

04/05/21 Monday

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.

Humans Were Apex Predators for Two Million Years, Study Suggests
by [Mary F.](#)

Apex predators, also commonly known as alpha predators, are predators at the top of the food chain that don't have any natural predators in their environments. Examples of apex predators include eagles, falcons, polar bears, lions, crocodiles and orcas.

A [study](#) recently published in the journal American Journal of Physical Anthropology by researchers at Tel Aviv University and Portugal's University of Minho suggests that humans were apex predators who only consumed the meat of large animals for about two million years. In fact, the study suggests that it was only after the extinction of larger animals and the decrease in animal food sources toward the end of the stone age about 85,000 years ago that humans began adding more vegetables to their diets and began to become farmers that domesticated both plants and animals.

To come to this conclusion, researchers analyzed genetics and physical characteristics attributed to humans from around 400 scientific papers focused on topics like genetics, metabolism, physiology and morphology.

For instance, the researchers evaluated the acidity of our stomachs and found that it is historically high, even for predators.

"Producing and maintaining strong acidity require large amounts of energy, and its existence is evidence for consuming animal products," [noted](#) one of the study's authors, Dr. Miki Ben-Dor. "Strong acidity provides protection from harmful bacteria found in meat, and prehistoric humans, hunting large animals whose meat sufficed for days or even weeks, often consumed old meat containing large quantities of bacteria, and thus needed to maintain a high level of acidity," he added.

The researchers also analyzed fat's structure in human cells and found that similarly to other predators, human fat is stored in a large number of fat cells. The opposite appears to be the case in omnivores that consume food of both plant and animal origin.

The researchers also referred to the human genome as evidence that humans were apex predators, with Ben-Dor noting that geneticists have found that "areas of the human genome were closed off to enable a fat-rich diet, while in chimpanzees, areas of the genome were opened to enable a sugar-rich diet."

The study of stable isotopes in the bones of prehistoric humans also appears to suggest that humans ate meat with a high fat content, mostly from large animals, the researchers noted.

"Most probably, like in current-day predators, hunting itself was a focal human activity throughout most of human evolution," Ben-Dor explained. "Other archaeological evidence — like the fact that specialized tools for obtaining and processing vegetable foods only appeared in the later stages of human evolution — also supports the centrality of large animals in the human diet, throughout most of human history."

"Archaeological evidence does not overlook the fact that stone-age humans also consumed plants. But according to the findings of this study plants only became a major component of the human diet toward the end of the era," Ben-Dor clarified.

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.

Watchdog Group Urges Major Companies to Cut Ties with Chamber of Commerce Over GOP Donations
by [Mary F.](#)

After hundreds of people, including former US president Donald Trump loyalists, stomped the US Capitol on January 6 in an attempt to overturn the 2020 election results, several organizations, including the US Chamber of Commerce, said it would halt political contributions to lawmakers who railed against the certification of Joe Biden's presidency.

This week, Accountable.US, a nonprofit that aims to expose government malfeasance, urged eight major companies, including Disney, Google and Pfizer, to dissociate from the US Chamber of Commerce, a business lobbying group, over its decision to reinitialize donations to Republicans who attempted to disrupt the electoral process and prevent Biden's victory.

According to the [nonprofit](#), the US Chamber of Commerce in January implemented a temporary pause to donations to 147 Republican members of Congress who voted against certifying the 2020 Electoral College results.

However, the organization in March "reversed course and announced it would be resuming political giving, even for those who voted against certifying the results of the US presidential election."

"While these companies and corporations may have publicly claimed to be forgoing political donations, their continued involvement with the US Chamber of Commerce is a direct contradiction to their supposed principled leadership," the nonprofit wrote in a report, urging 24 businesses, including Disney, Coca-Cola, Nike and Facebook to halt their involvement with the US Chamber of Commerce.

"We understand that Disney announced it has suspended its own political giving following the Capitol insurrection. Since the Chamber's stance directly conflicts with your own, we urge you to disassociate Disney from the US Chamber of Commerce. By continuing membership and financial support to the US Chamber, Disney is violating the spirit of the pledge you made following the insurrection," the nonprofit's president Kyle Herrig wrote in a letter obtained by The Hill.

However, in a statement last month, the US Chamber of Commerce defended its choice to not base its decisions to support members of Congress based on their votes against certifying the Electoral College results.

"We have never heard of [accountability.us](#) — they appear to be yet another partisan attack organization — but the Chamber's position on political giving was made after consultation with more than 100 members (as outlined in this memo)," a Chamber spokesperson said in an email to [The Hill](#).

"We do not believe it is appropriate to judge members of Congress solely based on their votes on the electoral certification. There is a meaningful difference between a member of Congress who voted no on the question of certifying the votes of certain states and those who engaged and continue to engage in repeated actions that undermine the legitimacy of our elections and institutions," Ashlee Rich Stephenson, Chamber senior political strategist, also noted in a statement to [The Hill](#).

The US Department of Justice (DoJ) is still working to bring charges against the rioters who stormed the Capitol in January. A [Politico](#) analysis released last week shows that almost a quarter of the more than 230 rioters publicly charged are facing misdemeanor charges.

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

Video: Hunter Biden Reveals He Used to Smoke Parmesan Cheese Because it Resembled Crack

by [Mary F.](#)

In a new memoir titled "Beautiful Things," Hunter Biden, the 51-year-old son of US President Joe Biden, details his experience with drug addiction, revealing that he has been in and out of rehab multiple times over the last two decades.

In a recent interview with CBS News, Hunter Biden admitted that he used to smoke parmesan cheese when he was addicted to crack cocaine because it resembled the drug.

"I spent more time on my hands and needs picking through rugs, smoking anything that even remotely resembled crack cocaine," Biden said on CBS Sunday Morning during an interview to promote his new memoir to be released on April 6. "I probably smoked more parmesan cheese than anyone."

During the interview, Hunter also revealed that his father tried to intervene after he started binge drinking vodka after his brother, Beau Biden, passed away in 2015 from brain cancer.

"He [Joe Biden] came to my apartment one time. And this was when he was still in office as vice president, and so he kind of ditched his Secret Service, figured out a way to get over to the house," Hunter revealed.

Biden's revelation was met with surprise by netizens, who were quick to judge Hunter's past choices.

This is not the first time Hunter has made headlines. In 2019, House Democrats alleged that former US president Donald Trump sought an illegal "quid pro quo" from Kiev by threatening to withhold military aid to pressure the country into opening an investigation into former US Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter's business dealings regarding Ukrainian energy company Burisma Holdings.

Hunter joined Burisma in 2014, while his father was serving as vice president under former US president Barack Obama. In 2019, Trump accused Biden, who was responsible for overseeing US political activities in Ukraine at the time, of using his son's position as board member to influence US foreign policy.

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.

Texas Governor Spurns Major League Baseball, Refuses Ceremonial Opening Pitch Over Georgia Boycott
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

In the wake of former US President Donald Trump's failed bid to overturn the results of the 2020 US presidential election, several states controlled by his Republican Party have moved to block measures making it easier for citizens to vote, claiming they encourage voter fraud.

In response to a decision by Major League Baseball (MLB) not to host its annual All-Star Game in Atlanta, Georgia, after that state passed a restrictive voting law, Texas Governor Greg Abbott has said he will no longer throw out the first pitch inaugurating the Texas Rangers' 2021 season. A similar bill to Georgia's is working its way through the Texas legislature, with Abbott's support. "I was looking forward to throwing out the first pitch at the Texas Rangers' home opening game until MLB adopted what has turned out to be a false narrative about Georgia's election law reforms," Abbott wrote on Twitter Monday morning. "It is shameful that America's pastime is being influenced by partisan politics."

The Rangers will play their first home game of the 2021 season on Monday afternoon against the Toronto Blue Jays at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas, between Dallas and Fort Worth. The opening ceremony was to have included Abbott alongside frontline "heroes" of the COVID-19 pandemic, including a teacher who has lost family members to the virus. According to [The Dallas Morning News](#), the teacher will now throw out the pitch to a health care worker. On Friday, MLB announced it was moving the Midsummer Classic all-star game from Atlanta to another city outside of Georgia as a protest against a [restrictive new voting bill](#) signed into law by Governor Brian Kemp. The law rolls back or limits many of the ways voters cast ballots in the 2020 elections and is seen by some as both an attack against the state's large black population, as well as a response to former US President Donald Trump, who urged Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" enough votes for him to win a ballot recount.

"All I want to do is this: I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have," Trump said in a December phone call to Raffensperger, according to an audio recording obtained by [The Washington Post](#). "There's nothing wrong with saying, you know, that you've recalculated." The Georgia law also comes in the wake of massive voter purges that have removed [hundreds of thousands](#) of names from Georgia voting lists in recent years thanks to a "use it or lose it" law that Kemp similarly cast as preventing voter fraud, but which critics denounced as [disproportionately affecting Black](#) voters.

In response to MLB's move and rising criticisms of the law by other US corporations, Trump [urged his supporters](#) to "boycott baseball and all of the woke companies that are interfering with free and fair elections." Trump has maintained that he won the November 2020 election against Biden, which was only called against him due to wide-ranging fraud by the Democrats. At its height, hundreds of people, including some of Trump's supporters [stormed the US Capitol](#) and temporarily dispersed Congress in a riotous, but ultimately doomed attempt to "stop the steal." Similar Texas Bill Has Abbott's Blessing

Last week, the Texas Senate passed its own version of the Georgia law protested by the MLB and [another similar law](#) passed last month in Iowa. The bill has Abbott's support, and he has pitched it as ensuring election security.

"Whether it's the unauthorized expansion of mail-in ballots or the unauthorized expansion of drive-thru voting, we must pass laws to prevent election officials from jeopardizing the election process," Abbott said at a [March press conference](#).

The state's Latino and black populations voted very strongly for US President Joe Biden, who didn't win Texas' electoral votes, but somewhat closed the gap on Trump's 9% victory margin in the 2016 US presidential election, when he faced off against Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton. An "election autopsy" by the Texas Democratic Party [obtained by ABC News](#) predicted that "with sufficient investment and ambition, Texas can be a reliably Democratic state in the next decade" due to its steadily changing demographics.

While MLB hasn't commented on the Texas bill, Fort Worth-based American Airlines has. "To make American's stance clear: We are strongly opposed to this bill and others like it. As a Texas-based business, we must stand up for the rights of our team members and customers who call Texas home, and honor the sacrifices made by generations of Americans to protect and expand the right to vote," the airline, which is the world's largest by fleet size, said in an [April 1 statement](#).

"Voting is the hallmark of our democracy, and is the foundation of our great country. We value the democratic process and believe every eligible American should be allowed to exercise their right to vote, no matter which political party or candidate they support."

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.

Several Charges Dropped Against Three Colorado BLM Protest Leaders, Still Face Over 13 Years in Jail
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

Three Aurora, Colorado, deputies have faced intense public scrutiny following the 2019 death of a young, unarmed black man in their custody, but so far the only charges filed by the district attorney have been against the activists who've led a mass movement demanding justice for the slain man, 23-year-old Elijah McClain.

