

09/21/21 Tuesday

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 Hegemonic System' Has 'Failed Miserably', Iran's Raisi Tells UN
By - Morgan Artyukhina

Speaking at the opening day of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, City on Tuesday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi blasted US attempts to rule the world. Raisi pointed to two recent examples of shocking incidents inside and outside the United States: the January 6 insurrection at the US Capitol, during which supporters of then-US President Donald Trump stormed the national legislature in an attempt to block certification of the recent election results, and the scenes last month of Afghans falling from the sides of US aircraft as US troops withdrew from Afghanistan.

"One clear message was sent to the world: the United States' hegemonic system has no credibility, whether inside or outside the country," Raisi said, adding that "not only the hegemonist and the idea of hegemony, but also the project of imposing Westernized identity, have failed miserably."

Raisi said the result of the US seeking hegemony has been "blood spilling and instability, and ultimately defeat and escape," noting the US has failed in its attempts to subdue countries across southwestern and central Asia. He also named US taxpayers who foot the bill of US wars as victims of this policy.

"The world doesn't care about 'America First' or 'America is Back,'" the recently inaugurated Iranian leader said, referring respectively to the presidential slogans of Trump, who left office in January, and US President Joe Biden, who replaced him.

The Iranian [president attacked](#) the US' "double standards" of foreign policy, saying the US had helped to create terrorist groups in some places - giving the example of Daesh* in Syria, while fighting terrorism in others. He also noted the rise of domestic terrorist groups inside the United States and condemned US policy supporting the Saudi war in Yemen and the Israeli war and blockade of Gaza.

Raisi also said that US "maximum pressure" economic sanctions against Iran, which Washington left in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, are crimes against humanity. He called it "maximum tyranny" and condemned the US' unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal in 2018, which preceded the return of sanctions. However, he said he believes in the talks in Vienna that began earlier this year after Biden took office, at which both nations aim to [negotiate a return](#) to the nuclear deal.

The Iranian president traveled to New York for the annual UNGA meeting after attending a summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Iran was recently admitted to the regional diplomatic, military and trade pact, which includes a number of Eurasian nations including Pakistan, China, Russia, and Kyrgyzstan.

[Speaking in Dushanbe](#) on Saturday, Raisi touched on many of the same themes, celebrating the decline of unilateralism and hegemony. "The SCO can turn into a driving force for global

multilateralism," he said. Tehran signed a number of new economic cooperation deals at the meeting, including eight with Tajikistan.

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.

Pro-Reunification Candidate Chang Ya-chung Edges Ahead as Chairman Election in Taiwan's KMT Nears

By - Morgan Artyukhina

A candidate for leader of the Chinese Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT), who supports peace talks with mainland China has pulled ahead in the polls just days before party elections are to be held, meaning one of Taiwan's two major parties could soon be chaired by a pro-unification figure.

According to recent polls cited by the [South China Morning Post](#) on Monday, Chang Ya-chung is the most likely of four candidates to win the KMT chairman election. The 66-year-old, who heads a non-governmental organization named after Chinese republican hero and KMT founder Sun Yat-Sen, has pulled ahead after a televised debate earlier this month in which he unapologetically defended cross-strait peace with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Chang reportedly emphasized Taiwan's Chinese identity during the debate, urging that the KMT should return to its foundational principles and saying that both recent party leaders, as well as the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), had led the country astray, [according to New Bloom](#).

He urged that rather than follow a policy of closer association with the United States or independence, as DPP leader and Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-Wen has done since 2016, or as some of his rival candidates have suggested, he would look to end hostilities across the Taiwan Strait. Before seeking eventual reunification, Chang would look for cooperation opportunities in other areas, as he did earlier this year, when he championed an ultimately unsuccessful [effort to import](#) 10 million Chinese COVID-19 vaccines.

Chang further elaborated on his position on Tuesday, releasing a [seven-point statement](#) he said would "arouse the party spirit" and revitalize its success, which has waned in recent years and reduced the party's membership to just 375,000.

According to the SCMP, Chang's performance won over much of the party's "deep blue" membership, or older members who hope for reconciliation with the PRC instead of independence and who form a majority of the party. However, polls cited by Taiwan's [Central News Agency](#) reported that just 8% of the island's population support reconciliation.

Taiwan, which is formally named the Republic of China (ROC), is all that remains of the republican government that ruled China from the collapse of the monarchy in 1912 to the victory of the communist revolution in 1949. However, Taipei has never conceded victory to the Communist Party of China or recognized the PRC's legitimacy, continuing to claim it is the sole legitimate representative of the Chinese people.

The PRC government in Beijing believes the same about itself, and sees Taiwan as a Chinese province in rebellion against its rule, [supported by foreign powers](#) like the United States that are

intervening in Chinese internal affairs. As US support for Taiwan has increased in recent years, Xi has redoubled commitment to reunification, [saying last month](#) that "resolving the Taiwan question and realizing China's complete reunification is a historic mission and an unshakable commitment of the CPC." By contrast, his administration has made clear that a declaration of independence by Taipei will mean war.

Chang's rivals include incumbent Johnny Chiang, a member of parliament who favored balancing cross-strait cooperation with a strong relationship with Washington; Cho Po-yuan, a former magistrate from Changhua County who urged a return to the 1992 Consensus between Taipei and Beijing and who said he would invite Chinese President Xi Jinping to visit the island; and Eric Chu Li-lian, the mayor of New Taipei and a former party chair. Chu called for strengthening ties with the US and reopening the KMT office in Washington, but didn't dismiss the importance of cross-strait relations.

One poll, conducted Tuesday by Taiwanese news outlet Apple Daily, found that Chang had a narrow lead over Chu with 37.5% support compared to 37.3%, with Chiang coming in third with 24% support and Cho in fourth with just 0.9%. Another conducted by TBVS cable news network last week had the four candidates in the same ranking, but with a slightly different spread of 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.

Pelosi Accuses GOP of 'Trying to Force First-Ever US Default' by Opposing Limit Suspension Bill

By - Morgan Artyukhina

Republicans are promising to block a Democratic attempt to force through a new borrowing limit suspension as part of a larger spending bill just days before the US government is set to run out of money. The Treasury has warned of "catastrophe" if the US is allowed to default on its debt next month.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) accused Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) of hypocrisy on Tuesday, noting that while he stands against an increase in the debt limit at present, he supported it two years ago.

Noting that [McConnell said in July 2019](#) that "America can't default, that would be a disaster," Pelosi tweeted that the Kentucky senator and his Republican colleagues "are trying to force the first-ever default of the US. All Members must come together in a spirit of bipartisanship to protect the full faith and credit of the US."

The US government is expected to run out of money to pay its bills sometime next month if the debt limit is neither raised or suspended, allowing the Treasury to borrow more money.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, who once headed the Federal Reserve, the US' central bank, wrote in a [Wall Street Journal op-ed](#) on Sunday that this would "produce widespread economic catastrophe" as the associated severe spending cuts would reduce many government programs to a trickle, including several large COVID-19 relief laws passed going back to December 2020, for which the funds have already been appropriated.

To avoid this fate, Democrats had added a line to [a bill introduced](#) on Tuesday that would keep the US government funded until December and suspend the federal borrowing limit until the end of next year.

Democrats have gambled that by adding the debt extension to a bill otherwise strongly supported by Republicans, it will make the pill easier to swallow. The bill includes \$6.3 billion to resettle Afghan refugees in the United States and \$28.6 billion in emergency relief for victims of recent natural disasters in the US, including wildfires, hurricanes, and floods. It also provides \$1 billion for replenishing Israel's Iron Dome air defense system, which used up thousands of missiles shooting down rockets fired from Gaza during the 11-day war in May.

However, on Tuesday afternoon, several progressive Democrats managed to [secure removal](#) of the Iron Dome funds by threatening to vote against the bill.

"We will not support legislation that raises the debt limit," McConnell said on Monday.

"Democrats do not need our help."

US President Joe Biden has emphasized that allowing the US to pay its bills is "a bipartisan responsibility," [calling GOP intransigence](#) "inexcusable." Without the support of 10 Republican lawmakers, the bill cannot pass the Senate, which is split evenly between the two major parties, but contains a filibuster rule allowing senators to hold up progress of a bill almost indefinitely if the opposition cannot muster 60 votes to override them.

While increasing the national debt has long been an issue of public debate, it became the creator of regular political crises beginning in August 2011, when Republicans protested spending increases associated with the Affordable Care Act and the 2008-9 bailouts of US banks and automobile manufacturers by refusing to approve an extension until just days before the US defaulted.

The incident had several repercussions, including the first-ever downgrading of US credit by credit rating agencies. It also led to the passage of the Budget Control Act of 2011, which lifted the debt ceiling for several years but mandated spending cuts in the longer term.

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 Covid Vaccines Reach 100 Nations, But WHO Warns Africa Still Short 470 Million Shots in 2021

By - Morgan Artyukhina

Unique among industrial nations, China has vaccinated more than 1 billion of its citizens against COVID-19 while exporting even more shots. While its vaccines are not as technically advanced as those made by Western pharmaceutical firms, they have been many nations' only source of protection from the pandemic.

Chinese-made COVID-19 vaccines have been exported to more than 100 countries, President Xi Jinping recently announced, helping to fill much of the world's need for protective shots. While Chinese vaccines are not the world's most effective, their ease of manufacture and storage have made them valuable health resources as much of the world struggles to meet vaccination goals.

Speaking on Friday, Xi told leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization that China had provided nearly 1.2 billion doses of finished and bulk vaccines to more than 100 countries and international organizations, making the socialist country the world's largest vaccine provider. "We will deepen anti-COVID cooperation with other developing countries, make good use of China's donation of 100 million U.S. dollars to COVAX, and make our due contribution to humanity's ultimate victory over the virus," Xi said, as [quoted by Xinhua](#) News Agency. He added on Tuesday while speaking at the United Nations General Assembly that China would provide another 1 billion doses to the world by the end of the year.

The COVAX program, which is jointly administered by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), provides vaccines to the world's poorest nations at little-to-no cost.

However, the [WHO said on Thursday](#) it was short by 470 million doses in Africa due to unplanned supply shortages, threatening the continent's end-year goal of vaccinating 40% of its population. At present, COVAX will deliver just 470 million doses, enough to vaccinate 17% of Africa.

Structural Barriers to Vaccine Equity

Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa, blasted decisions by vaccine suppliers, which include India, China, and several Western nations, to keep export bans in place and to hoard vaccines.

Those nations "have a chokehold on vaccine supplies to Africa," he said. "As long as rich countries lock COVAX out of the market, Africa will miss its vaccination goals. The huge gap in vaccine equity is not closing anywhere near fast enough. It is time for vaccine manufacturing countries to open the gates and help protect those facing the greatest risk."

The UN-connected global health group has [repeatedly condemned](#) Western policies that block poorer nations' access to their high-powered mRNA vaccines, which are more expensive but more effective than the more traditional whole inactivated virus (WIV) vaccines. Those policies include administering third "booster" shots to their own citizens instead of exporting the extra doses to the Third World and intellectual property laws codified in the World Trade Organization's Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which [prevent generic versions](#) of drugs from being manufactured abroad for cheap.

According to the WHO on Thursday, although one-third of humanity has been vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 infection, just 2% of those shots have been administered in Africa. By comparison, half have been given in the world's richer nations, including the US, UK, and European Union.

"The staggering inequity and severe lag in shipments of vaccines threatens to turn areas in Africa with low vaccination rates into breeding grounds for vaccine-resistant variants. This could end up sending the whole world back to square one," Moeti said.

On Monday, Indian Health Minister [Mansukh Mandaviya said](#) exports and donations to COVAX would resume next month, having been paused in the spring due to a colossal COVID-19 outbreak in the country which [might have killed](#) 4 million people. The country had previously been a major provider of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, by far the world's cheapest, but which carries a troublesome expiration date that has seen some nation's [shipments expire](#) before being administered.

