus on smooth transition in his final days in office.

Trump also told his supporters that "our incredible journey is just beginning."

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#### Canadian Economy Loses 63,000 Jobs in December - Statistics Agency

TORONTO, January 8 (Sputnik) - The Canadian economy shed 63,000 jobs in the month of December amid reintroduced lockdown measures across the country, the federal statistics agency said on Friday.

"Employment fell by 63,000 (-0.3 percent) in December - the first decline since April," Statistics Canada said in its monthly labor force survey.

The national unemployment rate ticked up to 8.6 percent, Statistics Canada said.

The agency noted that for the first time since the peak of the first wave of the pandemic in April both the labor force participation and the average number of hours worked declined.

Canada's economy remains in a precarious position with the number of coronavirus cases surging since the beginning of the fall and many jurisdictions either suspending reopening plans while others begin to implement new restrictive measures.

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**Biden Picks Ex-CIA Analyst Kendall-Taylor as Russia Director at NSC**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US President-elect Joe Biden picked former intelligence official Andrea Kendall-Taylor for the position Senior Director for Russia and Central Asia at the National Security Council, Biden's campaign announced in a statement on Friday.

"Andrea Kendall-Taylor is the Russia policy lead for the Biden-Harris Transition. She previously served as a senior intelligence officer both as Deputy National Intelligence Officer for Russia and Eurasia at the National Intelligence Council in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and a senior analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency," the statement said.

In the current NSC, Russia's portfolio falls under the purview of Senior Director for European and Russian affairs, a position held until recently by Ryan Tully.

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**Trump Promises His Voters 'Giant Voice Into Future'**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump said on Friday that millions of his supporters would have "a giant voice long into the future" after the incumbent gave up efforts to overturn his election defeat.

"The 75,000,000 great American Patriots who voted for me, AMERICA FIRST, and MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, will have a GIANT VOICE long into the future," Trump tweeted.

"They will not be disrespected or treated unfairly in any way, shape or form!!!"

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**Former White House Spokesperson Urges Trump to Consider Resigning**

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - Former White House Communications Director Alyssa Farah on Friday called on US President Donald Trump to consider resignation in the aftermath of the Capitol unrest and said she would never vote for her former employer.

In an interview with CNN, Farah explained that she decided to quit last December out of reluctance to assist Trump's refusal to concede and his bid to overturn the election defeat to President-elect Joe Biden.

"I think it's something he should seriously consider," Farah said when asked if she supports the idea of Trump's resignation. She agreed that she would feel safer if Vice President Mike Pence took over for the last days before Biden's January 20 inauguration.

Thousands of Trump supporters violently stormed the US Capitol on Wednesday in a bid to prevent Congress from certifying the election results. The attack came shortly after Trump urged his supporters to march on the Capitol and "fight much harder" to overturn the election results. Five people died as a result of the ensuing violence.

Since the incident, calls have been mounting for Pence and the cabinet to invoke the 25th amendment to remove Trump from office or initiate a congressional impeachment.

Farah said that she sees no need "to carry out the charade of an impeachment" given the number of days left before the inauguration. When asked if she would ever support Trump in another election, Farah replied "I wouldn't."

"And just candidly there is a lot that he did right, a lot in the 'America First' policy agenda that Republicans should hang on to," she said. "I want us to build us on the good of Donald Trump but in a moment that called for a leadership, that called for compassion ... quick judgment to save lives, he came up short, he didn't make the right call."

In the wake of the Capitol unrest and the congressional certification of Biden's win, Trump promised to cooperate with the orderly transition, but told supporters that "our incredible journey is just beginning."

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US House to Proceed With Impeachment Vote as Early as Next Week - Assistant Speaker

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) – The US House of Representatives could move to impeach President Donald Trump as early as next week if he is not removed from office for inciting this week's deadly violence at the Capitol, Assistant US House Speaker Katherine Clark said on Friday.

"We can use procedural tools to get articles of impeachment to the floor for a House vote quickly ... as early as mid-next-week," Clark told CNN in an interview.

Clark said the House would almost certainly take such steps if Vice President Mike Pence does not agree to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office.

The 25th Amendment allows for a temporary or permanent transfer of power from the US president to vice president if the majority of cabinet members certify to the congress that the president is unable to perform his duties.

Trump supporters violently stormed the US Capitol on Wednesday in a bid to prevent Congress from certifying the election results. The attack came shortly after Trump urged his supporters to march on the Capitol and "fight much harder" to overturn the election results. Five people died as a result of the ensuing violence.

**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.**

RPT: ANALYSIS - US Power-Transition Procedures Need Improvement But Only Cosmetic Changes Likely

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - The Constitution of the United States urgently needs reform to enable effective transfers of power, bipartisan cooperation and real progress to be achieved, but real change is almost impossible, analysts told Sputnik.