On Sunday, the Arapahoe County District Attorney's Office moved to dismiss a slew of charges against three anti-racist activists - Terrance Roberts, Joel Northam, and Lillian House - including all 16 felony charges against them and several misdemeanors, according to the National Committee for Justice in Denver (NCJD) solidarity group.

According to [a Monday bulletin](#) by the committee, the misdemeanors in Arapahoe County could still land House and Northam in jail for four years and Roberts for one year. However, they still face a number of felony and misdemeanor charges in neighboring Adams County alongside another organizer, Eliza Lucero, that could carry prison terms of as high as 13.5 years.

"The dismissal of a large number of charges, including all felonies in Arapahoe County, is a significant step in the right direction, showing an acknowledgement from District Attorney John

Kellner's office that this case is unjustified," NCJD said. "The extremely serious charging of these peaceful protest leaders is widely understood as a political prosecution aimed at silencing the movement for justice for Elijah McClain."

"We continue to call on both prosecuting District Attorneys John Kellner and Brian Mason to drop ALL charges against the leaders of the peaceful protests for justice for Elijah McClain. While the charges were filed by their predecessors George Brauchler and Dave Young, any continuation of the criminal prosecution perpetuates this miscarriage of justice," the committee added.

According to [the Colorado Sentinel](#), House and Northam will be arraigned on their remaining charges in Arapahoe County on April 19, while they and Lucero will face their charges in Adams County on May 11. Another protester charged, Trey Quinn, will be arraigned in Adams County on April 27. Roberts is to appear in Arapahoe County on Tuesday and in Adams County on April 12.

[As Sputnik reported](#), late last month an Adams County judge threw out the steepest charges against House, Northam and Lucero - that of first-degree kidnapping - after a pretrial hearing failed to establish probable cause.

In a series of "[violent and sudden](#)" arrests spearheaded by a SWAT team, Colorado police arrested a total of six protesters in September 2020 in connection with protests over the summer that formed part of the nationwide protests against police brutality and anti-black racism. In particular, one July 3 demonstration saw several hundred protesters surround an Aurora police precinct for several hours; prosecutors attempted to argue the protest amounted to kidnapping of the 18 officers inside. At the hearing, lawyers for the activists successfully argued the police had sequestered themselves in the station without attempting to leave or to disperse the crowd, which eventually left when ordered to do so.

Rising Tide of Protest

The protest was just the latest in [a growing movement](#) demanding justice for McClain, who died in police custody on August 30, 2019. While he was walking home from a convenience store, a local resident reported McClain to the police, who confronted him and tackled him to the ground, pinning him until he lost consciousness. [Friends and relatives](#) have said McClain was a docile and non-confrontational person. After the officers told medics that McClain had been violent and was "definitely on something," they reportedly administered an oversized dose of ketamine sedative, causing him to suffer cardiac arrest and become brain-dead. McClain died in the hospital three days later.

No charges have been filed against the three officers who confronted McClain - Nathan Woodyard, Jason Rosenblatt and Randy Roedema - and a police investigation subsequently exonerated them. However, [an independent review](#) by the City of Aurora published in February found serious faults with the police probe, noting that "Aurora police and paramedics made substantial errors at nearly every stage of their interaction with Elijah McClain and the detectives tasked with investigating the incident that led to the 23-year-old's death stretched the truth to exonerate the officers involved."

Protests organized and supported by the Party for Socialism and Liberation, a revolutionary Marxist party of which House, Lucero and Northam are members, have helped put an international spotlight on the McClain case, the Aurora Police Department, and the community's demands for justice for McClain. A series of huge protests over the summer of 2020 saw

demonstrators shut down highways and lead the city's largest protest marches ever. Despite the arrest of several lead activists, who were held for more than a week in a COVID-invested jail despite a two-day maximum wait time for a bond hearing, the protests continued and only grew in strength.

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.

Cold War: US Army Taps Two Firms to Compete on Replacing Aging Arctic Snow Rover
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

Arctic sea routes are expected to become ice-free by the 2040s and many world powers are looking to the northerly sea route for trade, fishing, and oil drilling - but weighing the military concerns that come along with such competition.

The US Army is looking to replace its aging tracked snow vehicle, tapping two defense firms to build prototypes for the service. As the world braces for the consequences of an increasingly warming climate, the Pentagon has been looking toward the Arctic as a new theater in which to expand its patrols.

[Oshkosh Defense announced](#) Monday it had been selected by the National Advanced Mobility Consortium, a US government partner, to jointly develop a prototype vehicle to the Cold Weather All-Terrain Vehicle (CATV) competition with ST Engineering. The other firm competing against Oshkosh is BAE Systems, Tim Goddette, head of the Army's Combat Support & Combat Service Support program, [told Defense News](#).

Since the 1980s, the US military has relied on Swedish firm Hägglunds' Bandvagn 206 tracked articulated snowcrawler to navigate the colder parts of the globe, dubbing it the Small Unit Support Vehicle (SUSV). Although light enough to be airlifted and adaptive enough to be fitted out for a variety of different missions ranging from transport to anti-tank warfare, the SUSVs are out of production and have become increasingly hard to maintain - a problem plaguing other [legacy Pentagon equipment](#), too.

ST Engineering's Bronco 3 all-terrain tracked carrier, an articulated vehicle similar to the SUSV that's presently used by Singapore and Thailand and formerly by the British Army, is to be modified for the competition. The Bronco 3 previously [completed Arctic testing](#) in 2019, although the Army's demands exceed its previous uses.

"The new vehicle design will be built with the combined expertise of Oshkosh Defense and draws on the rich heritage of the Bronco family of vehicles, a proven, robust and versatile articulated platform which has been in operation since 2001," Lee Shiang Long, the chief of Land Systems at ST Engineering, said in the Monday release. The document notes they will deliver two models to the Army: one a General Purpose model that can be used for troop transport or casualty evacuation, and another Cargo model, although it notes the vehicle could also be used in a Command & Control configuration.

BAE has yet to issue its own press release on the contract, but since the company now owns Hägglunds, it stands to reason its Bandvagn S10 "Beowulf" all terrain armoured vehicle, tracked

and articulated like the Bandvagn 206 but considerably larger and newer, will serve as the basis for its entry.

According to Defense News, the prototypes must be delivered to the Army by June 14, at which point they will be sent to the Cold Regions Test Center at Fort Greely in central Alaska for testing until December. The prototypes will be judged based on payload, mobility, crush resistance, transportability, and how well they cope with amphibious demands, with the Army making the final decision by June 2022.

The Earth's polar regions have been getting increased attention from many nations as the warming global climate threatens to leave vast parts of the Arctic Ocean ice-free. Russia, which has more miles of coastline in the region than any other nation, has [emphasized the potential](#) of the Northern Sea Route, and China has explored fishing in the region and the opening of a ["Polar Silk Road"](#) as part of the Belt and Road infrastructure megaproject.

The US, too, has looked at expanding [offshore petroleum drilling](#) in the Arctic Ocean, but also placed a major focus on military operations in the region, including weighing conducting "freedom of navigation operations" ([FONOPS](#)) [against Russian](#) maritime claims, like those it presently performs in the South China Sea against Chinese and Vietnamese claims.

However, US policy thinkers have criticized the Pentagon's disjointed Arctic policy, with the hawkish Center for Strategic and International Studies [think tank claiming](#) last May that US Arctic strategy has "no coherence to it," apart from reacting to other nations' moves.

Last year was the first time in 40 years a US Navy warship entered [the Barents Sea](#), north of Scandinavia, and the Navy has looked at [renewing rights](#) to installations in the region. In January, the Pentagon said it intended to soon test the AGM-179A Joint Air-to-Ground Missile (JAGM), which was likely [used to assassinate](#) Iranian Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani outside Baghdad last year, in Arctic conditions.

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

Chinese, US Navies Hold Dueling Carrier Drills in Seas Off China's Coast
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

The US has stepped up its drills off China's coast in recent years, holding multiple carrier drills as well as maintaining a constant daily presence with spy planes and patrol aircraft. Washington has presented itself as a mediator in an ongoing dispute between China and several other nations, although the US has no territory in the region.

The US and Chinese navies are both holding aircraft carrier drills in the waters off China's coast as Washington postures as standing up to Beijing's "aggression."

On Sunday, the South China Sea Probing Initiative (SCSPI) [think tank reported](#) that the US Navy aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt had entered the South China Sea via the southern Strait of Malacca. That same day, [SCSPI reported](#) a US guided-missile destroyer, the USS Mustin, was sailing in the East China Sea close to the Yangtze River delta and the cities of Shanghai and Hangzhou.

Then on Monday, China's [Global Times reported](#) that the Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning had led a task force alongside the [Type 055 cruiser](#) Nanchang through the Miyako Strait and into the Philippine Sea before launching exercises east of Taiwan.

The two carrier strike groups are hundreds of miles apart, but the convergence of the two nations' naval forces highlights the growing tension in the region as the US doubles down on its diplomatic and ideological offensive to portray China as a threat to the global order.

Last week, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken flew to Europe to [press US allies](#) on the need to close ranks against China. In an interview given to Italian media, he said Washington's goal was "not to contain China or keep it down" but to "preserve the rules-based international order, in which we have all invested so much over the past 75 years, and which has served our interests and values well."

"When someone challenges this system, be it China or others – when they do not play by or respect the rules, or try to undermine the commitments made by others, we all have reason to object," Blinken said, accusing Beijing of "undermining this order, violating human rights and other commitments."

Under former US President Donald Trump, the US shifted its strategic focus away from the War on Terror and toward "great power competition" with Russia and China, in particular highlighting the danger posed by the latter, which could surpass the US economically in the next decade and has a population more than four times the size of the US. However, since US President Joe Biden took office in January, he has raised the ideological appeal against China even higher, accusing Beijing of [genocide in Xinjiang](#) on spurious grounds, of crushing democracy in Hong Kong, and of aggression against Taiwan.

Beijing has countered that all three issues are questions of [internal security](#) and not subject to the approval of the US or other world powers.

The US has also looked to its other partners in the region in an attempt to [win them away](#) from Chinese influence, including the Philippines, a nation that borders the South China Sea, has [large overlapping claims](#) with China over parts of the waterway, and houses thousands of US troops via a mutual defense treaty.

A showdown has developed between Manila and Beijing in recent days after Chinese fishing boats [crossed into waters](#) claimed by the Philippines. The government of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has claimed the vessels are part of [China's maritime militia](#), sent to "swarm" Filipino boats and stake out a claim for China over the nearby Whitsun Reef in the Spratly Islands, while Chinese authorities have said the boats are sheltering from stormy weather and have no militiamen aboard.

On Monday, Duterte's chief legal counsel, Salvador Panelo, warned Beijing that the boats' prolonged presence was unwelcome and risked hostilities that both countries would rather not pursue.

"We can negotiate on matters of mutual concern and benefit," he said, [according to Reuters](#), "but make no mistake about it - our sovereignty is non-negotiable."

Ben Schreer, a professor of strategic studies at Macquarie University in Sydney, told the [South China Morning Post](#) Monday that the US display of force was intended to show to Manila the US is a "reliable and capable treaty ally," adding that the Liaoning's drills are "a signal to Japan, the US and other powers in the region that the [Chinese navy] is gradually developing a carrier capability, though at present it's nowhere near" achieving this.

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.