Enduring Popularity of Chinese Shots

According to a Tuesday report by the [South China Morning Post](#) (SCMP), Chinese vaccines have enjoyed such popularity due to a combination of factors including cost, availability, and ease of use.

The two primary vaccines China has exported, by SinoVac and Sinopharm, are both WIV vaccines, a proven technology that did not require the creation of new methods of manufacture or delivery, greatly reducing their cost. In addition, the shots can be stored at between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius, or normal refrigerator temperature, [according to the BBC](#). Russia's Sputnik V vaccine is also stored at refrigerator temperature.

However, the western messenger RNA vaccines, which are a new type of vaccination, must be stored at much colder temperatures: -20 Celsius for Moderna's shot and -70 Celsius for the Pfizer-BioNTech shot. Those require specialized cold storage chambers, which are unlikely to be available in many poorer or more rural parts of the world, and frustrate even the transport process.

Western nations have not promised even the number of vaccines China has already delivered, much less what Beijing has committed to. The Biden administration said it would buy 500 million Pfizer shots to donate to poorer nations, with the majority not arriving until next year.

"Given the current supply shortfall, the billions of doses of WIV from Sinopharm, Sinovac and Bharat [Biotech of India], when approved by the WHO, will be very important in the first round of vaccination globally," Jerome Kim, director general of the International Vaccine Institute, told SCMP.

"Over the midterm, the next six to nine critical months, where we have 11 billion doses to go, can we do it without inactivated vaccines? Now we need to vaccinate 8 billion – we may very well need every vaccine we can get that is WHO emergency use licensing [approved], particularly ones that can be kept stable at achievable temperatures for extended periods," he added.

Kim said the WIV vaccines will continue to be important because it was unknown "how quickly, cheaply, and in what volume the protein vaccines will be available and whether additional changes in the storage parameters of RNA vaccines will occur."

The downside to the Sinopharm and SinoVac vaccines is their lower effectiveness compared to mRNA vaccines. The WHO has found [two Sinopharm shots](#) to be 79% effective against symptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection and [two SinoVac shots](#) to be just 51% effective. While studies of a third dose have shown a promising boost for SinoVac, some nations - including China - are testing mixing SinoVac with other vaccines.

China is [set to begin testing](#) the effects of giving the unpopular but novel DNA vaccine developed by the US company Inovio as the second vaccination dose after SinoVac, or vice-versa, later this year. Meanwhile, Thailand is mixing SinoVac and AstraZeneca doses; South Korea [has also tested](#) mixing the AstraZeneca shot, but with Pfizer's mRNA shot, with strong results.

Meanwhile, other Chinese vaccines are also in development. Chongqing Zhifei Biological Products has developed a vaccine that is also stored at room temperature, but requires three shots to reach an [efficacy of 81%](#); and Sinopharm is also [developing its own](#) mRNA vaccine.

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.

Search for Fiancé of Gabby Petito, Brian Laundrie, Resumes in Florida Wilderness
By - Adriana Montes

Just one day after calling it off, the FBI and police resumed their search for 23-year-old Brian Laundrie in a 25,000-acre wildlife Florida reserve on Tuesday.

North Port police are working with the FBI agents and members of other law enforcement agencies in their search at the wildlife Carlton Reserve in Sarasota, Florida, where Laundrie is believed to have vanished on a hike a week ago after being named a person of interest in his girlfriend Gabby Petito's disappearance.

According to police, his parents reported seeing him last Tuesday, September 14, in hiking gear. North Port officers and FBI agents spent much of the weekend searching the reserve for Laundrie. North Port police believed they "exhausted all avenues in searching the grounds there."

Authorities returned to resume the search on Tuesday morning, according to the North Port Police Department.

The wildlife reserve is known to have miles long of campgrounds and trails, and law enforcement is facing very difficult terrain in search of Brian Laundrie.

Authorities assessed drone and K9 search and rescue teams to help facilitate the search. Investigators took some of Laundrie's clothing from his parents' home to provide a scent for the search dogs.

"Please be aware, the Carlton Reserve is a vast and unforgiving location at times. It is currently waist-deep in water in many areas," North Port Police spokesman Josh Taylor said.

"This is dangerous work for the search crews as they are wading through gator and snake-infested swamps and flooded hiking and biking trails."

North Port Police posted several [pictures](#) of their "By land. By air," search to Twitter.

As the search continues for Laundrie in Florida, an autopsy is scheduled to be conducted on remains found in Wyoming. Medical examiners are seeking to determine if it is Gabby Petito.

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.

Joe Biden Faces Backlash Over Inept UN Speech
By - Adriana Montes

Biden told his international peers that the world stands "at an inflection point in history," promising of multinational cooperation, and addressing a number of shared global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging technologies and climate change — as well as the withdrawal of US military assets from Afghanistan.

Biden gave a speech to the UN General Assembly Tuesday that received criticism from several political figures over the lack of context on how America is leading.

Former Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley criticized President Biden's address to the U.N. General Assembly, saying the speech "ignored the reality and seriousness of America's threats and enemies."

"With Joe Biden asleep at the switch, our friends don't trust us, and our enemies are rejoicing." Biden promised to "build back the world better," and stressed the importance of global cooperation on critical issues.

"A collective act of science and political will" will be required to fight the pandemic, he added. Amid Biden's "chaotic" withdrawal from Afghanistan and the barrage of criticism his administration received after abandoning 38 million Afghan allies as the Taliban* set up a government in Kabul, his declaration that America "stands up for allies and friends" came into question.

Biden framed the US withdrawal from Afghanistan as ending "a period of relentless war" and starting "a new era of relentless diplomacy."

While not mentioning China, he [spoke of several challenges](#) the US has with Beijing, that include cyberattacks, disinformation, freedom of navigation, economic safeguards, and protecting intellectual property.

Biden declared that "government by and for the people is still the best way to deliver for all of our people."

"We are not seeking the new Cold War, or the world divided into rigid blocks," Biden said, seemingly pointing to China, and adding that the US "is ready to work with any nation that pursues peaceful resolution to shared challenges.

Haley, who served under former President Trump, said what Biden "failed to address were the security threats imposed."

She added that under the Trump administration, "the world knew where we stood."

Congressional Republicans said Mr. Biden's address contradicted the "messy" pull-out from Afghanistan, which they said invigorated American adversaries and undercut allies.

"Tough talk is useless if it's followed by weak actions," said Rep. Mike McCaul (R-TX), the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Biden's speech to the UN may give him the opportunity to "reset the agenda" with countries concerned about the US commitment to multilateralism, said Alynna Lyon, a University of New Hampshire professor.

"Words are pretty hollow right now," Lyon said. "He can't just say he wants to work with other countries."

It also needs to be accompanied by actions and resources, she said.

Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel has also released a statement on Biden's speech, saying he "has damaged longstanding alliances, emboldened [US] enemies, and failed to stand for freedom", adding that the US president "has lost all credibility at home and abroad".

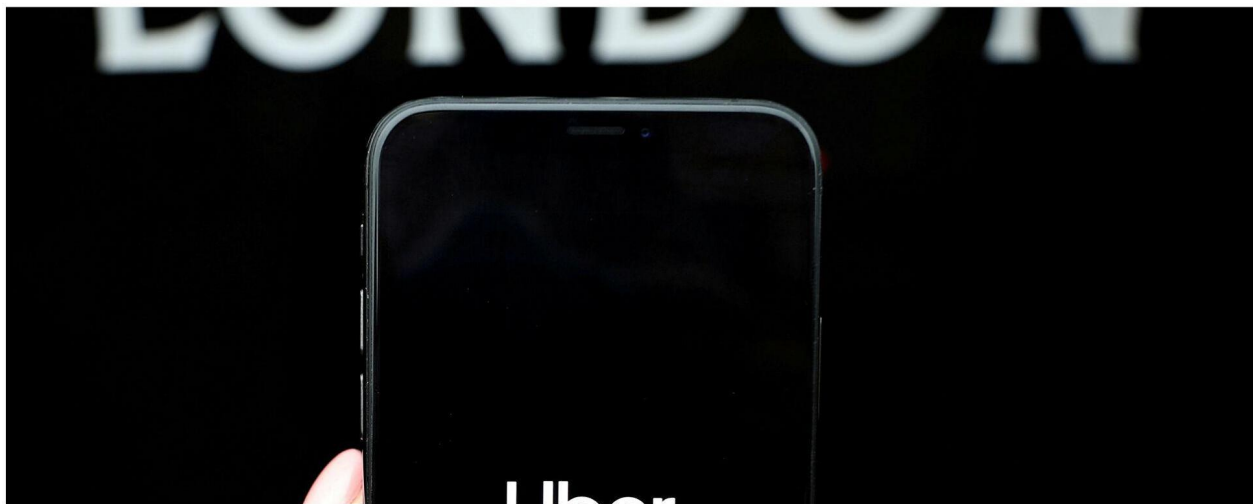
Biden's image both at home and abroad has been damaged indeed, mostly over the pullout from Afghanistan, which, some said, had not been appropriately planned. Many, including former President Donald Trump, suggested that it would have been more logical to withdraw American civilians and US weapons first, and only then — the military personnel.

Apart from Afghanistan, Biden has faced criticism over his handling of the border crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, while his approval rating has sunk in key battleground states.

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.

Uber's Business Model Faces Threat After Legal Setback Across Europe
By - Adriana Montes

Uber's business model component is derived from flexible drivers that have the freedom of working flexible hours, but are not recognized as regular employees. Uber faces the risk of losing its core business model to Europe's judges. Courts across Europe are deciding on the status of the ride-hailing app and its drivers, with thousands of drivers pushing to be recognized as employees. The company has affirmed that all drivers on its platform are classified as independent contractors — not employees. Drivers are deprived of workers' compensation for accidents, and are not entitled to unemployment insurance along with health benefits.



[Uber Drivers in UK Become First in the World to Be Granted Worker Status - Report](#)

17 March, 01:37 GMT

Uber has faced various legal proceedings across the world wherein authorities belonging to different legal fields have argued that the drivers should be qualified as employees.

For example, in the UK, the [Employment Tribunal](#) ruled that drivers cannot be considered self-employed, but rather regular workers.

Similarly, in Switzerland, the [SUVA](#) qualified Uber drivers on behalf of the Social Security Agency of the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland in May 2016, as employees.

Last week, Uber lost another legal challenge in Europe over the employment status of drivers. The Court of Amsterdam in the Netherlands ruled that drivers for Uber should be classified as employees, rather than self-employed contractors — and are entitled to greater workers' rights under local labor laws.

Uber drivers in the Netherlands are now entitled to the same employment benefits as taxi drivers.

It was another court victory for unions fighting for better pay and benefits for those employees seeking working time protection and holiday pay.

More than 100 similar court cases are progressing all over Europe, with the majority of cases taking the side of drivers.

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.

Park Ranger 'Implored' Gabby Petito to Distance Herself From Toxic Relationship With Brian Laundrie

By - Adriana Montes

Laundrie's behavior has been widely deemed suspicious, since he returned home without his fiancée acting absolutely calm and refused to talk to the authorities without his lawyer. He then went missing, while many believe he actually went into "hiding".

A National Park Service ranger who responded to a domestic incident between Brian Laundrie and Gabby Petito in Utah just weeks before the travel blogger's remains were found urged her to distance herself from the "toxic" relationship.

"I was probably more candid with her than I should've been," Melissa Hulls, the visitor and resource protection supervisor at Arches National Park, told Insider in an interview about her conversation with Petito on August 12.

Melissa Hulls was among several officers who responded to a 911 call reporting an alleged domestic assault involving Petito, 22, and Laundrie, 23.

Hulls arrived to find the couple pulled over by a Moab police officer inside the park and spoke with Petito.

Police bodycam footage was released last week of the encounter, showing Petito sitting in the back of a police cruiser appearing distraught and in tears.