Thousands of Trump supporters violently stormed the US Capitol on Wednesday in a bid to prevent Congress from certifying President-elect Joe Biden's victory. The move came after Trump refused to concede over allegations of election fraud, which have yet to be proven, and called on supporters to keep fighting to reverse the results.

#### SYSTEM FROZEN

The protesters attacked Capitol police with metal pipes, chemical irritants, and other weapons, and damaged property before seizing the rotunda and inauguration stage. The attack, which came after Trump urged his supporters to keep fighting to overturn the election results, marked the most significant breach of US capitol grounds since the British set fire to it in 1814.

On Thursday, Trump in a video message said he was outraged by the violence at the US Capitol and was focused on ensuring a smooth transition of power to a new administration on January 20.

Constitutional historian Dan Lazare, author of "The Frozen Republic," said the dramatic events showed how broken the venerable more than 230-year-old political process was. Yet changing it was in practice impossible.

"The US system is badly broken, as [Wednesday's] events demonstrate beyond the slightest doubt," Lazare said. "Yes, power-transition procedures can, and should be, improved. But the Constitution places it out of reach."

The legal reason for the deadlock is the amending clause set forth in Article V, which requires a two-thirds majority in each house plus approval by three-fourths of the states for the Constitution to be altered in the slightest, Lazare pointed out.

"This means that just thirteen states representing as little as 4.4 percent of the population possess unchallengeable veto power. Since any such barrier is effectively insurmountable, the system is frozen and nothing can be done short of a few cosmetic changes here and there," he said.

As a result, the United States finds itself in a position that is historically unique and locked into unending stasis, incapable of political evolution, Lazare warned.

"Essentially, 'we the people' entered into a social contract with themselves in 1787-88, one that is now impossible to escape. Indeed, it's doubly impossible because the minorities required for a veto under the three-fourths rule have fallen by better than 50 percent since the republic's inception," he said.

As a result, the US political system is growing more rigid and change-averse rather than less making a violent breakdown eventually inevitable, Lazare stated.

"In effect, the United States is doomed to follow the same course as the French monarchy, the Russian empire, and other such entities, which is to grow ever more frozen until the structure shatters like glass. That's the long and the short of it," he said.

#### COMPROMISE BROKEN

Up to now, the arcane and obsolete Constitution had staggered along because both parties in the political elite had agreed to cooperate on the most essential procedures. But now, outgoing President Donald Trump had broken that fragile compromise, California State University Emeritus Professor of Politics Beau Grosscup explained.

"The process now is in essence 'an agreement among gentlemen' to cooperate, share information, work for the common good assuming political will by all parties. [However] both coming in and going out, Trump people have been an outlier of non-cooperation," he said. Establishment Republican and Democratic political leaders were now likely to join together to try and condemn and scapegoat Trump for the escalating crisis, Grosscup noted.

"I expect the blame to be put on him and his people's lack of political will and only tinkering with the process – [with] obligatory cooperation on 'national security' - if anything," he said.

#### IMPEACHMENT UNLIKELY

However, the new Senate was unlikely to be able to gather the two-thirds majority needed to impeach Trump if the House of Representatives once again passed impeachment articles against him, Grosscup cautioned.

Impeachment "could be rushed through, but not enough political will to do so. Trump still has sycophants in the Senate," he said.

Lazare agreed that a new impeachment process could be launched against Trump but was unlikely to succeed.

"Impeachment is theoretically possible since only a majority vote would be required in the House. But I doubt it would reach the two-thirds threshold required for conviction in the Senate," he said.

Grosscup also recommended that the people who stormed the Capitol building on Wednesday should be prosecuted. But he noted that the political impact of such measures would be minimal unless Trump was held directly accountable too.

"As for prosecuting the people who broke into the Capitol, yes, by all means, go for it. But it will be meaningless unless the instigator-in-chief is held to account," he said.

The rioters could now be charged with trespassing, destruction of government property for sure, resisting arrest and insurrection, but direct political charges would be avoided, Grosscup predicted.

"The government is very good at coming up with charges depending on the politics of the offenders. Given the right-wing politics here, terrorism is clearly off the table," he said.

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RPT: REVIEW - Trump Commits to Power Transition Amid Fallout From Capitol Hill Riots

WASHINGTON, January 8 (Sputnik) - US President Donald Trump said he was outraged by the violence on Capitol Hill and vowed to ensure a smooth transition in power after a slew of resignations from his administration while lawmakers and officials in both parties called for his removal.

On Wednesday, according to a police statement, thousands of Trump supporters violently stormed the US Capitol where they attacked officers with metal pipes, chemical irritants and other weapons. Many forced their way into the building in a bid to enter the House chamber. The protesters tried, but failed, to prevent Congress from certifying Democrat Joe Biden's presidential election victory.