McConnell Chides Private Sector for Acting as 'Woke Parallel Government' in Wake of GA Voting Bill
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Major League Baseball (MLB) Commissioner Rob Manfred drew criticism after announcing last week that the league "fundamentally supports voting rights" and will relocate the 2021 All-Star Game from Atlanta, Georgia, due to the state's passage of S.B. 202. Critics included former US President Donald Trump, who encouraged others to boycott MLB.

In a Monday memo, US Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) made loose reference to the recent [MLB decision](#) by proclaiming the US' "private sector must stop taking cues from the Outrage-Industrial Complex" engineered by "powerful and wealthy people."

He went on to assert "[p]lenty of Democrat-run states allow fewer days of early voting than the new Georgia law requires."

According to McConnell, Democrats, including US President Joe Biden, are weaponizing US history in reference to [S.B. 202](#). The bill, in part, calls for added ID requirements and shorter runoff election periods. It also bars non-poll workers from giving food or drink - including water - to those waiting in voting lines.

"The President has claimed repeatedly that state-level debates over voting procedures are worse than Jim Crow or 'Jim Crow on steroids,'" the Senate Minority Leader [wrote](#).

McConnell's statement comes a week after the Georgia chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People ([NAACP](#)) [filed](#) a complaint against Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and state election officials, arguing the new voting reform legislation is part of "a concerted effort to suppress the participation of Black voters." The complaint claims policies included in S.B. 202 violate the First, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, as well as Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

Furthermore, Biden and Sen. [Raphael Warnock](#) (D-GA), the first black US senator to represent Georgia, have both referred to S.B. 202 as a modern-day form of Jim Crow laws -- which impeded non-white voter registration and participation in US elections of the late 19th and 20th centuries.

"Nobody really thinks this current dispute comes anywhere near the horrific racist brutality of segregation," McConnell claimed on Monday. "But there's an old cynical saying that 'history is just the set of lies agreed upon.' And a host of powerful people and institutions apparently think they stand to benefit from parroting this big lie".

The Senate Minority Leader warned that corporations acting as a "woke parallel government" risk falling victim to "serious consequences if they become a vehicle for far-left mobs to hijack our country from outside the constitutional order."

Though former US President Barack [Obama applauded](#) the MLB for "taking a stand on behalf of voting rights for all citizens," Trump notably urged Americans to boycott the MLB and other "woke" businesses.

"Boycott baseball and all of the woke companies that are interfering with Free and Fair Elections. Are you listening Coke, Delta, and all!" [45 wrote](#).

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

Graphic Video: Ghanaian Authorities Launch Probe After Dozens of Dead Dolphins Wash Ashore
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Earlier this year, 111 dolphins washed ashore near Bazaruto Archipelago National Park in Mozambique. The country's environmental ministry issued a statement last month linking the beaching and subsequent deaths to low tides that were possibly triggered by cyclone Guambe. More than 60 dead dolphins have been found on the shores of several Ghanaian beaches in recent days, according to officials with the country's Environmental Protection Agency.

"Initial observation... showed no wound/lesions on their bodies... The colour of the sea and temperature are normal," Michael Arthur-Dadzie, executive director of Ghana's Fisheries Commission, said in a statement, as reported [by AFP](#).

A number of other fish species were found dead on the beaches as well. Samples have been taken to a laboratory for further examination.

Due to the explainable nature of the beachings, Ghanaian officials have issued a warning against eating dolphins and other recently-caught fish.

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

At the same, early reports from Ghanaian news outlet Graphic Online revealed that many of the mammals have allegedly already been taken from the beaches by individuals wishing to resell the dead animals' meat.

Some reports have suggested the dolphins are actually melon-headed whales, which belong to the oceanic dolphin family. That mammal is less commonly known as an electra dolphin. Similarly, more than 100 dead dolphins were found on the shores of Mozambique back in February.

While Ghanaian authorities are still investigating what led to the beachings, a [preliminary investigation](#) by Mozambique officials determined that foul play was unlikely, as there were "no signs of mutilation of the animals or contamination by visible hydrocarbons."

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.

DC Police Release Photo of Knife Wielded by Suspect in Deadly Capitol Attack
by [Evan Craighead](#)

On Friday, a 25-year-old suspect was fatally shot by Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officers after he rammed his car into a northern security barricade near the US Capitol building.

According to acting US Capitol Police (USCP) Chief Yogananda Pittman, the suspect was wielding a knife and lunged at USCP officers before shots were fired.

The MPD issued a release on Monday detailing that 25-year-old suspect Noah Green "intentionally" struck two officers during the attack around 1:00 p.m. local time on Friday. "The suspect exited the vehicle armed with a large knife and charged toward another United States Capitol Police Officer," the MPD issuance read. "The officer discharged their service weapon striking the suspect."

A photo of Green's weapon was included in the release.

Just after 1:00 pm, a suspect driving a blue sedan entered the north gate on Constitution Avenue and intentionally struck two on duty United States Capitol Police Officers with his vehicle. The suspect then rammed the vehicle into the blocking barricade. The suspect exited the vehicle armed with a large knife and charged toward another United States Capitol Police Officer. The officer discharged their service weapon striking the suspect. (April 2, 2021)

William "Billy" Evans, a 41-year-old, 18-year USCP veteran, succumbed to injuries after being taken to an area hospital on Friday. The other officer involved in the incident "was admitted to the hospital for serious but non-life threatening injuries, and was later released."

The ongoing investigation is being handled by detectives of the MPD's Homicide Branch and Internal Affairs Bureau, as well as USCP personnel and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A US official told the [Associated Press](#) on Saturday that investigators are still trying to pinpoint a possible motive, and have been focused on Green's mental health. Green's family reportedly told investigators that the 25-year-old experienced increasingly delusional thoughts prior to the April 2 incident.

Green's since-removed social media [posts](#) detailed that he experienced a number of issues in recent years, including the loss of his job "due to afflictions."

In one Instagram post, Green claimed he was the victim of multiple home break-ins, food poisonings, assaults, "operations in the hospital [and] mind control."

"I just ask that the public continue to keep U.S. Capitol Police and their families in your prayers," Pittman remarked last week, detailing that the department has been having an "extremely difficult" time since the deadly January 6 riot on Capitol Hill.

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.

Chevron's Bid to 'Weaponize the Law' in Donziger Case May Set Disastrous Precedent Against Activists

by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

After making every effort to not pay billions in damages, oil giant Chevron has focused its efforts on targeting the work of Steven Donziger, who played a pivotal role in highlighting the company's practices in the Amazon. If unchallenged, legal efforts to target the lawyer will set a new precedent against environmentalists, he told Sputnik.

Donziger, a lawyer, writer, former journalist and environmental advocate, told Radio Sputnik's [Political Misfits](#) on Friday that Chevron is setting a new standard in which companies can target

activists and environmentalists who dare take a stance against harmful practices carried out by powerful firms.

He told hosts Michelle Witte and Bob Schlehuder that Chevron is establishing a means in which companies can “weaponize the law as a tool of intimidation against other lawyers and campaigners who might want to take on this critically important environmental and human rights work.”

Donzinger came under Chevron’s radar after he joined a legal team in 1993 that was digging into various devastating reports of pollution that had emerged over the years in northern Ecuador, specifically in the Lago Agrio region, where the waterways were tapped as a drinking source for Indigenous communities.

Dating back to the early 1960s, Texaco, which was acquired by the Chevron Corporation in 2001, adopted practices that saw toxic waste freely dumped into the environment, a move that helped create a 1,700-square-mile area in the Lago Agrio region that has been dubbed the “Amazon Chernobyl.”

A [study](#) carried out by the Lago Agrio legal team determined that communities in the region had “significantly” high levels of stomach, liver, pancreas and skin cancers, among other reported health developments.

In an effort to fight back against the environmental injustice, Donzinger and company filed a class-action lawsuit to initiate clean-up efforts and to put in place health care practices for the thousands of inhabitants who had been affected by the oil pollution. By 2011, the team was granted a \$8 billion compensation ruling by the Ecuadorian courts, which was later reconfirmed with the Ecuadorian Supreme Court upping damages owed by Chevron to \$9.5 billion.

However, that success was short-lived as Chevron ultimately refused to cough up the funds, alleging that Dozinger’s team offered court officials a \$500,000 bribe so the rulings would go in their favor. By 2014, the case was [tossed back](#) to the US, where a court ruled the 2011 Ecuador judgement was obtained through corrupt means. Similar declarations were [made in 2016](#) and [again in 2018](#) by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

As a result of the ruling, Donzinger was made liable for millions of dollars in Chevron’s legal fees and the oil giant was granted a seizure of his laptop and cellphone, devices that both contained confidential information about his clients. Donzinger filed an appeal and was subsequently charged with a criminal contempt charge in August 2019 that led to his house arrest.

To date, Donzinger has spent over 600 days on house arrest, with motions for his release repeatedly proving unsuccessful. He is due to appear in court in May for the misdemeanor charge before Judge Loretta Preska, who previously appointed the law firm Seward & Kissel to prosecute the case.

Incidentally, both Preska and the selected law firm have ties to Chevron. Preska serves on the board of the Federalist Society, a pro-corporate organization of lawyers and judges whose donors include Chevron. As for Seward & Kessel, the law group has previously prosecuted cases for the oil giant.

Donzinger told Witte that the case “is in my view a politically-corporate motivated attack on me,” highlighting that “another bizarre feature is that I’m being prosecuted not by the government, I’m being prosecuted by a private law firm that has Chevron as a client.”

Prosecutors with the US Department of Justice had previously declined to take on Donzinger’s case.

"I'm being prosecuted by the Chevron law firm in the name of the government," he noted. "It's outrageous, it's illegal in my view. It's wrong and it's really frightening because it shows the degree in which the Chevrans of the world can arrest control of our federal judiciary - our prosecutorial apparatus - and go after their critics."

"We're in new territory and if they're allowed to get away with what they're doing to me this is the playbook they're going to use against every activist and lawyer that deals with climate change - issues that are vital to the survival of the planet," he stressed.

"Make no mistake, this work is integrally connected to the survival of the planet because if you can't hold big polluters like Chevron accountable, and trust me this is the worst oil pollution in the world and it was done deliberately... if you can't hold these companies accountable for these kinds of things... I fear for the survival of the planet."

While much of the affected region in Ecuador continues to deal with the remnants of the [severe oil pollution](#), Chevron has also been dealing with an oil spill that hit much closer to its headquarters in the US. Earlier this year, [reports surfaced](#) that about 600 gallons of oil spilled from the company's wharf in Richmond, California.

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.

US Supreme Court Rules Google Did Not Violate Copyright Rules in Oracle Dispute
by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

A recent ruling by the US Supreme Court has brought a decadeslong dispute between search engine giant Google and computer software company Oracle came to an end after justices overturned a federal circuit court's decision that favored Oracle. The dispute had been ongoing for over 10 years.

The US Supreme Court ruled on Monday that Google is in the clear and had not committed any copyright violations when it used multiple lines of software code to create its Android operating system, granting Big Tech a landmark declaration.

The high court's [6-2 ruling](#) ultimately determined that Google's use of more than 11,000 lines of coding that were copied from Oracle's Java application programming interface (API) were covered under the doctrine of fair use.