The initial 911 call, released Monday, has since [revealed](#) a witness first reported seeing the "gentleman was slapping the girl," according to new audio obtained from the Grand County Sheriff's Office.

Ranger Melissa Hulls pulled Petito to the side to speak in private, in hopes that she would feel more comfortable speaking one-on-one with a female officer, according to Insider.

"I was imploring with her to re-evaluate the relationship, asking her if she was happy in the relationship with him, and basically saying this was an opportunity for her to find another path, to make a change in her life," she said.

"She had a lot of anxiety about being away from him, I honestly thought if anything was going to change, it would be after they got home to Florida."

The FBI [confirmed](#) on Tuesday that the remains found over the weekend in Grand Teton National Park were those of Gabrielle "Gabby" Petito, the Florida woman who went missing during a cross-country trip with her fiancé.

The Teton County coroner confirmed the identity and said the manner of Gabby's death was homicide.

Hulls has said she's been unable to revisit the footage from that evening since hearing that the FBI recovered a body in Wyoming consistent with the descriptions of Petito.

"It's hard not to second-guess myself, and wish I said more, or wish I had found the right words to make her believe that she deserved more."

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.

IRGC Chief: Iran No Longer Sees US as Threat - Report

By - Adriana Montes

Iran has "built power" to confront the United States, Iranian Military Officer Hossein Salami said on Tuesday, in reference to the recent chaotic withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan, Iranian media reported.

Iran no longer saw the US as a threat after it withdrew forces from the region, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps [was quoted as saying](#) by the Fars news agency.

"We have built power to defeat the US. When we build power for man's largest military empire, i.e. the US, small powers like the Zionist regime are no longer counted in our equations," Gen. Salami was quoted by an Insider.

"We witnessed a failed, fleeing and depressed US," he reportedly added.

President Joe Biden indicated an interest in turning a page on US-Iranian relations during his first address to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on Tuesday.

He stressed his commitment to preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

"The United States remains committed to preventing Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon. We are working with the P5+1 to engage Iran diplomatically and seek a return to the JCPOA," Biden [said](#).

Salami also declared that Iran has managed to weather US sanctions. "Inside our own country, despite all natural or imposed pressures, the Iranian nation has been engaged in resistance," he said.

In 2018, former US President Donald Trump ditched the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran, introducing harsh sanctions against the Islamic Republic under a "maximum pressure" campaign. The US sanctions have, for the most part, burdened the life of ordinary Iranians, especially in a time of pandemic, as Iran has been prevented from obtaining medicines and medical equipment from abroad.

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.

Boris Johnson Contradicts Joe Biden With Claim of Intelligence That Taliban Could Take Kabul

By - Nevin Brown

In August, President Joe Biden was stunned by the rapid advance of the Taliban* through Afghanistan as US troops began to depart. In the weeks since, new details have emerged that intelligence officials in the United States and the United Kingdom were warning that the Taliban could advance quickly on Kabul.

In an interview with Savannah Guthrie on NBC's "Today" morning news program, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson admitted that intelligence officials had warned him that the Taliban was in a position to advance on Kabul swiftly.

"There was a spectrum of predictions from the intelligence people, amongst which was the possibility that Kabul would fall very fast and the Taliban would take over very fast."

Johnson spent much of the interview defending the Biden administrations' handling of the withdrawal.

The public stance that the Biden administration was surprised by the Taliban's swift advance has not held up to scrutiny. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [admitted that he had received a cable from Kabul in July](#) warning of rapid advance by the Taliban.

Details from Bob Woodward and Robert Costa's book "Peril" [present a similar story](#). As early as March, Blinken and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned that if the withdrawal did not slow down, the risk of a swift Taliban advance remained an ever-present danger.

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.

Family Lawyer Confirms Human Remains Found in Wyoming Belong to Gabby Petito
By - Nevin Brown

A body "consistent with the description" of Petito was discovered on Sunday after the woman had been reported missing on September 11th.

The attorney for the Petito family [confirmed to Insider](#) on Tuesday that the human remains found near Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming belong to Gabby Petito.

The death has been ruled a homicide by Teton County Coroner Dr. Brent Blue. The cause of death remains pending until the completion of the autopsy.

The 22-year-old vlogger had been on a cross-country trip with her fiance Brian Laundrie in their 2012 Ford Transit Van. Laundrie returned to his family's home in Florida on September 1st without Gabby and remains the primary suspect. It wasn't until ten days after he returned that she was reported missing.

The couple was last seen together on August 12th when a police officer responded to a [domestic incident](#) outside of Moab, Utah. In the police footage, Gabby is visibly distressed and the officer instructed the couple to separate for the night. Social media posts of their journey would continue to go up, until abruptly stopping in late August.

Gabby Petito's mother received her last text from her daughter on August 30th. Her mother thought the text was odd as it referred to her grandfather as 'Stan,' which was not something she knew Gabby to do. Her mother fears that that final text was not actually sent by her daughter.

The FBI searched the Laundrie's house on Monday, but Brian Laundrie remains missing and hasn't been seen since September 14th. Brian's parents believe he may have gone to Carlton Reserve in Sarasota County, Florida. The 24,565-acre reserve is difficult terrain to traverse as a large portion of it is seasonal wetlands.

Authorities got a break in their search for Gabby Petito's body when two bloggers, also from Florida, posted a video of what they believed was Petito's Ford Transit van alongside the road. The footage, from August 27th, was taken in the Bridger-Teton National Forest area and gave search parties a firm location to her potential whereabouts.

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.

The US Space Force's Oldest Adversary, Social Media, Roasts Their New Uniforms
By - Nevin Brown

The US Space Force has unveiled new uniform prototypes, and science fiction enthusiasts have already started the comparisons.

The dress uniform prototype is navy-blue, has six silver buttons with the Space Force symbol arranged diagonally down from the right shoulder, and has a light blue collar underneath the uniform. The officers, known as Guardians, will have their name pin on the left side of the uniform's front. The uniform prototype has stirred quite the reaction on social media.

Some have pointed out the striking resemblance between the Space Force and "Battlestar Galactica" uniforms.

Others have noticed the striking resemblance to the mirror Universe uniform design from "Star Trek: Enterprise":

Or "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan":

What about the evil Empire in "Star Wars"?

As of right now, the Space Force's first and only tradition is the internet coming together to laugh at its expense. From the moment the new branch of the military was announced, the striking similarities it shares with popular science fiction has been front and center. First, it was the almost direct plagiarism of Starfleet Command from "Star Trek" for the branches' logo. Then, naming officers Guardians made everyone think a little too much about Marvel Comics' Guardians of the Galaxy.

However, the Space Force did unveil a more terrestrial uniform, with their physical training uniforms.

The tweet says the uniforms, a shirt, gym shorts, and jacket with the Space Force logo, are "currently undergoing testing." Hopefully, these groundbreaking gym clothes will be able to handle the cascade of sweat produced by a true Space Force Guardian.

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.

Migrants Escape After Overtaking Transport Bus

By - Nevin Brown

A transport bus carrying migrants from Del Rio to the Rio Grande Valley was overtaken by migrants, leading to their escape.

In a briefing with Texas Governor Greg Abbott, the Border Patrol union informed him of the incident. The staff of the bus, a Department of Homeland Security contractor, were overtaken by the migrants before they were able to flee the scene. It has been reported that no law enforcement was present on the bus.

According to Brandon Judd, the president of the National Border Patrol Council, the bus was carrying migrants who were going to be deported. When they learned of their fate, the migrants overtook the bus and fled.

Over the past week, a campsite of migrants, under the international bridge in Del Rio, Texas, has grown from a few hundred [to as many as 14,000](#).

The DHS has been transporting migrants from the site over the past few days, with 3,000 being moved on Monday, as well as 3,500 being moved in the days before. While some of the migrants are being moved to processing locations in the US, others are being deported.

According to Governor Abbott, 8,600 migrants remain at the Del Rio site.

The influx of migrants has strained local law enforcement and hospitals and prompted Governor Abbott to request an emergency declaration from the Biden administration. He blasted the President for the situation and blamed the administration's failure to enforce immigration laws as what led to the crisis.

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.

China Says Meeting of Beijing, Moscow, Islamabad Envoys With Taliban Constructive

BEIJING, September 21 (Sputnik) - The special envoys from Russia, China and Pakistan for Afghanistan held a constructive dialogue with the Taliban (banned in Russia as a terrorist organization) in Kabul, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lijian Zhao said Wednesday. Earlier this week, reports emerged that the Taliban had invited the Chinese special envoy Yue Xiaoyong, the Russian president's special envoy for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov, and Pakistan's special envoy for Afghanistan Mohammad Sadiq Khan for talks in Kabul on September 21-22. "They held in-depth and constructive discussions on the recent developments in Afghanistan, especially on inclusiveness, human rights, economic and humanitarian issues, friendly relations between Afghanistan and other countries, especially neighboring countries, and the unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan,"

The three met with the movement's Acting Prime Minister Mohammad Hasan Akhund, as well as former Afghan President Hamid Karzai and former Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah, Beijing confirmed.

"The Taliban side stressed that it attaches great importance to Afghanistan's relations with China, Russia and Pakistan, and the three countries are playing a constructive and responsible role in consolidating peace and stability in Afghanistan," the spokesman added.

The representatives of the three countries also called on the international community to continue providing humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and stressed that the United States and their allies hold the biggest responsibility for the socio-economic reconstruction of the country and must provide it with the necessary economic and humanitarian assistance.

A new interim government in Afghanistan, led by Akhund, who served as a foreign minister during the first Taliban rule and has been under United Nations sanctions since 2001 was formed on September 6, following the takeover of Panjshir - the last part of Afghanistan holding out against the Taliban rule.

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 Abuse of Haitian Migrants Driven by Biden Administration's Racist Policies - Activists

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik), Barrington M. Salmon - The Biden administration's racist immigration policies must be reversed to prevent migrants from Haiti and other countries from being abused at the US border, human rights activists and former officials told Sputnik. Nearly 13,000 migrants, mostly from Haiti, arrived to the Texas town of Del Rio along the US-Mexico border over the last week, prompting the government to declare a state of emergency and deploy border agents on horseback, video clips of which went viral. Images of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers on horseback running down, whipping and seeking to subdue Haitian migrants has angered people like Monique Clesca, a Haitian writer, journalist and activist who has likened the corralling of those seeking asylum and refuge to a lynching.

Clesca told Sputnik she is angered and heartbroken by the callous manner in which the thousands of migrants have been treated. Videos and pictures show aggressive CBP officers roughing up, cursing and denigrating the Black men, women and children at encampments under and around the Del Rio International Bridge in Texas.

"This country has a right to decide its immigration policy but there's a certain level of expectation as to why they're coming," said Clesca, an international development consultant and a retired United Nations official. "A lot of them aren't coming directly from Haiti. They may have residency elsewhere, like Brazil or Chile and may have been pushed out or left. If someone is coming from Brazil, for example, they should be spoken to."

The Biden administration has kicked into high gear a deportation process that has removed and repatriated almost 6,000 of migrants in the encampments.

Clesca pointed out that many of the Haitians who massed at the US-Mexico border came after the July 7 catastrophic earthquake that killed more than 2,000 people and left thousands of others homeless.

UnDocuBlack's Patrice Lawrence said the "savages" on horseback who were whipping people should be fired immediately.

Lawrence, co-director of the immigrant rights organization founded in 2016, said the CPB attackers should be "replaced with people able to offer medical and healthcare, test for COVID and resettle them."

"Fifteen thousand migrants is not a crisis and it is something that the United States government can handle," Lawrence told Sputnik.

RACISM AND DOUBLE STANDARDS PREVAIL

Biden administration officials have said they are deeply troubled by the videos and pictures but not enough to stop the deportations. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas reiterated his message to migrants not to come to the US earlier this week.

Lawrence, born in Jamaica, who has lived in the United States as an undocumented immigrant, said the Biden administration needs to get rid of Title 42, a health statute instituted by former President Donald Trump which prevents migrants from gaining entry into the US for public health reasons and allows officials to deport those who illegally cross the border using the coronavirus outbreak as a reason.