The attack came after Trump in a fiery speech near the White House urged his supporters to keep fighting to overturn the outcome of the vote.

#### CALLS FOR REMOVAL/RESIGNATIONS

The riots, which marked the most significant breach of US capitol grounds since the British set fire to it in 1814, sparked a slew of resignations on Thursday along with calls for impeachment. Many called for top security officials to resign in light of the failure to prevent the violence. One woman was shot and killed by a police officer. In all, at least five people have died including a Capitol police officer in connection with Wednesday's unrest, CNN reported on Thursday.

US Capitol Hill Police Chief Steven Sund said he submitted his letter of resignation on Thursday, effective January 16, after a chorus of calls to step down by congressional leaders. This came after a number of other officials quit, including Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao. "Yesterday, our country experienced a traumatic and entirely avoidable event as supporters of the President stormed the Capitol building following a rally he addressed," Chou said in a letter to her colleagues. "As I'm sure is the case with many of you, it has deeply troubled me in a way that I cannot simply set aside. Today, I am announcing my resignation as US Secretary of Transportation, to take effect on Monday, January 11."

Others who have stepped down since Wednesday include Stephanie Grisham, former chief of staff to First Lady Melania Trump; Matt Pottinger, the deputy national security adviser; Sarah Matthews, deputy White House press secretary; Anna Cristina "Rickie" Niceta, social secretary at the White House; Ryan Tully, the National Security Council's senior director for European and Russian Affairs; Tyler Goodspeed, acting chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers; and John Costello, deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and security at the Commerce Department.

House Judiciary chairman Jerrod Nadler said he supports bringing impeachment charges against Trump immediately and removing him from office for inciting his supporters to attack the US Capitol.

Several lawmakers and officials, including Republicans, urged Vice President Mike Pence to invoke constitutional powers to have Trump removed.

"Donald Trump has flagrantly abused his power and tarnished the office he holds. Now he's incited bloodshed in the halls of your Capitol. We cannot endure this nightmare for a second longer," US Congressman Gerry Connolly said in a tweet on Thursday. "If his Cabinet won't exercise the 25th [Amendment to the Constitution], he must be impeached and removed from office."

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, a Republican, during a news conference said America would be better off if Trump resigned or was removed from office.

Acting US Attorney General Michael Sherwin said in a call with reporters that he does not rule out charging Trump with inciting a riot on Capitol Hill.

US Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, however, said impeachment or invoking the 25th amendment was not appropriate at this point.

#### SMOOTH TRANSITION

Trump in a video message on Thursday said he was outraged by the "violence, lawlessness and mayhem" that took place at the Capitol Building on Wednesday, adding that those who broke the law will "pay."

"A new administration will be inaugurated on January 20. My focus now turns to ensuring a smooth, orderly and seamless transition of power," Trump said in a pre-recorded video on Thursday.

Trump added that he still strongly believes the US election laws must be reformed to verify the identity and eligibility of all voters and to ensure confidence in future elections.

Trump told his supporters that their journey is just beginning, but did not give further details about the matter.

The president was criticized for not doing more to halt his supporters from stopping the violence. In a video message the day before, he told supporters to go home but in a tweet suggested the riots were a result of the fraudulent election.

Every US election security agency and Trump's own Justice Department have refuted the president's allegations of voter fraud. The Trump campaign and its allies also lost more than 60 court challenges to reverse the results, including before the Supreme Court.

#### CHARGES/REFORMS UNLIKELY

Some experts believe that changing the Constitution of the United States to enable effective transfers of power is necessary but practically impossible.

Constitutional historian Dan Lazare told Sputnik the amending clause set forth in Article V requires a two-thirds majority in each house plus approval by three-fourths of the states for the Constitution to be changed. As a result, the US political system is growing more rigid and change-averse rather than less making a violent breakdown eventually inevitable, Lazare said. "In effect, the United States is doomed to follow the same course as the French monarchy, the Russian empire, and other such entities, which is to grow ever more frozen until the structure shatters like glass. That's the long and the short of it," he said.

California State University Emeritus Professor of Politics Beau Grosscup thinks impeachment could be rushed through, but the new Senate was unlikely to be able to gather the two-thirds majority needed to impeach Trump if the House of Representatives once again passed impeachment articles against him.

Although some were calling for charges of sedition against the rioters, Grosscup found it unlikely. The rioters could now be charged with trespassing, destruction of government property for sure, resisting arrest and insurrection, but direct political charges would be avoided, Grosscup predicted.

"The government is very good at coming up with charges depending on the politics of the offenders. Given the right-wing politics here, terrorism is clearly off the table," Grosscup said.