"We assume, for argument's sake, that the material was copyrightable. But we hold that the copying here at issue nonetheless constituted a fair use," Justice Stephen Breyer, who wrote the majority opinion in the ruling, noted. "Hence, Google's copying did not violate the copyright law."

"Google copied only what was needed to allow programmers to work in a different computing environment without discarding a portion of a familiar programming language," Breyer highlighted, noting that about 11,500 lines of code were copied by the tech giant.

Breyer further indicated that the company's purpose in copying the lines were to simply "create a different task-related system for a different computing environment (smartphones) and to create a platform - the Android platform - that would help achieve and popularize that objective."

“The record demonstrates numerous ways in which reimplementing an interface can further the development of computer programs. Google’s purpose was therefore consistent with that creative progress that is the basic constitutional objective of copyright itself,” he continued. The ruling was supported by Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh. Both Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito dissented. Justice Amy Coney Barret did not take part in the ruling since she was not confirmed by the US Senate until after the case was heard.

The Supreme Court’s opinion brought to a close a dispute that had been ongoing for more than a decade, and one that spanned three trials and two separate appeals, according to The Verge. In the dissent, which was written by Thomas, the pair of justices noted that the high court was creating an untenable distinction between implementing code and being able to declare it, explaining that “the result of this distorting analysis is an opinion that makes it difficult to imagine any circumstance in which declaring code will remain protected by copyright.”

“The court wrongly sidesteps the principal question that we were asked to answer: Is declaring code protected by copyright? I would hold that it is,” Thomas wrote. “The majority purports to save for another day the question whether declaring code is copyrightable. The only apparent reason for doing so is because the majority cannot square its fundamentally flawed fair-use analysis with a finding that declaring code is copyrightable,” Thomas added.

While Oracle [declared](#) the Monday ruling damaged the ability for other companies to compete, Google [hailed](#) the decision as a “big win for innovation, interoperability and computing.”

Following the decision, [CNBC reported](#) that Google would be moving to cease ties with Oracle’s finance software, instead opting to use services provided by SAP in May. However, it’s worth noting that the outlet did indicate the switch was not related to the Supreme Court ruling.

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.

‘Miscarriage of Justice’: Weinstein’s Defense Calls for New Trial in Appeal Against Rape Convictions

Last February, film producer Harvey Weinstein was convicted of rape and sexual assault against two women and sentenced to 23 years in prison. At that time, his defense attorney, Donna Rotunno argued Weinstein did not get a fair trial and deemed the sentence “obscene,” “obnoxious” and “cowardly.”

The Weinstein legal defense team [filed an appeal](#) on Monday in the New York Supreme Court in a bid to request a new trial for the disgraced Hollywood mogul, reiterating that his 2020 trial was unfair from the start.

In the Monday filing, lawyers argued the convicted sex offender was not judged based on who he is, but on how he was “cast in the press,” adding that his sentence was too harsh. “The trial court’s sentence reflects not on Mr. Weinstein, the man, and the conduct for which he was convicted, but on Mr. Weinstein the media villain,” reads the appeal.

Juda Engelmayer, the chief spokesperson for the Weinstein team, said in a [statement](#) obtained by the Los Angeles Times that the prosecution was influenced by the moral outrage over

“claimed sexual misbehavior of power men, special interest groups seeking to benefit off public fury, and sensational (often inaccurate or prejudice) media coverage.”

In a statement obtained by the Insider, Engelmayer stressed that Weinstein’s conviction was a “miscarriage of justice.”

Weinstein’s lawyers also allege in the appeal that a series of legal errors were made by New York Supreme Court Judge James Burke, who they believe made it impossible for Weinstein to receive a fair trial. The legal team also called into question the credibility of the [six women](#) who testified at his trial in 2020.

“Weinstein’s trial was overwhelmed by excessive, random and highly dubious prior bad act evidence, none of which shed light on disputed issues relevant to the charged offenses,” the appeal notes, adding that the numerous retelling of misconduct “served no legitimate evidentiary purpose but merely depicted Weinstein as loathsome.”

The lawyers go on to challenge Burke’s decision to limit the testimony of “false memory” expert Elizabeth Loftus and argued that prosecutors failed to disclose evidence that one of the accusers, Jessica Mann, continued to engage in a consensual relationship with Weinstein after the date of her alleged rape.

Additionally, the legal filing also argues possible bias of juror [Amanda Brainerd](#), who withheld information about a novel she had written involving the “sexual predation of older men,” underscoring that it raised the issue of a conflict of interest. Weinstein’s lawyers say that the Manhattan judge’s refusal to excuse the juror deprived the filmmaker of his right to a fair trial.

“This appeal is a window into my innocence and I hope that the truth becomes more clear once people read it,” Weinstein wrote in a [statement](#) issued from the Wende Correctional Facility, where he is currently being held.

Weinstein’s attorneys claim that the Miramax co-founder is deteriorating in prison, and will probably die if he remains there for the duration of his sentence.

Weinstein is still facing [sexual assault](#) charges in Los Angeles, California, where a hearing is scheduled for next month.

Lawyers further stated in their appeal brief that Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey’s office was responsible for “tainting” the New York trial by announcing the case against Weinstein the day before his jury selection began in Manhattan, explaining that the development had “only increased the media firestorm” and refusal to delay the trial was unfair to the defendant.

It is unclear how the appeal might affect the California-based Weinstein case since legal proceedings could suffer jury selection delays as a result of social distancing protocols implemented to curb the spread of COVID-19.

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.

US Justice Thomas Warns Big Tech Companies Should Be 'Regulated' in Twitter Ruling

In 2019, the 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals found that former US President Donald Trump violated the First Amendment when he blocked certain Twitter users. At the time, lawyers for the

blocked users argued the account was an official source of information about the government, and that blocking amounted to illegally silencing their speech.

US Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas on Monday dismissed a previous ruling from a three-judge panel, arguing that Twitter's January ban of Trump exposed the potential abuses of its legal protection.

Thomas specifically [criticized](#) Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, explaining in his ruling that the right to cut off one's speech "lies most powerfully in the hands of private digital platforms."

As Trump is no longer in office and Twitter has permanently banned him, the Supreme Court ruled that the case from the 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals should be tossed and dismissed as 'moot' or no longer active.

Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act is a decades-old law that protects technology companies from lawsuits and provides platforms wide range control over speech on their sites. Highlighting the amount of control Big Tech companies like Facebook and Google have over online marketplaces, Thomas compared the platforms to common carriers and warned they should be "regulated" in a manner similar to telephone companies.

"It changes nothing that these platforms are not the sole means for distributing speech or information. A person always could choose to avoid the toll bridge or train and instead swim the Charles River or hike the Oregon Trail," Thomas wrote in his decision. "But in assessing whether a company exercises substantial market power, what matters is whether the alternatives are comparable. For many of today's digital platforms, nothing is."

Mentioning names such as Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Thomas argued that while such tech platforms provide unprecedented amounts of opportunity for speech, it also concentrated control "of so much speech in the hands of a few private parties."

Daphne Keller, a former general counsel for Google, blasted Thomas' stance and [told NPR](#) that ignoring a long history of cases that have upheld platforms' First Amendment right to police troubling content is both "ignorant" and "intellectually dishonest."

Twitter's decision to ban Trump created a contentious [debate online](#) over the issue of freedom of speech and the power that private companies exerted in the situation where a sitting US president could be deplatformed.

This is not the first time Thomas has called on the government to review Section 230. In a [court order](#) from 2020, Thomas claimed that placing no limits on an internet company's discretion to take down material can in turn protect companies who "racially discriminate in removing content." At the time, Thomas cited the [court case](#) *Sikhs for Justice, Inc. v. Facebook Inc.*, in which the Sikhs for Justice company sued Facebook for blocking access to their page in India.

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.

US Judge Dismisses Lawsuit Accusing WHO of Gross Negligence Over Pandemic Response

Residents of a suburban New York City county sued the World Health Organization (WHO) in April of last year, accusing the health body of negligence over how it provided information to the public and responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

US District Judge Cathy Seibel dismissed a [class-action lawsuit](#) on Monday filed by seven New York-based plaintiffs who accused the WHO of gross negligence, declaring that the global health organization was immune under its own 1948 constitution and the International Organization Immunities Act.

The plaintiffs, including a New Rochelle doctor and six Mount Vernon residents from the state's Westchester County, sought damages from the organization over its failure to quickly declare a pandemic, monitor China's response to the original outbreak, provide treatment guidelines and coordinate global response.

The New York residents, who all contracted COVID-19, argued that the pandemic "likely could have been prevented" if the WHO had not been "complicit in the spread and normalization" of Chinese government "propaganda."

According to [Reuters](#), the judge rejected arguments that the alleged negligence voided the WHO from its immunity provided under its constitution and the aforementioned act, adding that the complaint "makes only the general and vague assertion that the WHO negligently failed to provide effective leadership and implementation of its core global functions under (International Health Regulations)."

Under the International Organization Immunities Act, public international organizations, such as the WHO, are entitled to enjoy privileges, exemptions and immunities as an international organization. In [article 67](#) of the WHO's constitution it states that the organization shall "enjoy in the territory of each member such privileges and immunities as may be necessary for the fulfillment of its objective and for the exercise of its functions."

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO has faced severe criticism over its early decisions, prompting even former US President Donald Trump to [withdraw](#) the United States as a member of the organization in May 2020. At the time, Trump remarked during a White House [briefing](#) that "China has total control over the World Health Organization."

However, the move has since been [halted](#) by US President Joe Biden.

Lawrence Gostin, a professor of global health law at Georgetown University and technical assistant to the WHO during early cases of the pandemic, [claimed](#) that "myself and other public health experts" were deceived "based on what the World Health Organization and China were saying."

In early February 2020, the WHO's director general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus [praised](#) the "transparency" of the Chinese response to early cases of the virus despite mounting evidence that Chinese officials had [silenced whistleblowers](#) and undercounted cases.

The WHO has often emphasized that "ensuring open lines of communications" is critical in efforts to control the outbreak of a disease. However, as stated by Yanzhong Huang, a senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations, there is a large concern over whether or not the WHO can "assume leadership effectively," and if the organization can be trusted to be a politically-neutral "guardian of global health."

China was not listed as a defendant in the New York case, and there have not yet been any comments from lawyers from either end. Westchester County became a hot spot during the start

of the COVID-19 pandemic, having had more than 121,500 cases and 2,200 deaths, according to [data cited](#) from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

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 - US Palestinian Group Urges Biden to Mend Relations With Russia - Chair

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN) has signed an appeal to President Joe Biden to mend relations with Russia in light of the organization's mission to oppose the United States' policies that threaten sovereign nations, USPCN National Chair Hatem Abudayyeh told Sputnik.

Last week, USPCN joined 26 like-minded pacifist and left-leaning groups in urging the Biden administration to stop participating in what they call are "reckless rhetorical exchanges" and instead vigorously pursue nuclear-arms negotiations with Russia.

"We speak strongly and loudly against the thuggery of US foreign and economic policy - whether that of the Trump Republicans or the Obama/Biden Democrats - and its direct threats against sovereign nations like Russia, China, Iran and others," Abudayyeh said. "We live in the belly of the beast. We recognize that there are other imperialist powers in the world, but the primary one is US imperialism, which wreaks havoc everywhere, including and especially in the Arab World," he added.