She said Haitians should also be given humanitarian parole and any policy that hinders that from happening should be removed.

Lawrence pointed to anti-Black racism and bias in the US immigration agenda for the way Haitians are and have been treated.

"They have criminalized Black people and are willing to do whatever it takes to remove them," Lawrence said.

The US ramped up deportations, she noted, in advance of a District Judge Emmet Sullivan's order to stop expelling migrant families with children under Title 42, a ruling which is expected next week.

Kweku Lumumba, external relations coordinator for KOSSA and Green Party chair for Georgia, said the Biden administration's actions are indicative of the US policy towards immigrants in general and Haitians in particular.

"This is seen as standard even as people are seeking asylum, fleeing violence, corruption and poverty," Lumumba told Sputnik. "They want to be able to provide for their families. We've seen this before with the boat people."

Lumumba said a number of people, companies and other elements are capitalizing on migrants' plight and desperation.

"There are people who passed through 11 countries in three months. Stop buying the idea that Haiti is poor. They weren't poor because it cost \$17,000 per person or \$170 million or more," he said of the price Haitians seeking asylum in the US pay. "Airlines going to Brazil were making \$324,000 daily on a single plane. That's \$115 million annually going to the airlines."

US AND FOREIGN MEDDLING SOW CHAOS

Black Alliance for Peace's Haiti/Americas Coordinator, Jemima Pierre, told Sputnik all too often the true reasons for the steady stream of migrants from Haiti, Mexico, Guatemala and elsewhere are lost in conversation and debates. US foreign policy, American embrace and support of repressive governments, and in Haiti's case, the occupation of the island nation since 2004, are critical reasons for the people fleeing and trying to escape gangs, poverty and circumstances offering limited or few options.

"What is often lost is how did they get to the US border, why and how long?" Pierre asked. "It's a long story. This was not a sudden increase in the numbers of people. It's an increase in

draconian conditions. The US closed the borders which is illegal and does not allow people the opportunity to seek asylum or refuge. It's terrorism that is bringing Black people, Colombians and others. Biden is a racist. The US policy is racist."

The Haitian-born Pierre, who emigrated to the US as a child, said US imperialism and white supremacy have governed the way that successive American governments have treated the Haitian people. She said the intervention of a US/UN/Canada/France/OAS coalition into Haiti's affairs has been fueling the Haiti crisis.

"The terrible actions of the US include the removal of [former President Jean-Bertrand] Aristide in 2004 and US support of horrible, corrupt governments... Biden picked the latest prime minister. This is the story," Pierre said. "They know they can get away with treating Black immigrants this way without people making a lot of noise and pushing back. And they think that we're a bunch of negroes who can't take care of ourselves."

Clesca said the assassination of President Jovenel Moise and the earthquake caused widespread devastation in the south of the island.

"They have been devastating for the economy, for human rights, in terms of opportunities. Home is no longer home or welcoming for many Haitians. People have been selling their clothes, land and other possessions to be able to go elsewhere," said Clesca, who was in Haiti when Moise was assassinated on July 7 and when the earthquake hit.

The rulers in the last 10 years have overseen misrule, misgovernment and corruption, she added.

"People have left to find schooling for their children, jobs and opportunities. This is pretty much the situation. A Human Rights organization said recently that almost half of the country is gang territory, controlled by gangs," Clesca said. "There are also kidnappings. It's not possible to go to the bank or the supermarket without your heart in your mouth. It's a dire situation."

THE BEST FUTURE IS A HAITIAN FUTURE

Clesca echoed Pierre's comments, saying Haitian sovereignty and control of their own affairs has been choked off by US and western countries in league with a small clique of the Haitian elite.

"There is lack of opportunity or investment in human rights or Haitian education. Regimes have broken human rights records, yet all have been supported by the US, Canada, the United Nations and France, and money has been misappropriated, all under the watchful eye of the US, France and Canada," Clesca said.

Clesca said she has been active for the past seven months working with representatives of political parties, civil society organizations, Haitians in the Diaspora and others developing a political framework that would produce a participatory, democratic, transparent mechanism to choose a prime minister and president of a transition government.

"We're working on a social justice agenda, healthcare and economic measures. We're in the phase of designating candidates for prime minister and president," Clesca said. "We hope that the syndicate of foreign nations will see the light that Haiti should be sovereign, that we should make our own choices and be responsible for our own solutions, not solutions coming from abroad."

A recent case - the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban - illustrates that US and western solutions are not infallible, she said.

"Their solutions aren't working. They should look at the solutions we're offering. Let's try to see if we can implement them and if they'll work. They need to help us build schools, hospitals, [offer] job training," Clesca said. "We hope the US will value Haitians actually standing up for themselves."

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 - Palestinians Ready to Renew Talks With Israel if They Show Readiness - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The Palestinians are ready to resume peace talks with Israel but have yet to see a willingness from the latter's new leadership, Palestinian National Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al Maliki told Sputnik.

"Of course we are ready," al Maliki said on Tuesday when asked if Palestine was ready to resume peace talks with Israel. "Is it possible? Well, it depends on the willingness on the other side. What we have heard so far from the Israeli leaders, [they] have shown they are not ready and they are not willing."

Al Maliki added that the UN Secretary-General should publicly highlight that the Palestinians have reacted positively to his call for renewed dialogue with Israel and should specifically call out Israeli officials responsible for blocking the resumption of talks.

Al-Maliki also told Sputnik that he is ready to meet with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

Earlier on Tuesday, Guterres urged the leaders of Israel and Palestine to resume negotiations towards a two-state solution during his remarks at the UN General Assembly.

In late July, Russian Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanskiy said that Russia would further boost the activity of the Middle East Quartet to advance peace in the region and called on the members of the group to examine Moscow's initiatives. Following the most recent Israeli-Palestinian escalation in May, Russia, in particular, proposed to hold a meeting of the Quartet with the participation of regional actors — Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, Bahrain, Palestinians, Israelis, and possibly Saudi Arabia.

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 - Portugal Wants to Cooperate With Russia on Economic Crises, COVID-19, Refugees - President

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - Lisbon is interested in strengthening cooperation with Russia on addressing various global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic response, terrorism, climate change, and migration, among others, Portuguese President Marcelo Nuno Duarte Rebelo de Sousa told Sputnik.

"Nowadays, the pandemic is still a vital subject. Economic and social crises, emerging from the pandemic - another vital subject," De Sousa said when asked about areas where the two countries could strengthen cooperation.

The Portuguese president went on to add the need to cooperate on the challenges posed by terrorism, migration and refugees along with security in Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia. De Sousa pointed out that the issues to be addressed are numerous and require a broad multilateral approach that does not just involve "classic allies," but the cooperation of everybody in international organizations such as the United Nations.

"In that sense, they require cooperation, a broad cooperation, and in that cooperation, of course, there is space left for countries such as those belonging to the European Union and neighbors such as the Russian Federation," he said.

De Sousa emphasized that a "permanent relation of dialogue" exists between Moscow and Lisbon.

However, he reiterated that the current challenges require even greater cooperation via multilateralism in that that no one country, regardless of its status, can address them alone. "Little by little, we need each other. No power, no global power, no regional power, no local power can act by itself, alone," he said. "That's why we think it's useful to go on keeping the dialogue with countries that are, at the same time, European nations, which is the case of Russian Federation."

De Sousa also emphasized that cooperation at the level of international organizations, necessitates even greater emphasis on "respecting international law, respecting the values and principles and coexistence of different points of view, trying to reinforce human rights and the rule of law."

De Sousa spoke to Sputnik on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York.

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 - Lifting Sanctions on Taliban Not on UN Security Council Agenda - Russian Ambassador to UN

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The waving of sanctions on the Taliban (terrorist group, banned in Russia) is not on the UN Security Council agenda but the issue should be given careful consideration, Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia told Sputnik on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

"The topic of lifting the sanctions imposed on the Taliban via the Security Council is not on the agenda right now. Of course, this is an important issue, and sooner or later it will still have to be solved," Nebenzia said.

However, this issue should not be rushed as the situation must be carefully considered, according to the Russian official

"I [can] say that practically all members of the Council, and not just the five members of its permanent members, have repeatedly, during their speeches on the topic of Afghanistan, talked about the cautious approach toward the new Afghan authorities," he added.

The idea of a summit between the five permanent members of the UN Security Council — China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States — is still relevant but no specific details have been discussed, Nebenzia 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.

RPT - Guterres Got Letter From Taliban Requesting to Join 76th Session of General Assembly

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has received a letter from the foreign affairs minister of the Taliban group (terrorist group, banned in Russia) requesting to participate in the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, UN spokesperson Farhan Haq told Sputnik.

"On 15 September 2021, the Secretary-General received a communication from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the United Nations signed by Ambassador Ghulam Isaczai, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations in New York, containing the list of delegation of Afghanistan for the 76th session of the General Assembly. The Permanent Representative is listed as the head of delegation," Haq said. A Doha-based spokesperson of the movement Mohammad Suhail Shaheen has been nominated to lead Afghanistan's mission to the United Nations, Haq said.

"The letter further indicates that the mission of the Permanent Representative is considered over and that he no longer represents Afghanistan. A new Permanent Representative, Mohammad Suhail Shaheen, is nominated," the letter said, according to Haq.

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.

Russia's Nebenzia Calls for Solving Afghan Humanitarian Crisis Before Discussing Sanctions

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - Before discussing the sanctions against Afghanistan, the countries should solve the humanitarian crisis in the country and unfreeze its foreign assets, Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia told Sputnik on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

"We believe that at this stage, the humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan remains one of the more pressing problems. I would say that if we discuss sanctions, then we must start with their negative consequences [for the local population from humanitarian point of view]," Nebenzia said. "After all, it is precisely such tough measures that today can lead to an economic collapse in the country."

After the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan, the United States froze nearly \$9.5 billion in assets belonging to the Afghan central bank, while the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Union suspended funding for projects in the Islamic republic.

In mid-August, the Taliban took over Kabul and the official Afghan government collapsed. After seizing the last resisting province of Panjshir, the Taliban announced the composition of the new interim government of Afghanistan led by Mohammad Hasan Akhund, who has been under United Nations sanctions since 2001.

On September 13, Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen told Sputnik that the new Afghan government is ready to take all possible legal steps to unfreeze Afghanistan's foreign assets in the United States.

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 Events Must Be Held In-Person With All Anti-COVID Measures Taken - Russian Ambassador

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The UN events should be held in a face-to-face format, yet with all anti-COVID-19 measures in place, Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia told Sputnik on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

"We are convinced that the UN events should be held in a face-to-face format, of course, with the observance of precautionary measures," Nebenzia said.

He said that the Russian delegation is glad that so many leaders of states will come to New York this year in person.

"The so-called digital diplomacy, for many reasons, cannot replace personal communication, face-to-face negotiations. Without them, it is extremely difficult to achieve the required degree of understanding and trust with partners," Nebenzia explained.

The UN Headquarters opened its doors on Tuesday for many world leaders and top officials coming in person to New York City for the annual high-level General Assembly week. More than 100 top countries' officials are expected to participate in the UN gathering this year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which in 2020, forced the event into a fully virtual format.

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.

Biden's 'Abusive' Policies to Blame for Mistreatment of Haitian Migrants at Border - HRW

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The mistreatment of Haitian migrants at the US border are a result of the Biden administration's abusive and racist policies, Human Rights Watch said in a statement.

Nearly 13,000 migrants, mostly from Haiti, arrived to the Texas town of Del Rio along the US-Mexico border over the last week, prompting the government to declare a state of emergency and deploy border agents on horseback to deter the migrants.

"The US government showed a total disregard for the right to seek asylum when it sent agents on horseback with reins flailing to control and deter this largely Black migrant population," HRW

Managing Director Alison Parker said on Tuesday. "This violent treatment of Haitians at the border is just the latest example of racially discriminatory, abusive, and illegal US border policies that are returning people to harm and humanitarian disaster."

The rights group also said the incidents stem from the immigration policies implemented by the "administration of President Joe Biden." HRW blasted the administration's six-step strategy to address the increase of migrants that included a "surge" of agents to "improve control of the area" and new expulsion flights to Haiti.

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 - Portugal Wants to Cooperate With Russia on Economic Crises, COVID-19, Refugees - President

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - Lisbon is interested in strengthening cooperation with Russia on addressing various global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic response, terrorism, climate change, and migration, among others, Portuguese President Marcelo Nuno Duarte Rebelo de Sousa told Sputnik.

"Nowadays, the pandemic is still a vital subject. Economic and social crises, emerging from the pandemic - another vital subject," De Sousa said when asked about areas where the two countries could strengthen cooperation.

The Portuguese president went on to add the need to cooperate on the challenges posed by terrorism, migration and refugees along with security in Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia. De Sousa pointed out that the issues to be addressed are numerous and require a broad multilateral approach that does not just involve "classic allies," but the cooperation of everybody in international organizations such as the United Nations.

"In that sense, they require cooperation, a broad cooperation, and in that cooperation, of course, there is space left for countries such as those belonging to the European Union and neighbors such as the Russian Federation," he said.

De Sousa emphasized that a "permanent relation of dialogue" exists between Moscow and Lisbon.

However, he reiterated that the current challenges require even greater cooperation via multilateralism in that that no one country, regardless of its status, can address them alone. "Little by little, we need each other. No power, no global power, no regional power, no local power can act by itself, alone," he said. "That's why we think it's useful to go on keeping the dialogue with countries that are, at the same time, European nations, which is the case of Russian Federation."

De Sousa also emphasized that cooperation at the level of international organizations, necessitates even greater emphasis on "respecting international law, respecting the values and principles and coexistence of different points of view, trying to reinforce human rights and the rule of law."

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.

Kerry Calls China Decision to Halt Coal-Fired Plant Projects 'Great Contribution'

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - US climate envoy John Kerry said Chinese President Xi Jinping's announcement to stop funding the building of coal-powered plants across the world is a great contribution in the climate fight.

During his UN General Assembly address earlier in the day, Jinping said Beijing will not pursue new coal-fired power projects in developing countries around the world.

"We've been talking to China for quite some period of time about this. And I'm absolutely delighted to hear that President Xi has made this important decision," Kerry said in statement as quoted by Politico on Tuesday. "It's a great contribution. It's a good beginning to the efforts we need to achieve success in Glasgow."

Xi during his speech earlier also said China will step up support for other developing countries in developing green and low-carbon energy.

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.

Idea of Summit Between UNSC Permanent Members Still Relevant - Russian Ambassador to UN

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The idea of a summit between the five permanent members of the UN Security Council — China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States — is still relevant but no specific details have been discussed, Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia told Sputnik on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

"The idea of a summit of the leaders of states which are permanent members of the UN Security Council remains relevant. So far, there is no clarity about the timing and place of the meeting," Nebenzia said.

He noted that the COVID-19 pandemic intervened in the preparation of such a meeting.

"Nevertheless, any organizational difficulties can be overcome if there is political will on the part of all participants. We are convinced that such a meeting should be held taking into account the seriousness of the challenges facing the global community and the special role of the permanent members of the Security Council," he 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.

Biden Stresses to Johnson US Support for 'Secure, Prosperous' N. Ireland - White House

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden during talks at the White House with UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson stressed the US commitment to a secure and prosperous Northern Ireland, the White House said in a statement.

"They also discussed Northern Ireland, and President Biden reiterated his longstanding support for a secure and prosperous Northern Ireland in which all communities have a voice and enjoy the gains of the hard-won peace," the White House said on Tuesday.

The two leaders, in addition, discussed ongoing work on Afghanistan along with developments in the Indo-Pacific, the release added.

Last week, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said if the Good Friday agreement that brought peace to Northern Ireland in 1998 is destroyed, a post-Brexit trade deal between the UK and the US is very "unlikely."

As part of the Brexit agreement, Northern Ireland remained in the European single market and customs unions after the UK left the bloc for good on December 31, 2020. However, the UK government has been reluctant to implement the agreed full customs checks, arguing that British businesses needed more time to adjust to the new regulations.

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.

Lifting Sanctions on Taliban Not on UN Security Council Agenda - Russian Ambassador to UN

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The waving of sanctions on the Taliban (terrorist group, banned in Russia) is not on the UN Security Council agenda but the issue should be given careful consideration, Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia told Sputnik on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

"The topic of lifting the sanctions imposed on the Taliban via the Security Council is not on the agenda right now. Of course, this is an important issue, and sooner or later it will still have to be solved," Nebenzia said.

However, this issue should not be rushed as the situation must be carefully considered, according to the Russian official

"I [can] say that practically all members of the Council, and not just the five members of its permanent members, have repeatedly, during their speeches on the topic of Afghanistan, talked about the cautious approach toward the new Afghan authorities," he added.

9/21/2021 8:00:00 PM -04:00

Lifting Sanctions on Taliban Not on UN Security Council Agenda But Must be Considered Carefully - Russian UN Ambassador to Sputnik
Sputnik

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, Cavusoglu Hold Talks on Syria, Afghanistan, Karabakh - State Dept.

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu met on the margins of the UN General Assembly to discuss a number of regional security matters including Afghanistan, Syria and the Caucasus, a State Department official told reporters.

"This afternoon's meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu went about an hour. The two of them, of course, discussed Afghanistan at length. They also talked about Syria, and they had a relatively long conversation about the Caucasus - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh," the senior State Department official said on Tuesday.

During a speech before the UNGA earlier in the day, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan urged the international community to find a political solution to the conflict in Syria to prevent it from becoming a protracted one.

Erdogan expressed hope that the conciliatory approach displayed by the countries engaged on the issue of extending the humanitarian assistance delivery mechanism to Syria for another 12 months will be emulated to return home Syrian asylum seekers.

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 House Advances Bill to Avoid Shutdown, White House Backs Despite Concerns

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The US House voted in favor of advancing a measure that would temporarily fund the government in order to avoid a shutdown on September 30 and suspend the country's debt limit.

The House voted 217-207 on Tuesday to clear a procedural hurdle and advance the legislation to a final debate and vote.

The Biden administration in a statement said it backed the funding bill as well as suspending the debt limit and looked forward to working with Congress on a full year appropriations bill.

However, the White House also expressed concerns of items missing from the legislation.

"The Administration strongly supports passage of H.R. 5305, the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act," the White House said in a statement.

"However, the Administration is deeply disappointed that the bill fails to provide the authority requested to fully resettle Afghans, and to adjust their status, thereby obstructing them in building successful new lives in their new communities in the United States."

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 House Passes Bill to Compensate American Personnel Affected by 'Havana Syndrome'

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The US house unanimously passed legislation to compensate CIA personnel and diplomats affected by the so called "Havana Syndrome" while serving in Cuba, China and elsewhere.

US diplomats were first diagnosed with the Havana syndrome in Cuba in 2016 and then in China in 2018. The diplomats said they experienced piercing sounds that have caused longer-term health effects. US diplomats in Russia, Tajikistan, Austria and in several African countries have also reported to have experienced Havana syndrome symptoms, such as nausea and dizziness.

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 Committee to Deliberate for 'Some Time' on Taliban Credentials Request - State Dept.

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - It will take the UN's credentials committee some time to decide whether to give the Taliban (banned in Russia) credentials as the official representatives of Afghanistan, a senior US State Department official said.

Earlier, UN spokesperson Farhan Haq told Sputnik that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres received a letter from the foreign affairs minister of the Taliban requesting to participate in the 76th session of the UN General Assembly.

"There is a credentials committee, we are on it. It will take some time to deliberate, and so we will obviously follow this issue closely and deliberate along with other members of the credentials committee," the senior administration official said in response to a question about the Taliban's request for UN credentials, adding that it is not expected to be done this week.

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 Board Emphasizes Importance of Thorough, Timely Review of Georgieva Matter - Statement

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The IMF Executive Board said it met on the ethics matter involving Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and stressed the importance of a thorough probe.

"The IMF's Executive Board met today for an initial briefing from the Ethics Committee on the matter related to Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva's alleged role in the World Bank's Doing Business 2018 as described in the Investigation's Report," the board said in a statement on Tuesday. "The Executive Board emphasized the importance it attached to conducting a thorough, objective, and timely review and agreed to meet again soon for a further discussion."

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 House Advances Bill to Fund Government, Avoid Shutdown

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The US House voted in favor of advancing a measure that would temporarily fund the government in order to avoid a shutdown on September 30 and suspend the country's debt limit.

The House voted 217-207 on Tuesday to clear a procedural hurdle and advance the legislation to a final debate and vote.

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.

Gun Restrictions Vital to Protect Democracy in Public Places - Civil Liberties Groups

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - Restriction on guns being allowed in public spaces is essential for the free functioning of democracy, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and its New York sister organization argued in a new legal brief before the New York State Supreme Court.

"Today, the New York Civil Liberties Union and the ACLU submitted an amicus brief to the Supreme Court in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Corlett*, arguing that restrictions on guns in public spaces are appropriate to make public spaces safe for democratic participation," the brief said on Tuesday.

Strict regulations of public carry, both open and concealed, have been common measures throughout US history as a way of maintaining the peace and safety of public places and states have an important interest in making public spaces safe in order to facilitate public debate, the brief said.

"For centuries, restrictions on concealed weapons have been an important part of maintaining the peace in which social, civic, and economic life thrive... (T)here is no substitute for the exchange of ideas in the physical public square," New York Civil Liberties Union Executive Director Donna Lieberman said.

Rolling back reasonable regulations on the carrying of weapons would erode speech, assembly, protest and other First Amendment activities vital to US democracy, Lieberman 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.

Congressman Urges US House to Reverse Plan to Strip \$1Bln Funding for Israeli Iron Dome

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The US House Democratic leadership needs to reconsider plans to pull \$1 billion in funding for Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system, which would harm the Jewish state's ability to defend itself, ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee Michael McCaul said.

"There is strong bipartisan support to supply our friend and ally Israel with the tools to defend itself against future threats and I would urge Democrat leaders to reconsider this dangerous decision," McCaul said in a press release on Tuesday.

US House Democrats removed the \$1 billion to replenish the Iron Dome from a stopgap government funding bill under pressure from lawmakers with a history of antipathy toward Israel, according to media reports.

McCaul said the Iron Dome saved lives and helped limit civilian casualties in a May conflict in which Hamas militants in Gaza fired more than 4,000 rockets at Israel.

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.

Yellen, Italian Finance Minister Discuss Tax Reforms - Statement

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen held a call with Italian Economic and Finance Minister Daniele Franco during which they discussed international tax reforms, the Treasury Department said.

Yellen and Franco "discussed the importance of advancing global tax reform efforts in the OECD/G20 discussions on international taxation and finding a compromise on the withdrawal of digital services taxes in that context," the Treasury Department said in a statement on Tuesday. The bilateral talks came after a virtual meeting held by Yellen last week with finance ministers from the Group of 7 countries (G7), where she supported efforts by international fiscal authorities to revamp and make the global tax system more equitable.

The G7 agreed in June to impose a global minimum tax on corporate foreign earnings. The agreement was later supported by 134 countries representing more than 90 percent of the world's gross domestic product.

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.

Pan-American Health Body to Make COVID-19 Vaccines in Brazil, Argentina - Release

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - Two centers in Brazil and Argentina will become regional hubs to develop and manufacture mRNA-based vaccines to combat the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases across Latin America, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said.

"PAHO has announced the selection of two centers in Argentina and Brazil as regional hubs for the development and production of mRNA-based vaccines in Latin America in a bid to tackle COVID-19 and future infectious-disease challenges," the organization said in a press release on Tuesday.