The United States and Russia reached a new low in their relations after Biden answered affirmatively to a question during an interview whether he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin is a killer and then threatened Putin will "pay a price." Russia responded by recalling its ambassador from Washington for consultations in a rare diplomatic gesture.

Abudayyeh said USPCN advocates for the rights of Palestinians in their homeland, but also participates in this US political discourse viewing itself as "part of the progressive movement for the transformation of our society here."

"We join in alliance with other oppressed peoples, which is how we fight for Black liberation with the Movement for Black Lives; for workers', women's, and immigrant rights; and for peace with real justice across the world," he said.

USPN has said it was founded in 2006 "as part of the broader Palestinian nation in exile and the homeland." The organization has chapters across the United States and advocates for the Palestinians' equality and self-determination, an end of the occupation of their land and the right of refugees to return to their homes.

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 - US Open to Talks With Russia on Ukraine, Urges Moscow Not to Escalate - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States is open to engage with Russia on Ukraine and calls on Moscow to refrain from escalating the situation on the border, a US State Department spokesperson told Sputnik.

"We are open to engagement with Moscow," the spokesperson said on Monday.

The spokesperson reiterated the United States' concerns with respect to the escalating situation in eastern Ukraine, referring to "credible reports" about alleged Russian troop movements near the border.

"These movements were preceded by violations of the July 2020 ceasefire that led to the deaths of four Ukrainian soldiers on March 26 and the wounding of two others," the spokesperson said.

"We call on Russia to refrain from escalatory actions."

Earlier on Monday, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said Moscow takes steps it considers necessary on its own territory.

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.

US Lawmakers Urge Biden Administration to Work With EU, UK on Whiskey Tariff Freeze

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - Fifty US lawmakers in a letter urged the Biden administration to work with the European Union and the United Kingdom to suspend their tariffs on American Whiskey.

"As the Biden Administration continues to work with the EU and UK on priority trade issues, we strongly urge that the Administration work with the EU and UK to secure the immediate suspension of tariffs on American Whiskey and secure agreements that result in the removal of all tariffs on US, EU, and UK distilled spirits and wine," the Congressman John Yarmuth, Andy Barr, and others said in the letter to US Trade Representative Katherine Tai on Monday.

The letter said EU and UK tariffs on American Whiskey tariffs are scheduled to increase from 25 percent to 50 percent on June 1. These tariffs were imposed on American Whiskey in response to the Trump administration's tariffs on steel and aluminum.

American Whiskey exports to European Union countries declined by 37 percent and to the United Kingdom by 53 percent, the letter said.

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.

World Bank Approves \$150Mln for Ecuador Coronavirus Vaccination Program - Statement

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The World Bank said in a release that it has authorized \$150 million for Ecuador for coronavirus vaccination of about 30 percent of its population and to track and evaluate vaccine distribution.

"The World Bank Board of Directors approved US\$150 million in additional financing for the COVID-19 Emergency Response Project in Ecuador," the release said on Monday. "With the

approved financing, the government expects to immunize approximately 30 percent of the population."

The World Bank noted that this is the first financial operation in Latin America and the Caribbean for coronavirus vaccines procurement.

The funds will also be used for the management of supply chains and logistics for vaccines storage and handling as well as for the purchase of personal protective equipment, the release said.

Ecuador has so far reached agreements on the deliveries of vaccines against the coronavirus with the companies of Pfizer, AstraZeneca, and Sinovac, as well as the COVAX international distribution initiative.

The country with a population of more than 17 million people is expected to vaccinate about 2 million of its citizens by May 20, according to the release.

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

Florida Environmental Agency Says No Second Breach at Phosphate Plant Reservoir

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The Florida Department of Environmental Protection said in a notice that there is no second breach at a former phosphate facility in Manatee County. Earlier in the day, a local public safety official said the US Army Corps of Engineers was assessing a potential second breach at the abandoned Piney Point fertilizer plant reservoir. "There have been news reports of a second area of seepage from the east wall of the NGS-South compartment at Piney Point. These reports are unsubstantiated," the agency said in a notice on Monday.

The notice said engineers and dam safety specialists from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, the Army Corps of Engineers and other engineers assessed the site of the potential second leak at the facility and determined the site was "safe to continue work."

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection continues to monitor the initial leak, the notice said.

At least 26 pumps are being used for water removal at the site of the leak and 10 vacuum trucks have also been deployed, the notice said. About 35 million gallons of water is being removed from the Piney Point reservoir each day, the notice said.

Water at the Piney Point site is not radioactive, but it has high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen, according to Florida authorities.

On Saturday, Florida Governor Ronald DeSantis announced a state of emergency in Manatee County after a breach was detected in the wall of a large pond at the Piney Point plant. Evacuation orders were issued as experts feared that the stacks of phosphogypsum - radioactive byproduct from manufacturing fertilizer - could collapse further, which could cause major flooding of nearby areas and spilling into the bay.

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.

Minneapolis Police Chief Says Officer Chauvin's Actions Not Part of Department's Policy

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) chief Medaria Arradondo testified in court that former officer Derek Chauvin's actions were not mandated by any policies in the department when he apprehended George Floyd prior to his death. "Clearly, when Mr. Floyd was no longer responsive - and even motionless - to continue to apply that level of force to a person prone out, handcuffed behind their back, that in no way, shape or form is anything that is set by policy, is not part of our training and is certainly not part of our ethics or values," Arradondo said on Monday. Arradondo agreed when asked in the court whether Chauvin had violated any MPD policies by not rendering help to George Floyd. Chauvin put his knee on Floyd's neck during the arrest prior to him dying and is charged with second- and third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. If found guilty Chauvin faces up to 40 years in prison. All officers, including Chauvin, involved in Floyd's arrest were fired by Arradondo within 24 hours.

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.

US Sanctions Turkey for 'Significant' Transaction With Russia - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States is imposing sanctions on Turkey's Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB) and four of its top managers over a significant transaction with Russia, the State Department said in a notice. "The Secretary of State [Antony Blinken] has... selected certain sanctions to be imposed upon SSB and Ismail Demir, SSB's president; Faruk Yigit, SSB's vice president; Serhat Gencoglu, SSB's Head of the Department of Air Defense and Space; and Mustafa Alper Deniz, Program Manager for SSB's Regional Air Defense Systems Directorate, pursuant to CAATSA," the notice said on Monday. The document, which is scheduled to be published in the federal register on Tuesday, added that Blinken determined that SSB "has knowingly engaged in a significant transaction with a person that is part of, or operates for or on behalf of, the defense or intelligence sectors of the Government of the Russian Federation." The filing made no mention of the acquisition by Turkey of the S-400 air defense systems in Russia.

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.

US Open to Talks With Russia on Ukraine, Urges Moscow Not to Escalate - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States is open to engage with Russia on Ukraine and calls on Moscow to refrain from escalating the situation on the border, a US State Department spokesperson told Sputnik.

"We are open to engagement with Moscow," the spokesperson said on Monday.

The spokesperson reiterated the United States' concerns with respect to the escalating situation in eastern Ukraine, referring to "credible reports" about alleged Russian troop movements near the border.

"These movements were preceded by violations of the July 2020 ceasefire that led to the deaths of four Ukrainian soldiers on March 26 and the wounding of two others," the spokesperson said.

"We call on Russia to refrain from escalatory actions."

Earlier on Monday, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said Moscow takes steps it considers necessary on its own territory.

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.

SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) -

US-RUSSIA RELATIONS

* The United States is closely monitoring Russia's military activities in the Arctic and is committed to protecting its interests in the region, Defense Department spokesperson John Kirby told reporters on Monday.

* The United States has asked Russia to provide an explanation of the reported movement of its forces in its border area, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said.

* Russia take the steps that it considers necessary on its own territory, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said, commenting on Washington's claims that Russia pulls troops closer to the border with Ukraine.

JCPOA TALKS IN VIENNA

* Russia expects the United States and Iran to start indirect talks on the restoration of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) after a meeting of the JCPOA's Joint Commission on Tuesday in Vienna, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said on Monday.

* The United States contemplates no unilateral concessions to Iran as it seeks to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement through multilateral diplomacy, US State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters ahead of the talks in Vienna.

* US Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley will lead the United States' delegation during the multilateral consultations on reviving the Iranian nuclear deal that are about to start in Austria, Price told reporters.

* Russia will make an effort to facilitate indirect contacts between Iran and the United States on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, told Sputnik.

PUTIN-FERNANDEZ TALKS

- * Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday called his Argentine counterpart, Alberto Fernandez, who is recovering from COVID-19, to wish him a speedy recovery, the Kremlin said.
- * Putin called Fernandez, who is recovering from COVID-19 to ask about his health, the press office of the Argentinian leader said.

CORONAVIRUS VACCINES

- * The first large batch of Russian EpiVacCorona vaccines against the coronavirus was sent to Russian regions on Monday, consumer rights watchdog Rospotrebnadzor said, adding that over 40 regions will receive more than 230,000 vaccine sets.
- * The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) announced it had agreed with India's Panacea Biotec to produce 100 million doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine against the coronavirus in India annually.
- * The United States will work with global partners on producing the novel coronavirus vaccines to be available for everyone around the world, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE DISPUTE

- * Russia will respond to Ukraine's new sanctions in such a way that it will be in line with national interests, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.
- * Russia poses no threat to any foreign country, including Ukraine, but it is mindful of its own security, Peskov said.
- * Uncontrollable skirmishes are taking place in the Donbas, and Ukrainian military commanders are making such decisions on the field without any restrictions from their superiors, while Kiev makes no real efforts to implement the Minsk agreements, Peskov said.

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.

Dow, S&P 500 Hit Record Highs as Wall Street Reacts to Strong US Jobs Report

NEW YORK, April 5 (Sputnik) - The Dow Jones Industrial Average and the S&P 500 hit record highs on Monday as stocks on Wall Street rallied strongly in response to the stellar US jobs report for March released last Friday.

The Dow, Wall Street's broadest stock indicator comprising mostly industrial stocks, closed up 373 points, or 1.1 percent, at 33,526, after hitting an all-time high at 33,618.

The S&P 500, which groups the top 500 stocks on the New York Stock Exchange, closed up 57 points, or 1.4 percent, at 4,077, after a record high of 4,084.

The technology-laden Nasdaq Composite Index closed up 225 points, or 1.7 percent, at 13,705. Nasdaq, which groups high-flying tech stocks such as Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix and Google, hit a high of 13,721 on the day, short of its February record high of 14,175.

Stocks rallied after the Labor Department reported on Friday that US employment expanded by 916,000 in March, far above the 660,000 forecast by economists.

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.

New 'Double Mutant' Coronavirus Variant From India Detected Near San Francisco - Reports

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The new coronavirus variant that emanates from India, dubbed as "double mutant," has been found in the San Francisco Bay Area by Stanford's Clinical Virology Laboratory, the New Mercury News reported on Monday.

According to the report, at least one confirmed and seven presumed cases of the Indian variant have been found after testing Stanford patients.

The new Indian variant is said to have two worrisome mutations in a key part of the virus that helps it latch onto cells, the report explained.