The Bio-Manguinhos Institute of Technology on Immunobiologicals (BMITI) at the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ) was selected as the center in Brazil and Sinergium Biotech, a private sector biopharmaceutical company, was chosen as the center in Argentina, the release said. "[BMITI] has a long tradition in vaccine manufacturing and has made promising advances in the development of an innovative mRNA vaccine against COVID-19" while "Sinergium will partner with pharmaceutical mAbxience ...to develop and manufacture active vaccine ingredients," the release added.

World Health Organization Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan and PAHO Assistant Director Jarbas Barbosa announced the initiative during PAHO's 59th Directing Council on the subject of technology transfer for the production of mRNA vaccines in the Americas, 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.

Erdogan Calls for Political Solution to Syria Conflict During UN General Assembly Address

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan urged the international community to find a political solution to the conflict in Syria to prevent it from becoming a protracted one.

"The international community cannot allow the Syrian crisis to linger on for another 10 years. We need to display a stronger will to find a political solution to the problem," Erdogan said in his address during the 76th session of the UN General Assembly.

Erdogan expressed hope that the conciliatory approach displayed by the countries engaged on the issue of extending the humanitarian assistance delivery mechanism to Syria for another 12 months will be emulated to return home Syrian asylum seekers.

The war in Syria is in its tenth year and Turkey is actively engaged in the conflict after it launched Operation Euphrates Shield in August, 2016 to eradicate the Islamic State terror group (banned in Russia) and push Kurdish militia away from its borders. In cooperation with Syrian opposition, Turkey took hold of the cities of Jarabulus, Azaz and Al-Bab.

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 Lawsuit Challenges Alliance of 2 Airlines for Stifling Competition - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration and six US states filed a lawsuit to prevent American Airlines and Jet Blue from consolidating operations in New York City and Boston, the Justice Department said.

"The civil antitrust complaint alleges that this extensive combination, which they call the "Northeast Alliance," will not only eliminate important competition in these cities, but will also

harm air travelers across the country by significantly diminishing JetBlue's incentive to compete with American elsewhere," the Justice Department said in a press release on Tuesday. The Northeast Alliance combines American's and JetBlue's operations at four major airports: Boston Logan, New York John F. Kennedy and LaGuardia and Newark Liberty, the release said. "In an industry where just four airlines control more than 80% of domestic air travel, American Airlines' 'alliance' with JetBlue is, in fact, an unprecedented maneuver," US Attorney General Merrick Garland said in the release. "It would result in higher fares, fewer choices, and lower quality service if allowed to continue."

The airlines have committed to coordinate on all aspects of network planning, including which routes to fly, when to fly them, who will fly them and what size planes to use for each flight, 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.

SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY
WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik)

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

* Chinese President Xi Jinping said in a speech before the UN General Assembly on Tuesday that Beijing will not pursue new coal-fired power projects in developing countries around the world.

* China will never use its international position to invade or bully other countries or seek world hegemony, Xi said.

* Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki told Sputnik on Tuesday he is ready to meet with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly taking place this week in New York.

* UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on world leaders to build up humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan that is on the brink of a catastrophe following the Taliban (banned in Russia) takeover.

BIDEN ADDRESS

* The United States is not seeking another Cold War and is ready to work with any nation that pursues peaceful resolutions of issues, US President Joe Biden said at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday.

* Biden said the United States is committing \$10 billion to combat hunger and invest in food systems domestically and globally.

* The world needs a new financing mechanism for global health security in order to monitor and prevent future pandemics like the ongoing COVID-19 one, Biden said.

* US military power should not be a primary tool to solve world problems, but rather a tool of last resort while Washington stands ready to defend its national interests if needed, Biden said.

* The United States will cooperate with its allies and partners through multilateral institutions like the United Nations to address global challenges, including those in the Indo-Pacific region, Biden said.

ATTEMPTED COUP IN SUDAN

* Sudan did not request Russia's assistance in connection with the attempted military coup, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov told Sputnik on Tuesday after a meeting with Sudanese Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammed Sharif.

* Sudanese Prime Minister Abdullah Hamdok expressed a belief that the attempted military coup indicated the need for a reform of the country's military and security agencies.

SCRIPAL CASE

* The UK Counter Terrorism Policing network confirmed on Tuesday the charges against Sergey Fedotov, a third suspect in the Salisbury poisoning attack on former Russian military intelligence officer Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia.

* The UK police will send a notice to Interpol regarding the third suspect in the poisoning of Sergey and Yulia Skripal, UK Home Secretary Priti Patel said.

* London refuses to investigate the Skripals case jointly with Russia despite calls by Moscow, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

* The Russian Embassy in UK, during a meeting at the UK Foreign Office, expressed its categorical rejection of the methods used by the UK police in establishing the facts in the case of Yulia and Sergei Skripal, the Russian diplomatic mission said in a statement.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN RUSSIA

* The results of the elections for the State Duma show the United Russia party won 324 out of the 450 seats in parliament's lower house, followed by the Communist Party with 57 seats, the Just Russia - For Truth party with 27 seats, the Liberal Democratic party with 21 seats and the New People party with 13 seats, the Central Election Commission said.

* The United States failed to discredit Russia's electoral system despite all the cyberattacks and vote interference, the Russian Foreign Ministry's spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, assured.

AFGHANISTAN DEVELOPMENTS

* Representatives of the Taliban movement (banned in Russia as a terrorist organization) and the Russian president's special envoy for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, discussed at meetings in Kabul the current situation in Afghanistan, the country's future and interaction between countries, the movement's spokesman Mohammad Naeem told Sputnik.

* Developments in Afghanistan will be the key topic on the agenda of bilateral and multilateral meetings during the high-level week of the UN General Assembly in New York, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin told Sputnik.

* Afghan Acting Prime Minister Mohammad Hasan Akhund held a meeting in Kabul with special representatives of Russia, China and Pakistan, 1TV reported.

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.

Appointment of Taliban Envoy 'Matter for Credentials Committee' - UN Spokesperson

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The appointment of the envoy to the United Nations from the Taliban (terrorist group, banned in Russia) is a matter for credentials committee', UN spokesperson Farhan Haq told Sputnik.

"This is a matter for the credentials committee," Haq said when asked about the possible Taliban envoy appointment to the UN.

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.

Timing of NASA Summit With Roscosmos Chief Depends on COVID-19 Pandemic - Nelson

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - A planned summit in Russia between the leaders of NASA and Roscosmos will take place when the COVID-19 pandemic eases, NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said on Tuesday.

"As soon as possible depending on COVID-19," Nelson told reporters at a press conference when asked about the timing of his planned trip to Moscow to meet Roscosmos chief Dmitry Rogozin.

Rogozin invited Nelson to Russia shortly after he was sworn in as NASA administrator in early May, possibly before the end of 2021. Dubai has also been suggested as a possible site for the two to meet.

Nelson said on Tuesday that scheduling depends on getting past the surge in COVID-19 cases due the Delta variant and other potential coronavirus mutations, but that he wants to go at the earliest possible time.

"I'm very enthusiastic our cooperation with Russia continue," Nelson said. "It's been a model of how nations can come together in peaceful cooperation in space and I think it's important that we keep that model going."

Nelson told Sputnik in August that he hopes to persuade Russia to collaborate with the United States on the NASA-led Lunar Gateway project - a proposed space station orbiting the Moon that would service future flights by humans to Mars and further into deep space.

US-Russian cooperation in space dates back to a joint Apollo-Soyuz mission that sent three US astronauts into space aboard an Apollo spacecraft that docked in orbit with a Soviet-made Soyuz vehicle.

More recently, Russia has indicated it wants to continue its partnership with the United States

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.

Taliban in Letter to UN Says Spokesman Shaheen Nominated to Lead UN Mission

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) – The Taliban (banned in Russia) informed UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a letter, that a Doha-based spokesperson of the movement Mohammad Suhail Shaheen has been nominated to lead Afghanistan's mission to the United Nations, UN spokesperson Farhan Haq told Sputnik on Tuesday.

"The letter further indicates that the mission of the Permanent Representative is considered over and that he no longer represents Afghanistan. A new Permanent Representative, Mohammad Suhail Shaheen, is nominated," the letter said, according to Haq.

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.

Guterres Got Letter From Taliban Requesting to Join 76th Session of General Assembly

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has received a letter from the foreign affairs minister of the Taliban group (terrorist group, banned in Russia) requesting to participate in the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, UN spokesperson Farhan Haq told Sputnik.

"On 15 September 2021, the Secretary-General received a communication from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the United Nations signed by Ambassador Ghulam Isaczai, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations in New York, containing the list of delegation of Afghanistan for the 76th session of the General Assembly. The Permanent Representative is listed as the head of delegation," Haq 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.

Xi Tells UNGA China Aims to Provide 2Bln COVID-19 Vaccines to World by End of Year

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) – China is planning to supply the world with 2 billion vaccine doses against COVID-19 by the end of this year amid the ongoing global pandemic, President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday.

"China will strive to provide a total of 2 billion [COVID-19] vaccines to the world by the end of this year," the Chinese leader said during his virtual address for the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Xi Jinping has also noted that in addition to donating \$100 million to COVAX China will donate 100 million COVID-19 vaccines to developing countries over the course of this year.

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.

China Will Never Invade, 'Bully' Other Countries, Seek Hegemony – Xi Jinping at UNGA

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) – China will never use its international position to invade or “bully” other countries or seek world hegemony, President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday. “China will never invade or bully others or seek hegemony,” the Chinese leader said during his virtual address for the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

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.

Xi Says China Will Not Build New Coal-Fired Power Projects Abroad

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - Chinese President Xi Jinping said in a speech before the UN General Assembly on Tuesday that Beijing will not pursue new coal-fired power projects in developing countries around the world. “China will step up support for other developing countries in developing green and low-carbon energy and will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad,” Xi 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.

Biden Congratulates Canada's Trudeau, Liberal Party on Election Victory

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden congratulated Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party's victory in Monday's parliamentary elections, the White House said in a statement.

"President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. spoke today with Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada to congratulate him on the Liberal Party's victory in the September 20 federal elections," the statement said on Tuesday.

Both leaders underscored the strong and deep friendship between Canada and the United States, the statement said. They also discussed issues concerning economic recovery and coordinating efforts with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic response, the statement said. "The President expressed to Prime Minister Trudeau his desire to continue working closely and deepening collaboration with Canada - one of our nation's top partners," the statement added. With more than 92% of the ballots counted, Trudeau's Liberal Party has won 156 seats in Parliament out of the total 338 seats and the Conservative Party has won 122 seats.

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.

Turkish Parliament to Consider Ratifying Paris Climate Agreement in October - Erdogan

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The Turkish government will present the Paris Climate Agreement for ratification to parliament next month, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday.

"We are among the first countries to have signed the Paris Climate Agreement. However, we hadn't yet ratified this agreement," Erdogan said while addressing the 76th session of the UN General Assembly. "We plan to present the Paris Climate Agreement for approval to our Parliament next month."

The government of Turkey also envisages to complete the ratification process of the carbon neutral targeted agreement ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow scheduled to take place in November.

The Paris Climate Agreement, signed by more than 190 nations in December 2015 and effective since November 2016, entails an objective to keep the rise in global temperature to less than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels and reach the net-zero-emission target by 2050.

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.

Biden, Iraq President Discuss Bilateral Relations During UN General Assembly - White House

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden and Iraq President Barham Saleh discussed bilateral relations and the upcoming parliamentary elections at the United Nations, the White House said on Tuesday.

"President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. met today with the President Barham Saleh of Iraq on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York. Together they discussed strengthening the bilateral relationship and deepening cooperation on regional diplomatic initiatives," the White House said in a statement.

Biden emphasized the United States' commitment to Iraq's long-term stability and the two leaders also reaffirmed their respect for Iraq's democracy as well as its efforts to hold free, fair and transparent parliamentary elections on October 10.

The US president lauded recent initiatives such as the Baghdad Regional Summit and the historic visit of Pope Francis to Iraq earlier this year as an important symbol of the country's contribution to regional stability and interfaith tolerance, the statement said.

The parliamentary elections in Iraq were initially scheduled for June but were postponed. The Iraqi authorities have confirmed that the new date in October remains in force.

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.

No Agreements on Blinken-Lavrov Meeting at UNGA - Russian Ambassador to UN

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - There have been no discussions on a bilateral meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the sidelines of the high-level week of the UN General Assembly session in New York, Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia told Sputnik on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

"As far as I know, there are no such agreements yet. But they will see each other at least at the planned traditional meeting of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council with the UN Secretary General [Antonio Guterres]," Nebenzia said.

On Tuesday, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also said that no meeting was planned between the two diplomats.

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 in Touch With Mexican Authorities About Situation at Border - White House

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration is in touch with the Mexican government about the ongoing migrant crisis at the US-Mexico border, White House spokesperson Jen Psaki said on Tuesday.

"We are, of course, continuing to be in close touch with the Mexican government about how to address the challenging situation at the border, including with a number of Haitians who have come across the border as well," Psaki said during a briefing aboard Air Force One.

Psaki said the situation is not about one country or individuals coming from one country but is part of a broad and ongoing conversation with the Mexican government to address the immigration situation at the border.

The US government has reported that more than 200,000 migrants have come into contact with the border authorities in the past two months each. Some 13,000 migrants, most of whom came from Haiti, are presently at the Del Rio border crossing in the US state of Texas. The crisis has prompted Texas Governor Greg Abbott to request President Joe Biden to declare a state of emergency.

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 Call Between Biden and Macron to Happen Soon, Details Being Finalized

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The call between US President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron will happen soon after their respective teams finalize all the details, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said on Tuesday during a briefing aboard Air Force One.

"It'll happen soon. We're in touch with Macron's team about finalizing the details and the schedule for that. The president looks forward to speaking with him, to reaffirming our

commitment to the partnership – the long-standing alliance – and to continuing to work together on a range of important issues, including security in the Indo-Pacific," Psaki said.

The US and France have experienced turbulence in their diplomatic ties in the days following the announcement of an agreement between Australia, the UK and US to get Canberra nuclear-powered submarines, undermining a \$66 billion submarine deal between Paris and Canberra.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian called Australia's decision a "stab in the back," emphasizing that trust had been undermined. French Secretary of State for European Affairs, Clement Beaune, stated that Europe must reinforce strategic autonomy and defense after this incident.

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 Democrats Strike Down \$1Bln in Israel Defense Aid to Keep US Govt Running - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - Democrat lawmakers in US Congress will drop \$1 billion of US aid for an Israeli air defense system in order to keep the US federal government funded over the next 2 months, political news site The Hill reported on Tuesday.

The provision to assist Israel's 'Iron Dome' air defense system was originally included in a bill to keep the federal government funded through December 3, but was removed on objection from some progressives in the Democratic Party, The Hill said, citing sources familiar with the last-minute snag.

The issue over Iron Dome funding comes as Democratic centrists and progressives appeared at odds over the timing and scope of Biden's infrastructure agenda.

Moderates demanded a pledge from Democratic leaders last month to hold a vote by next Monday on the \$1.2 trillion Senate-passed bipartisan infrastructure bill to invest in roads, bridges and broadband initiatives.

But progressives have threatened to tank that bill if the larger, \$3.5 trillion "human" infrastructure package to invest in social safety net programs like childcare and expanded Medicare benefits isn't completed by then.

Not all were happy with the decision to drop the funding for the Israeli air defense system.

Josh Gottheimer, a leading Democrat centrist, expressed frustration that the Iron Dome funding was being removed, but stopped short of threatening to vote against the bill.

"The Iron Dome protects innocent civilians in Israel from terrorist attacks and some of my colleagues have now blocked funding it," Gottheimer tweeted. "We must stand by our historic ally — the only democracy in the Middle East."

Democrats are planning to bring the legislation to the Congress floor later Tuesday. Congress must act within a matter of days to avoid a government shutdown when current funding expires at the end of this month.

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.

Biden Believes Footage From US-Mexico Border 'Horrific' and Supports Probe - White House

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden believes footage of what appears to be law enforcement officers pushing and whipping migrants at the US-Mexico border to be horrific and supports the investigation into the matter, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said on Tuesday.

"He believes that the footage and the photos are horrific. They don't represent who we are as a country, and he was pleased to see the announcement of the investigation. He certainly supports that, and obviously there'll be a determination made on next steps once that concludes," Psaki said during a briefing aboard Air Force One.

US Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas on Tuesday announced an investigation into allegations of abuse against migrants at the border, saying that the department is troubled by what it saw.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott sent a letter to Biden on Monday asking him to declare a state of emergency in response to the situation at the border after almost 16,000 migrants, predominantly of Haitian origin, arrived at the US-Mexico border over the last several days.

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.

Biden, Australia's Morrison Renew Commitment to 'Open' Indo-Pacific Strategy – White House

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden and visiting Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison renewed their shared commitment to maintaining a "free and open" Indo-Pacific region and to working with NATO and the other Quad nations of Japan and India, the White House said on Tuesday.

"President Biden met today with Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australia and celebrated the 70th anniversary of the US-Australia Alliance," the White House said in a readout. "The leaders affirmed their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region, based on shared values and mutual interests."

Biden and Morrison also agreed to seek to involve European allied nations and NATO more deeply in Indo-Pacific security arrangements, the White House added.

The two leaders "discussed the critical role European allies and partners, including NATO and the EU, play in the Indo-Pacific and ways to deepen that cooperation and joint work ... [and] agreed on the importance of working with allies and partners around the world," the readout added.

They also discussed the upcoming Quad Leaders' Summit, including efforts to expand access to vaccines in the Indo-Pacific and to cooperate to address the climate crisis, the White House 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 Space Force Unveils New Uniform, Exercise Clothes For 'Guardians' – Top General

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) – The US Space Force has unveiled a new dress uniform and physical training (PT) tracksuit for its 6,400 members, formally known as "Guardians," commanding officer General John Redmond said on Tuesday.

"We also have a really cool tracksuit, our PT uniform," Raymond told the Air Force Association Cyber Space Conference at National Harbor in the US state of Maryland.

The new dress uniform is a dark Navy blue with silver buttons carrying the Space Force insignia diagonally from the right shoulder down the chest with a lighter blue-colored collar.

The PT uniform consists of a black T-shirt emblazoned with the Space Force insignia on its right side of the shirt's front and the words "Space Force" in large white capital letters on the back, with matching black shorts that also carry the Space Force insignia.

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 Vows to Prevent Del Rio Migrant Surge Disaster From Being Replicated

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - Texas Governor Greg Abbott on Tuesday vowed to deter any large migrant groups threatening to overwhelm US border communities along the southern border with Mexico after the town of Del Rio was inundated by some 16,000 migrants crossing the border illegally.

"There have been reports for a while now about other groups like this that could be coming from other countries... if you are targeting Texas to come to we're going to show up in force and shut down the border," Abbott said during a press conference. "We're not going to allow the disaster that we saw here in Del Rio to be replicated by additional caravans coming from wherever they may come from."

Abbott added there are currently some 8,600 migrants under the Del Rio international bridge waiting to be processed by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The Del Rio sector has been sealed off to migrants, Abbott said, adding that migrants are seeking entry in other vulnerable points along the US-Mexico border.

A surge of migrants, mostly Haitians, that illegally crossed into the United States in Del Rio, Texas, increased from about 4,000 on Wednesday to more than 16,000 on Saturday.

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.

Over 25% of US Gas Output, Nearly 17% of Oil Still Shut-in After Hurricane Ida - BSEE

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - More than 25% of natural gas production and nearly 17% of oil output in the United States remain shut-in after last month's Hurricane Ida, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) said on Tuesday.

A total of 566.67 million cubic feet per day of gas, accounting for 25.4% of production on the US Gulf Coast of Mexico, has not returned since the storm, the BSEE, which is responsible for monitoring the situation, said in a statement.

Also not restored were 320,909 barrels equivalent of oil output from the region, it added.

Ida forced the protective shut down of more than 90% of oil and gas production on the Gulf prior to its landfall on August 29. While it was downgraded to a tropical storm later, facilities that shut for the hurricane have had trouble returning to optimal capacity.

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 Says Biden Has Not Granted Federal Emergency Declaration Over Border Crisis

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - Texas Governor Greg Abbott on Tuesday said US President Joe Biden has not yet approved his request for a federal emergency declaration in response to the immigration crisis on the United States' southern border with Mexico.

"I have not yet heard back from the Biden administration," Abbott said during a press conference.

Abbott sent a letter to Biden on Monday requesting a federal emergency declaration in Texas in order to make available additional federal resources to deal with the influx of asylum-seeking migrants arriving at the US southern border.

Abbott said on Monday that a surge of migrants, mostly Haitians, that illegally crossed into the United States in Del Rio, Texas, increased from about 4,000 on Wednesday to more than 16,000 on Saturday. The influx poses life-threatening risks to residents in the region and is quickly overwhelming law enforcement resources, 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.

Texas Governor Vows to Prevent Del Rio Migrant Surge Disaster From Being Replicated

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - Texas Governor Greg Abbott on Tuesday vowed to deter any large migrant groups threatening to overwhelm US border communities along the southern border with Mexico after the town of Del Rio was inundated by some 16,000 migrants crossing the border illegally.

"There have been reports for a while now about other groups like this that could be coming from other countries... if you are targeting Texas to come to we're going to show up in force and shut down the border," Abbott said during a press conference. "We're not going to allow the disaster that we saw here in Del Rio to be replicated by additional caravans coming from wherever they may come from."

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 Jails Peruvian to 9 Years For Phone Scam Targeting US Spanish Speakers - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - A Peruvian national who used call centers in Peru to defraud Spanish speaking US residents with threats of arrest and deportation received a 110-month prison sentence for his actions, the Justice Department said on Tuesday.

Henry Milla of Lima, Peru, pleaded guilty for his role in conspiring to commit mail fraud and wire fraud through two Peruvian call centers that he owned and operated, the Justice Department said in a press release.

"The defendant, along with his co-conspirators, used false statements and threats to obtain money from Spanish-speaking individuals across the United States by falsely telling victims that they were required to accept and pay for English-language courses and other educational products and that failure to do so placed them in legal jeopardy," the release said.

In pleading guilty, Milla admitted that he and his employees falsely claimed to be lawyers, court officials, federal agents and representatives of a fictitious "minor crimes court," the release added.

Milla was arrested in January 2020 by Peruvian authorities based on a US extradition request. He and four co-defendants, previously pleaded guilty and received prison sentences, 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.

US SEC Chief Says Private Forms of Money Not Sustainable in Long Run

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - Private forms of money historically have no chance of lasting long without being regulated, US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Chairman Gary Gensler said during a live discussion hosted by the Washington Post on Tuesday amid the SEC's bid to regulate cryptocurrencies.

"I think history tells us that private forms of money don't last long," Gensler said. "Investment contracts outside of investor protection are not sustainable in the long run."

Gensler's comment came days after he told a US Senate hearing that the SEC was seeking help from lawmakers to oversee the offer and sales of crypto tokens as well as oversee crypto trading, lending platforms and the so-called stablecoins. Gensler pleaded for assistance in

governing investment vehicles that provide exposure to digital assets or crypto derivatives, as well as custody of virtual assets.

A former head of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission under the Obama era, Gensler is known for tough action, clamping down heavily on what he termed as excessive speculation in energy trading in the aftermath of the 2007-08 financial crisis. The Biden administration appointed Gensler to the head of the SEC in April and he cited reigning in the "Wild West" of the crypto world as one of his top priorities.

Gensler told the Senate that swaths of the crypto market were operating outside of the SEC's regulatory frameworks that shield investors and customers from illicit activity.