The report cited Dr. Ben Pinsky as saying the detected cases "demonstrate the rapid spread of this variant."

Earlier this month, India's health ministry said the authorities have detected a new coronavirus type with E484Q and L452R mutations in the S protein. The authorities say they suppose there is a link between the new variant and the 55 percent surge in the number of cases in India over the past week alone.

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.

Ex-USAID Chief to Lead American Global COVID-19 Response - Blinken

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced on Monday that the former administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Gayle Smith, will lead the American global COVID-19 response to ensure equal vaccines distribution across the world's most impoverished nations.

"As we get more confident in our vaccine supply... at home, we are exploring options to share more with other countries going forward," Blinken said in his remarks on the COVID-19 response. "We've got to make sure that we can better detect, prevent, prepare for and respond to future pandemics and other biological threats. This is a pivotal moment, a time for us to think big and act boldly, and the United States will rise to the challenge. I'm here today with a remarkable leader who will help us do just that."

Blinken pointed out the pandemic will not end in the United States until it is contained worldwide. To this aim, Washington with its partners are preparing to undertake an "unprecedented" global operation to deliver enough vaccines for everyone in the world - a task that will require intensive diplomacy, he said.

Smith, who helped lead the US response to the Ebola crisis in 2014, said she was ready to take on this responsibility.

"American leadership is desperately needed. And I'm extremely confident we can rise to the occasion," Smith stated.

The chief executive of the ONE Campaign that fights preventable diseases added that in her new role she will focus on shortening the lifespan of a "borderless pandemic" and ensuring the United States can detect, prevent, and respond to future global health threats.

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.

COVAX Delivered 32Mln Vaccine Doses to 70 Countries - Managing Director

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The World Health Organization's COVAX Facility for equal vaccine opportunity has delivered first round coronavirus doses to 70 countries, the head of the facility said on Monday.

"We have 32 million doses that have been delivered to 70 participating economies," COVAX Facility Managing Director Aurelia Nguyen said in a live-streamed discussion hosted by the International Monetary Fund.

Many poor countries are relying on COVAX, which was set up last year with GAVI, an alliance of vaccine partners, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, to get vaccines for the COVID-19.

The program is targeting to distribute 2.0 billion COVID-19 doses in an equitable way for 2021. Under the plan, poorer countries get doses for free and no country would vaccinate more than 20 percent of its people before another country had a similar opportunity.

But COVAX has also struggled to mobilize support needed from wealthy nations to subsidize its program. It has only secured orders for 1.07 billion doses so far, as wealthy provider nations have preferred to sign bilateral supply deals.

"So far, at COVAX, the approach we've taken is backing a very large number of vaccines and promising candidates," Nguyen said. "We have also secured agreements for more than 2 million doses for 2021, and at least one of those doses ... for the 92 lower-income economies, will be paid by donor funding."

Nyugen told the Financial Times in January that COVAX had "line of sight" on 1.97 billion vaccination doses and was on track to meet its goal of fair and equitable access to vaccines for developing countries. However, she declined to say how many doses would be delivered this year itself.

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.

US Palestinian Group Urges Biden to Mend Relations With Russia - Chair

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN) has signed an appeal to President Joe Biden to mend relations with Russia in light of the

organization's mission to oppose the United States' policies that threaten sovereign nations, USPCN National Chair Hatem Abudayyeh told Sputnik.

Last week, USPCN joined 26 like-minded pacifist and left-leaning groups in urging the Biden administration to stop participating in what they call are "reckless rhetorical exchanges" and instead vigorously pursue nuclear-arms negotiations with Russia.

"We speak strongly and loudly against the thuggery of US foreign and economic policy - whether that of the Trump Republicans or the Obama/Biden Democrats - and its direct threats against sovereign nations like Russia, China, Iran and others," Abudayyeh said. "We live in the belly of the beast. We recognize that there are other imperialist powers in the world, but the primary one is US imperialism, which wreaks havoc everywhere, including and especially in the Arab World," he added.

The United States and Russia reached a new low in their relations after Biden answered affirmatively to a question during an interview whether he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin is a killer and then threatened Putin will "pay a price." Russia responded by recalling its ambassador from Washington for consultations in a rare diplomatic gesture.

Abudayyeh said USPCN advocates for the rights of Palestinians in their homeland, but also participates in this US political discourse viewing itself as "part of the progressive movement for the transformation of our society here."

"We join in alliance with other oppressed peoples, which is how we fight for Black liberation with the Movement for Black Lives; for workers', women's, and immigrant rights; and for peace with real justice across the world," he said.

USPN has said it was founded in 2006 "as part of the broader Palestinian nation in exile and the homeland." The organization has chapters across the United States and advocates for the Palestinians' equality and self-determination, an end of the occupation of their land and the right of refugees to return to their homes.

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.

US to Work With Partners on Producing COVID-19 Vaccines for Global Supply - Blinken

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States will work with global partners on producing the novel coronavirus vaccines to be available for everyone around the world, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday.

"We'll work with global partners on manufacturing and supplies to ensure there'll be enough vaccines for everyone everywhere," Blinken said in a press conference.

Blinken said the Biden administration believes it will soon be in a position to share more COVID-19 vaccines with other countries.

The spread of the disease must be stopped around the world in order to guarantee Americans long-term safety, Blinken said, adding that the United States plays a critical role considering it has had the highest number of confirmed cases.

In addition, Blinken said the Biden administration will continue to push for a complete and transparent investigation into the origin of COVID-19.

Earlier in the day, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Rochelle Walensky said the agency has reported an increase in the number of people who have tested positive for the novel coronavirus and the number of hospitalizations for a fourth week. More than 165 million Americans have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the available vaccines and more than 57 million people have been fully vaccinated, according to the data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

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.

White House Says Monitoring Vaccine Distribution in Florida

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration is closely watching the COVID-19 vaccine allocation process in Florida amid reports the state's governor awarded a distribution deal to a political donor, White House spokesperson Jen Psaki told reporters on Monday. US media reported over the weekend that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis granted a vaccine distribution deal to the Publix supermarket chain just weeks after the company donated \$100,000 to his political action committee.

"We are not going to hurt the people of Florida just because of the steps or actions of leadership. We will continue to take actions to ensure that the vaccine is equitably distributed," Psaki said during press briefing.

Psaki expressed concerns that only 7 percent of vaccine doses in Florida went to Blacks while this group represents 17 percent of the entire state's population.

Both the governor and Publix refuted those allegations as irresponsible.

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.

US Closely Monitoring Russia's Activity in Arctic - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States is closely monitoring Russia's military activities in the Arctic and is committed to protecting its interests in the region, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters on Monday.

"Without getting into specific intelligence assessments, obviously, we are monitoring very closely. Nobody wants to see the Arctic as a region become militarized. We obviously recognize that the region is key terrain, it's vital to our homeland defense and a potential strategic corridor between the Indo-Pacific, Europe and homeland, which would make it vulnerable to expanded competition, if you will," Kirby said during a briefing.

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.

US to Work With Partners on Producing COVID-19 Vaccines for Global Supply - Blinken

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States will work with global partners on producing the novel coronavirus vaccines to be available for everyone around the world, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday.

"We'll work with global partners on manufacturing and supplies to ensure there'll be enough vaccines for everyone everywhere," Blinken said in a press conference.

Blinken said the Biden administration believes it will soon be in a position to share more COVID-19 vaccines with other countries.

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.

UPDATE 2 - US Has Asked Russia to Explain Reported Troop Movement in Border Area - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States has asked Russia to provide an explanation of the reported movement of its forces in its border area, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a press briefing on Monday.

"We are concerned by recent escalating Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, including the credible reports that have been emanating about Russian troop movements on Ukraine's borders and occupied Crimea. The movements were of course preceded by the violations of the mid-2020, the July 2020 ceasefire that led to the deaths of four Ukrainian soldiers last month... and the wounding of two other Ukrainian personnel," Price said.

The spokesperson also said "Russia's destabilizing actions undermine the deescalation intentions achieved through the OSCE brokered agreement of July of last year," adding that "We've asked Russia for an explanation of these provocations."

Price emphasized that the United States stands in support of Ukraine and is discussing the situation in the region with its NATO allies.

According to a spokesperson of the militia of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, at least one child was killed and a woman injured as a result of Ukraine's drone attack in Oleksandrivske on Saturday.

A man was hospitalized for sustaining shrapnel wounds after an explosive device dropped from a drone by Ukrainian forces detonated in the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic (LPR), the LPR forces said on Sunday.

After the attacks, Russian lower house Speaker Viacheslav Volodin suggested that it is time to expel Ukraine from the Council of Europe.

Despite the Minsk peace agreements, ceasefire violations continue in the Donbas region, where the Ukrainian military launched a special operation against the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics in 2014. According to UN data, about 13,000 people have fallen victim to the Donbas conflict.

On Friday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the current situation on the contact line in Donbas is "frightening" amid many provocations made by the Ukraine military. Peskov said Russia is taking measures to ensure the security of its borders amid the increased NATO activity, which obliges Moscow to be on alert. Russia does not threaten anyone but it moves troops on its territory as it wishes, he added.

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

US Looking Into Reports of Massacres by Ethiopian Forces in Tigray - State Dept.
WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States is looking into reports of massacres by Ethiopian forces in the Tigray region, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a press briefing on Monday.
When asked about the videos verified by Amnesty International, CNN and BBC, who claimed they shown a massacre by Ethiopian forces in Tigray, Price said, "We are, of course, looking into these reports."
Price pointed out that the US government has taken close note of the reports and will continue to pay close attention.
The spokesperson also said the United States is gravely concerned by the reports of human rights violations, abuses and atrocities in the Tigray region.
"We strongly condemn the killings, the forced removals, the sexual assaults, the other human rights abuses that multiple organizations have reported," Price added.

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

US Has Asked Russia to Explain Reported Troop Movement in Border Area - State Dept.
WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States has asked Russia to provide an explanation of the reported movement of its forces in its border area, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a press briefing on Monday.
"We are concerned by recent escalating Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, including the credible reports that have been emanating about Russian troop movements on Ukraine's borders and occupied Crimea. The movements were of course preceded by the violations of the mid-2020, the July 2020 ceasefire that led to the deaths of four Ukrainian soldiers last month... and the wounding of two other Ukrainian personnel," Price said.
The spokesperson also said "Russia's destabilizing actions undermine the deescalation intentions achieved through the OSCE brokered agreement of July of last year," adding that "We've asked Russia for an explanation of these provocations."
Price emphasized that the United States stands in support of Ukraine and is discussing the situation in the region with its NATO allies.

According to a spokesperson of the militia of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, at least one child was killed and a woman injured as a result of Ukraine's drone attack in Oleksandrivske on Saturday.

A man was hospitalized for sustaining shrapnel wounds after an explosive device dropped from a drone by Ukrainian forces detonated in the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic (LPR), the LPR forces said on Sunday.

After the attacks, Russian lower house Speaker Viacheslav Volodin suggested that it is time to expel Ukraine from the Council of Europe.

Despite the Minsk peace agreements, ceasefire violations continue in the Donbas region, where the Ukrainian military launched a special operation against the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics in 2014. According to UN data, about 13,000 people have fallen victim to the Donbas conflict.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday that the current situation on the contact line in Donbas is "frightening" amid many provocations made by the Ukraine military.

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.

US Border Patrol Says Arrested 2 Yemeni Men on Previously Placed on Terrorism Watch List

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents recently apprehended two Yemeni men on the southern border who are on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's terrorism watch list, the agency said on Monday.

"US Border Patrol agents assigned to the El Centro Sector arrested two Yemeni men within the last 2 months that were identified on a terrorism watch list," the agency said in a press release. One of the Yemeni nationals was apprehended on January 29 for illegally entering the United States through the US border with Mexico, the release said. Border Patrol agents pointed out the 33-year-old Yemeni man was on the FBI's terrorism watch list as well as on a no-fly list, the release said.

In addition, the release said the man had a cellular phone sim card hidden underneath the insole of his shoe.

The second Yemeni national was apprehended on March 30 for illegally entering the United States through the southern border, the release said. Border Patrol agents found that the 26-year-old man was also on the FBI's terrorism watch list and the no-fly list, the release added. Both men are currently in federal custody, according to the release.

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

Special Envoy for Iran to Lead US Delegation at JCPOA Talks in Vienna - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - US Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley will lead the United States' delegation at the multilateral consultations on reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement - formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - that are about to start in Vienna, Austria, State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters on Monday.

"I can confirm that Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley will lead the US delegation in Vienna. The talks are scheduled to start tomorrow," Price said during a press briefing.

On Tuesday, Vienna will host an in-person meeting on reviving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to discuss steps needed to fully restore the agreement. The US team will hold consultations with delegations from China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, but expects no direct talks with Iran.

"Our negotiators are headed to Vienna to take part in talks with our partners starting tomorrow to discuss how Iran might get back into compliance with the JCPOA," Price said.

The State Department spokesperson pointed out that getting Iran back into compliance with the accord would mean imposing strict, verifiable and permanent limits on its nuclear program.

"They will also discuss the sanctions relief that the United States would be prepared to take.

And, of course, we will continue to be guided by what the original JCPOA called for... which is nuclear sanctions," Price said.

In 2015, Iran signed the JCPOA with the P5+1 group of countries comprising the United States, Russia, China, France, United Kingdom and Germany as well as the European Union. The agreement required Iran to scale back its nuclear program and downgrade its uranium reserves in exchange for sanctions relief. In 2018, the US withdrew from the JCPOA and began imposing sanctions on Iran in violation of the agreement.

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.

UN Sees Jordan's Stability 'Critically Important' for Region - Spokesman

UNITED NATIONS, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United Nations is following the events in Jordan closely and believes that the country's stability is critically important for the Middle East region, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a press briefing on Monday.

On Saturday, Jordanian state media reported that several senior officials were arrested for security reasons. In a video message, Hamzah bin Hussein, half-brother of Jordan's King Abdullah II, said that he had been placed under house arrest and cut off from communication.

The following day, Jordanian Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Ayman Safadi said an investigation revealed that Prince Hamzah and two officials had had contacts with foreign intelligence agencies to destabilize the country. Safadi added that the member of the royal family had contacted unnamed foreign intelligence and sought to depose the current monarch.

"We're obviously following those events closely," Dujarric said. "Jordan plays a vital role in the Middle East and its peace and security. The stability of the country is critically important."

The spokesman also recalled "key" Jordan's role in supporting the United Nations by hosting more than 650,000 Syrian refugees and aiding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

41-year old Prince Hamzah is the elder son of the late King Hussein from his fourth wife, Queen Noor. He was named crown prince in 1999. However, in 2004 Abdullah II, his half-brother changed the decision in favor of his son Hussein, who is 26 years old now.

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.

US Mulls No Unilateral Concessions to Iran During JCPOA Talks in Vienna - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States contemplates no unilateral concessions to Iran as it seeks to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement through multilateral diplomacy, US State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters ahead of the talks in Vienna.

"We certainly will not entertain unilateral gestures or concessions to get... Iran to a better place. Our goal at these talks in Vienna is to set the stage for that mutual return to compliance," Price said during a press briefing.

On Tuesday, Vienna will host an in-person meeting of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA to discuss steps needed to fully restore the deal.

"The original formulation is one that still holds today... Limited lifting of nuclear sanctions in return for permanent and verifiable limits on Iran's nuclear program," Price said.

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.

US Environmental Groups Demand Stopping New Deep Water Oil Terminals Off Texas - Letter

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - A coalition of more than 30 environmental organizations on Monday sent a letter to the US Transportation and Homeland Security secretaries demanding they prevent new deep water oil terminals from being built off the coasts of Texas and Louisiana.

"The undersigned request MARAD [Maritime Administration] and USCG [US Coast Guard] immediately deny the SPOT, Texas GulfLink and Bluewater Texas VLCC crude export projects, as well as all other pending deep water port fossil fuel export licensing applications," the letter said.

The letter said each of future oil export facilities will be capable of loading and exporting about 2 million barrels of crude oil per day mostly Texas and North Dakota, resulting in more pollution being exported and fossil fuel production locked in domestically.

The letter pointed out that MARAD and the US Coast Guard have failed to complete a comprehensive environmental review for the proposed projects and correct impact assessments.

The authors of the letter name the risk of potential oils spills as being among the main reasons to deny the project applications.

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.

Special Envoy for Iran to Lead US Delegation at JCPOA Talks in Vienna - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - US Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley will lead the United States' delegation during the multilateral consultations on reviving the Iranian nuclear deal that are about to start in Austria, the State Department' spokesman Ned Price told reporters on Monday.

"I can confirm that Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley will lead the US delegation in Vienna. The talks are scheduled to start tomorrow," Price said during a press briefing.

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.

US Has Asked Russia to Explain Reported Troop Movement in Border Area - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States has asked Russia to provide an explanation of the reported movement of its forces in its border area, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a press briefing on Monday.

"We are concerned by recent escalating Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, including the credible reports that have been emanating about Russian troop movements on Ukraine's borders and occupied Crimea. The movements were of course preceded by the violations of the mid-2020, of the July 2020 ceasefire that led to the deaths of four Ukrainian soldiers last month... and the wounding of two other Ukrainian personnel," Price said.

The spokesperson also said "Russia's destabilizing actions undermine the deescalation intentions achieved through the OSCE brokered agreement of July of last year," adding that "We've asked Russia for an explanation of these provocations."

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.

Emergent BioSolutions Shareholders Initiate Probe Into Vaccine Accident at Baltimore Plant

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - Bronstein, Gewirtz & Grossman LLC has started an investigation into Emergent BioSolutions' management actions after a major accident with Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccines at the organization's Baltimore manufacturing plant last week, the law firm said in a statement on Monday.

"Bronstein, Gewirtz & Grossman, LLC is investigating potential claims on behalf of purchasers of Emergent BioSolutions Inc.," the statement said. "The investigation concerns whether Emergent and certain of its officers and/or directors have violated federal securities laws."

The law firm noted that as a result of the accident, the Emergent BioSolutions stock price fell from \$92.91 per share to \$80.46 per share on April 1.

Last week, Johnson & Johnson admitted to having produced a faulty batch of coronavirus vaccines at the East Baltimore facility owned by Emergent BioSolutions reportedly due to a mix-up of two ingredients that led to the ruining of about 15 million doses.

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.

US Army Corps of Engineers Assessing Second Leak at Florida Phosphate Plant - Official

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The US Army Corps of Engineers is assessing a possible second leak at the Piney Point former phosphate plant in the state of Florida, Manatee County Public Safety Director Jacob Saur said on Monday.

"An infrared drone identified a signature that could indicate a second break," Saur said in a press conference. "The Army Corps of Engineers, new engineers from the Department of Environmental Protection are back out at the site now and they'r reassessing that."

Saur said the first breach in the containment wall at the Piney Point facility continues, but seepage rates remained steady overnight. He added that evacuation orders remain in place. Manatee County officials have said about 22,000 gallons of water are being pumped out of Piney Point per minute as of Sunday. The risk of a collapse at the site is expected to decrease by Tuesday.

Water at the Piney Point site is not radioactive, but it has high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen, according to Florida authorities.

On Saturday, Florida Governor Ronald DeSantis announced a state of emergency in Manatee County after a breach was detected in the wall of a large pond at the Piney Point plant.

Evacuation orders were issued as experts feared that the stacks of phosphogypsum - radioactive byproduct from manufacturing fertilizer - could collapse further, which could cause major flooding of nearby areas and spilling into the bay.

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.

US Working With G20 Countries on Global Minimum Corporate Tax - Yellen

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States is working with the Group of 20 (G20) nations on a minimum corporate tax rate for the world to achieve prosperity and a level playing field for all, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said during a live-streamed speech to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs on Monday.

"We are working with G20 nations to agree to a global minimum corporate tax rate that can stop the race to the bottom," Yellen said. "Together we can use a global minimum tax to make sure

the global economy thrives based on a more level playing field in the taxation of multinational corporations, and spurs innovation, growth, and prosperity."

Yellen's remarks came on the heels of President Joe Biden's announcement last week that his administration will raise the corporate tax from 21 percent to 28 percent in an effort to fund his post-pandemic \$2.3 trillion infrastructure plan. Biden lamented that many companies were not paying their fair share of burden to lift the economy and some were not paying at all.

"It's important to work with other countries to end the pressures of tax competition and corporate tax base erosion," Yellen said. "It would be more efficient if the world's biggest economies enter an OECD agreement on corporate minimum tax."

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is comprised of the 37 mostly economically-advanced countries.

Yellen said she would use her participation in this week's International Monetary Fund and World Bank annual meetings to advance discussions on climate change, improve access to coronavirus vaccines and encourage countries to support a strong global recovery.

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.

UN Welcomes Efforts by JCPOA Participants to Hold 'Constructive' Dialogue in Vienna

UNITED NATIONS, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United Nations welcomes the efforts by participants in the Iran nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to hold a new meeting in Vienna aimed to revive the accord, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters on Monday.

On Tuesday, Vienna will host an in-person meeting of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA to discuss steps needed to fully restore the deal.

"We very much welcome the active efforts by all the JCPOA participants to hold a constructive dialogue and to use diplomacy regarding this important multilateral agreement," Dujarric said when asked what the United Nations expected from the upcoming gathering.

In 2015, Iran signed the JCPOA with the P5+1 group of countries comprising the United States, China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom plus Germany - and the European Union.

The agreement required Iran to scale back its nuclear program and severely downgrade its uranium reserves in exchange for sanctions relief, including lifting an arms embargo five years after the deal's adoption. In 2018, the US withdrew from the JCPOA and began imposing sanctions on Iran in violation of the agreement.

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.

Blinken, Sudan Prime Minister Discuss Easing Border Tensions With Ethiopia - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed held a call with Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and discussed easing border tensions between Sudan and Ethiopia, Department of State spokesperson Ned Price said in a readout of the conversation on Monday.

"Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke today with Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok," Price said. "They ... discussed negotiations related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, as well as the need to de-escalate tensions between Sudan and Ethiopia over the al-Fashaga border area including recent commitments to engage in dialogue." Blinken and Hamdok also discussed the United States' support for the civilian-led Khartoum transitional government's efforts to advance the peace process, address regional and economic issues and promote political reforms, Price said.

"Secretary Blinken welcomed the recent declaration of principles signed with the SPLM-N Al Hilu movement, and stressed the importance of ensuring protection of civilians throughout Sudan," Price added.

At least 18 people were killed and 54 others were injured in armed clashes that took place in Sudan's Western Darfur region, according to local reports on Monday.

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.

US, Arab Countries Commit to 'Accelerate Climate Action' - Joint Statement

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States and a number of Arab countries have agreed to accelerate climate action, US and Arab countries' senior officials said in a joint statement upon concluding the United Arab Emirates Regional Climate Dialogue.

"Our countries, gathered in Abu Dhabi under the auspices of the United Arab Emirates, are committed to accelerate climate action," the statement said.

The United States was represented by Special Envoy John Kerry. Other participants included senior officials in charge of environmental policy and climate change from the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Egypt, Bahrain, Oman, Sudan and Qatar.

"We will work together to ensure the success of the Paris Agreement and will cooperate with our global partners to strengthen climate ambition," the statement said. "We urge the international community to take steps to keep a Paris-aligned temperature limit within reach, including through enhanced nationally determined contributions."

The officials emphasized in the statement that they consider investments in renewable energy, ecosystem-based approaches, carbon capture technologies and other low-carbon solutions to contribute to sustainable economic growth and job creation.

"We also recognize the importance of adaptation and the co-benefits of building resilience to climate change," the statement said.

The officials vowed to reduce carbon emissions by 2030 and beyond and to work collectively to help the region adapt to the climate change impacts, the statement added.

The United States has resumed its active participation in projects focused on climate change under the Biden administration. One of President Joe Biden's first executive orders after

assuming office in January concerned the return of the United States to the Paris Climate Agreement that seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

On March 26, the White House said that Biden invited 40 global leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, to take part in the online climate summit scheduled for April 22-23.

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.

At Least 568 People Killed Since Coup in Myanmar, Figure May Be Significantly Higher - UN

UNITED NATIONS, April 5 (Sputnik) - At least 568 people have been killed in Myanmar since the military coup on February 1, but the number of dead may be significantly higher, United Nations spokesperson Stephane Djaric said in a press briefing on Monday.

"Our colleagues there say they remain alarmed by the ongoing violence in the country where another 80 people were killed over the weekend," Dujarric said. "As of today, the UN Human Rights Office has received credible reports of at least 568 women, children and men who have been killed since the military seized control of the government in February. The office warrants at this number may be significantly higher."

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.

US Enters 4th Week of Increased Number of COVID-19 Cases, Number of Deaths Decreases - CDC

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported an increase in number of people who have tested positive for the novel coronavirus and the number of hospitalizations for the fourth week, while the number of deaths has decreased, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said during a briefing on Monday.

"CDC's most recent data show the seven-day average of new cases is about 64,000 cases per day. This is up approximately 7 percent compared to the prior seven-day period," Walensky said. "Importantly, we are now entering our fourth week of increased trends in cases."

Walensky said the seven-day average number of hospitalizations has increased by 3 percent and reached about 4,970 admissions per day while the average of deaths has decreases to an average of about 800 per day.

More than 165 million Americans have been vaccinated with at least one dose of the available vaccines and more than 57 million people have been fully vaccinated, according to the data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

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.

Sullivan, Croatian Prime Minister Discuss Energy Diversification - White House

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic on Monday discussed over the telephone the situation in the so-called "Western Balkans" region and energy diversification, National Security Council spokesperson Emily Horne said.

"Mr. Sullivan and Prime Minister Plenkovic also discussed coordination on shared priorities, including the COVID-19 pandemic, energy diversification and the Western Balkans," Horne said in a statement.

Sullivan congratulated Plenkovic on Croatia's recent inauguration of its liquefied natural gas terminal on the island of Krk and the country's progress in meeting the requirements to join the US visa waiver program, Horne said.

The National Security Advisor also conveyed to Plenkovic the United States' appreciation for the strong US-Croatia ties and Washington's commitment to enhancing Transatlantic relations, Horne added.

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

US Supreme Court Rules in Favor of Google in Copyright Dispute With Oracle

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) – The US Supreme Court on Monday ruled in favor of Google in its copyright dispute with Oracle concerning the use of Java application programming interface for Android development.

"We reach the conclusion that in this case, where Google reimplemented a user interface, taking only what was needed to allow users to put their accrued talents to work in a new and transformative program, Google's copying of the Sun Java API was a fair use of that material as a matter of law. The Federal Circuit's contrary judgment is reversed, and the case is remanded for further proceedings in conformity with this opinion," the Supreme Court said.

The majority opinion was delivered by Justice Stephen Breyer while Justice Clarence Thomas delivered a dissenting opinion. Justice Amy Barrett did not take part in the ruling.

There have been three trials and two appeals over the ten-year-old lawsuit between Oracle and Google. In 2005, Google purchased Android and used 11,500 lines of Java SE code in the the development of the operating system, claiming it engaged in a fair use rather than a copyright breach.

The Supreme Court opinion is a review of the US Federal Circuit decision that ruled in favor of Oracle that Google' use of the Java SE code was copyrightable and did not constitute a fair use.

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.

US Wants G20 to Adopt Agreement on Minimum Corporate Tax Rate - Yellen

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The United States is working with Group of 20 nations on a minimum corporate tax rate for the world to achieve prosperity and a level playing field for all, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Monday.

"We are working with G20 nations to agree to a global minimum corporate tax rate that can stop the race to the bottom," Yellen said in a live-streamed speech to The Chicago Council on Global Affairs. "Together we can use a global minimum tax to make sure the global economy thrives based on a more level playing field in the taxation of multinational corporations, and spurs innovation, growth, and prosperity."

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.

US Supreme Court Denies Twitter Users' Lawsuit Appeal Against Trump

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - Twitters users who tried to sue former President Donald Trump for his activities on Twitter have had their appeal on the case rejected by the US Supreme Court, which refused to hear it, according to an official notice on Monday.

"The motion for leave to file a petition for a writ of certiorari under seal is denied," the notice said.

The Second Circuit of the US Federal Court found that Trump had violated the First Amendment when, as President of the United States, he blocked several users from interacting with his Twitter account who then sued him. However, the Supreme Court found that Trump only had limited control of his Twitter account.

"The disparity between Twitter's control and Mr. Trump's control is stark, to say the least. Mr. Trump blocked several people from interacting with his messages. Twitter barred Mr. Trump not only from interacting with a few users, but removed him from the entire platform, thus barring all Twitter users from interacting with his messages," the Supreme Court said.

Trump has said he now plans to create his own social media platform after he was banned by Twitter and other social media giants, including Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

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.

Soros Open Society Foundations Pledge \$20Mln to Support Biden Infrastructure Plan- Reports

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - George Soros' Open Society Foundations are allocating \$20 million to launch a campaign generating support for President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion infrastructure construction plan, the news website Axios reported on Monday.

The foundations have already committed to provide \$20 million to initiate the campaign and may eventually offer up to \$100 million to fund it with the goal of raising up support among

progressives across the United States for the program to help it gain funding in Congress, the report said.

Some progressive critics have held back from supporting the Biden program saying it is too small and needs to be greatly expanded, the report added.

An expanded version of the Biden program could be announced later this month offering increased funding to health care and community colleges as well as for issues pertaining to climate change, according to the report.

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.

IMF Says Approved \$238Mln in Debt Relief for 28 Poorest Countries Most Hit By COVID-19

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Monday that it has approved a third tranche of debt service relief grants totaling \$238 million for 28 poorest and most vulnerable states affected by the measures implemented to battle the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"This approval follows two prior tranches. It enables the disbursement of grants from the CCRT for payment of all eligible debt service falling due to the IMF from its poorest and most vulnerable members from April 14, 2021 to October 15, 2021, estimated at SDR 168 (US\$238) million," the IMF said in a statement, referring to the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust. The IMF disbursed two earlier tranches of debt service relief from the CCRT last April and October. The SDR, or Special Drawing Rights, is an international monetary reserve currency created by the IMF to supplement existing money reserves of member countries.

Following the global coronavirus outbreak in March 2020, the IMF launched an urgent effort to raise SDR 1 billion (US\$1.4 billion) in CCRT grants for countries most impacted by the measures to address the pandemic.

The IMF said the third tranche of debt service relief from the CCRT will continue helping countries needing to free up funds for vital emergency health, and social and economic support. Debt service relief could be provided from October 16, 2021 through April 13, 2022 for a total of SDR 680 (US\$964) million subject to availability of funding in the CCRT, the IMF added.

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

Member of Proud Boys, Brother Indicted Without Bond for US Capitol Attack - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - The US government has indicted two brothers, including a self-identified member of the Proud Boys, for conspiracy related to the attack on the US Capitol on January 6, the Department of Justice said in a press release on Monday.

"Matthew Leland Klein, 24, and Jonathanpeter Allen Klein, 21, both of Oregon, were indicted in federal court in the District of Columbia on charges of conspiracy; obstruction of an official

proceeding and aiding and abetting; obstruction of law enforcement during civil disorder and ... destruction of government property," the release said.

According to court documents, Jonathanpeter Klein is a self-identified member of the Proud Boys, a group that describes themselves as a "pro-Western fraternal organization for men who refuse to apologize for creating the modern world" and as Western Chauvinists, the Justice Department said.

"Matthew Klein assisted members of the crowd with using a police barricade to climb a wall and gain access to an external stairwell leading to the Upper West Terrace of the Capitol. ...

Jonathanpeter Klein entered the Capitol building on the northwest side with his brother entering shortly after through the same door," the release said.

The case is being prosecuted by the US Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the Department of Justice National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section and the case is being investigated by the FBI's Washington and Portland Field Offices, the Justice Department said.

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.

Less Than Quarter of Americans Approve of Biden's Handling of Migrant Crisis - Poll

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) - Less than a quarter of Americans approve of how President Joe Biden is handling the situation with unaccompanied migrant children at the US border with Mexico, a new poll by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research revealed on Monday.

The poll found that 40 percent of Americans say they disapprove of Biden's policy on the migrant children crossing the US southern border, while 24 percent say they approve of it. Thirty-five percent of respondents say they neither approve nor disapprove of the Biden's policy. In addition, the poll results show nearly 60 percent of Americans consider providing safe treatment of children at the border to be a high priority.

The poll results also differ along the party lines with 74 percent of Democrats and 10 percent of Republicans who approve of Biden's handling the migrant crisis.

According to US media reports, there are currently more than 18,000 unaccompanied migrant children in US custody of which more than 5,000 being held at facilities not designed for long-term housing.

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.

Earthquakes of Up to 4.0 Magnitude Strike Los Angeles Area – USGS

WASHINGTON, April 5 (Sputnik) – A pair of earthquakes measuring up to 4.0 on the Richter scale rattled the Los Angeles area early Monday morning, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said.

The 4.0 quake struck at 4:44 a.m. local time at the depth of 19.9 km in the Lennox area of Los Angeles County, just miles away from the international airport. That quake followed a 2.5 magnitude temblor that hit 30 minutes earlier, USGS said. There were no immediate reports of damages or injuries.