He pushed forth that argument on Tuesday, describing stablecoins that peg their market value to assets such as the dollar or gold as mere gambling tokens.

"We have financial stability issues, with stablecoins acting almost like poker chips at the casino right now," Gensler said. "So, to add to the Wild West analogy, I mean, we've got a lot of casinos here in the Wild West and the poker chips in the form of stablecoins, you know, at the casino gaming tables. I think there's just a lot of warning signs and flashing lights that might spill ... and I'd rather get ahead of it."

Policing of cryptocurrencies is being mulled as central banks around the world, including the US Federal Reserve, toy with the idea of having their own digital currencies. While central bank authorities agree that the monetary system of the future might largely be dictated by digital currencies, many are also wary of illegitimate activities from these and have been studying ways to counter them.

Bitcoin, the granddaddy of digital coins, has been super volatile this year, rallying more than 800 percent at one point from a year ago before dropping about half in value, causing huge losses for some speculators. Bitcoin is completely banned by India and heavily restricted by China's government. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has also called Bitcoin an "inefficient" payment system that was too volatile for the average user or investor and often misused for illicit finance.

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.

FBI Chief Says Terrorist Groups Probing US to Plan Large-Scale Attacks After Afghan Exit

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - Terrorist groups are searching for US weaknesses in efforts to pull off a mass casualty attack reminiscent of September 11, 2001, especially with the American exit from Afghanistan, FBI Director Christopher Wray told Congress on Tuesday.

"We are certainly watching the evolving situation in Afghanistan. Now 9/11 was 20 years ago but for us at the FBI, as I know it does for my colleagues here with me, it represents a danger we focus on every day and make no mistake the danger is real," Wray said in testimony to the Senate Homeland Security Committee.

Wray named the Islamic State, al-Qaeda and al-Shabab (terrorist groups banned in Russia) as groups that "continue to look for vulnerabilities and have not stopped trying to carry out large scale attacks against us."

US intelligence agencies have warned that al-Qaeda could use Afghan soil to plot attacks on the United States sooner than expected. They said an attack was likely imminent in the next 1-2 years with the US withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan shortening the timeline.

President Joe Biden as part of the rationale for withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan was that terrorism is a global threat not relegated to Afghanistan. The Taliban in a deal with the United States committed to not allowing the country to be used by terrorists to launch attacks. Afghanistan provided the base for al-Qaeda and the group's late leader Osama bin Laden to plan and direct the September 11 attacks, prompting a US invasion and two decades of fighting that followed.

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.

NASA Needs to Re-Establish 'Core Relationship' With Russia - Ex-Space Agency Official

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - NASA needs to re-establish the close and cooperative "core" working relationship with the Russian Federal Space Agency Roskosmos that it enjoyed in the past, former US space program official William Shepherd said in a congressional testimony on Tuesday.

"We do not have that core relationship with our Russian counterparts right now that would have been very common 20 years ago," Shepherd told the US House Committee on Science, Space and Technology. "We've got to reignite the very strong integration we used to have with our Russian partners."

Russia brought huge and unique capabilities to making the ISS a success, Shepherd, a former US astronaut, said.

"I have seen unique spacecraft and spacecraft system designs, excellent crew equipment and space suits, well developed life support systems; excellent metalworking and fabrication; simple but effective thermal control systems, solar arrays and controls [and] good crew-to-computer integration," Shepherd said.

Russian engineers taught their US counterparts the valuable technique of mixing the complex alongside the simple in their system architectures to create exceptionally robust capabilities, 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.

Russia, China Disseminate Disinformation on US Troop Withdrawal, COVID-19 - DHS Secretary

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - Russia, China, Iran and several other countries are disseminating inaccurate information on the US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, COVID-19 vaccines as well as on other issues, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in prepared remarks for a US Senate hearing on national security on Tuesday.

"Russia, Iran and PRC [People Republic of China], as well as other malign influence actors, also continue to disseminate and amplify inaccurate information to international and US audiences about topics such as racial justice, false claims about the 2020 presidential election, the efficacy of US COVID-19 vaccines in comparison with Russian and Chinese vaccines, and our withdrawal from Afghanistan," Mayorkas said.

Mayorkas accused Russia, China and Iran of having attempted to meddle in the US election systems.

"Since 2016, Russia has continued to amplify mis[information] and disinformation about US candidates for political office and the security of US election systems, with the goal of sowing divisiveness and confusion, and weakening our democratic institutions," Mayorkas said.

Iran continues to exacerbate domestic tensions while China pushes conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic, he also said.

The Biden administration is committed to addressing Iran's and China's attempts to target dissidents on US soil.

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.

Palestinians Ready to Renew Talks With Israel If They Show Readiness - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The Palestinians are ready to resume peace talks with Israel but have yet to see a willingness from the latter's new leadership, Palestinian National Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al Maliki told Sputnik on Tuesday.

"Of course we are ready," al Maliki said when asked if Palestine was ready to resume peace talks with Israel. "Is it possible? Well, it depends on the willingness on the other side. What we have heard so far from the Israeli leaders, [they] have shown they are not ready and they are not willing."

Al Maliki added that the UN Secretary-General should publicly highlight that the Palestinians have reacted positively to his call for renewed dialogue with Israel and should specifically call out Israeli officials responsible for blocking the resumption of talks.

Al-Maliki also told Sputnik that he is ready to meet with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

Earlier on Tuesday, Guterres urged the leaders of Israel and Palestine to resume negotiations towards a two-state solution during his remarks at the UN General Assembly.

In late July, Russian Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanskiy said that Russia would further boost the activity of the Middle East Quartet to advance peace in the region and called on the members of the group to examine Moscow's initiatives. Following the most recent Israeli-Palestinian escalation in May, Russia, in particular, proposed to hold a meeting of the Quartet with the participation of regional actors — Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, Bahrain, Palestinians, Israelis, and possibly Saudi Arabia.

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 Air Force Inspector General to Lead Investigation of Botched Kabul Airstrike - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The Air Force's Inspector General, Lt. Gen. Sami Said, has been appointed to lead the investigation into the US' airstrike in Kabul that killed 10 civilians including seven children, Military Times reported on Tuesday.

Said will be given 45 days to complete the investigation into the August 29 missile strike, Air Force spokesperson Ann Stefanek told the outlet.

US Central Command head General Kenneth McKenzie confirmed on Friday that the airstrike killed 10 civilians including seven children but not any members of the intended target, the Islamic State Khorasan Province terror group (banned in Russia).

McKenzie said that mistaken intelligence had pointed to an imminent threat to American forces at the Kabul airport. The man they actually hit with the strike, Zemarai Ahmadi, was an electrical engineer for a US aid organization, according to a New York Times report. Intelligence purportedly indicated that Ahmadi was carrying explosives in a white Toyota Corolla, which matched an IS-K threat profile. It was later revealed that Ahmadi had no connection to IS-K, and that he was transporting water, not explosives, to people in a neighborhood nearby the Kabul airport.

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.

NASA Made No Effort to Learn From New Features in Russian Spacesuits - Ex-US Official

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - NASA made no effort to request information or cooperation from Russia to incorporate impressive features in its spacesuit designs during their cooperation on the International Space Station (ISS), former US space official William Shepherd told Congress on Tuesday.

"The Russian space suit, which is fundamentally a different architecture from ours, it is quite durable, it is very simple and I think it has a lot of design attributes that our system does not," Shepherd told a hearing of the US House Committee on Science, Space and Technology. However, NASA showed no interest in learning from superior elements in the Russian space suit design that were lacking in the US space suits, Shepherd said.

"But NASA made almost no effort to evaluate that and incorporate any of those design changes in our thinking. ... This is the lost opportunity in our relationship with the Russians in this partnership. One of my frustrations was we did very little at NASA in understanding and leveraging the things we had learned from our experience with the Russians and the Russian space agency," he said.

Shepherd recommended in his testimony that NASA officials should seek to reestablish closer relations with their Russian counterparts such as they enjoyed in the past.

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.

Palestinians Ready to Renew Talks With Israel If They Show Readiness - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The Palestinians are ready to resume peace talks with Israel but have yet to see a willingness from the latter's new leadership, Palestinian National Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al Maliki told Sputnik on Tuesday.

"Of course we are ready," al Maliki said when asked if Palestine was ready to resume peace talks with Israel. "Is it possible? Well, it depends on the willingness on the other side. What we have heard so far from the Israeli leaders, [they] have shown they are not ready and they are not willing."

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 House Democrats Introduce Legislation to Prevent Presidential Abuses - Schiff

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - Democrats in the US House of Representatives have introduced legislation to reform aspects of the presidency to prevent abuse of its powers, Congressman Adam Schiff's office said in a press release on Tuesday.

"Today, House Democrats introduced the Protecting Our Democracy Act - a sweeping package of reforms that will strengthen America's democratic institutions against future presidents, regardless of political party, who seek to abuse the power of their office for corrupt purposes," the release said.

The Protecting Our Democracy Act would prohibit self-pardons by the president, strengthen Congress' ability to enforce subpoenas, protect whistleblowers and inspectors general independence and suspend the statute of limitations for federal offenses committed by a sitting president among other policy changes.

The legislation is being sponsored and backed by Schiff and other congressional Democrat leaders including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Chairpersons Jerrold Nadler, Rosa DeLauro, and Carolyn Maloney.

Also on Tuesday, Schiff said during a press conference that former-President Donald Trump made this legislation a necessity. Other lawmakers said during the same press conference that the reforms are forward-looking and will apply to presidents of any political party.

Schiff said there is strong support in the House of Representatives for the measure and there is similar support in the Senate.

The Biden administration has also been involved in crafting the legislation, 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.

Palestinian FM Tells Sputnik He Is Ready to Meet Russia's Lavrov At UNGA Sidelines

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki told Sputnik on Tuesday he is ready to meet with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly taking place this week in New York.

"Yes, why not, why not," al-Maliki said when asked about a possibility of meeting with Lavrov. Al-Maliki also said "no" when asked by Sputnik whether he has plans to meet the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

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.

Dozens Protest Outside UN Headquarters Against US Global Military Engagements

NEW YORK, September 21 (Sputnik) - Several dozen protesters gathered outside the UN headquarters in New York City on the first day of the 76th General Assembly on Tuesday demanding the US end its military engagements around the world and accept more refugees. The rally got underway as US President Joe Biden arrived to deliver an address at the Assembly Hall, with protesters demanding to suspend the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) and stop the use of military drone strikes.

It began across the road from the UN headquarters but was moved several blocks away by law enforcement. Protesters held signs reading "DRONE STRIKES KILL KIDS" and "REPEAL THE AUMF" as well as "LET AFGHANS IN" and "LET HAITIANS IN" among other slogans, according to a Sputnik correspondent from the scene.

Last week, the Pentagon confirmed reports that a drone strike in Kabul, which they first claimed struck terrorist targets, in fact killed 10 civilians, seven of them children. The Department of Defense has launched an investigation into the circumstances of the incident and is exploring compensatory payments to the family's of the victims, according to Central Command Chief Kenneth McKenzie.

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 Space Force Commander Claims Russia Has Armed Satellite in Orbit to Destroy US Assets

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) – Russia already has deployed in low-earth orbit a "nesting doll" satellite armed with a weapon that can destroy US satellites vital for

communications, command and control and precision targeting, Space Force Commander General John Raymond said on Tuesday.

"Russia has a nesting doll satellite [in orbit] to destroy US satellites, armed with a weapon to destroy US satellites," Raymond told the Air Force Association (AFA) Air Space Cyber Conference at National Harbor in the US state of Maryland. "It denies our ability to leverage space as a force multiplier."

Raymond claimed the satellite is designed like a Russian "nesting doll," with an outer casing that opens up to reveal an inner satellite shell and that shell also opens to reveal a weapons that can fire at and destroy US orbiting satellites from a safe distance.

He went on to posit that the satellite is targeted at destroying US space assets that are essential for accurate long-range precision targeting and fires for "smart" munitions launched from bombers and other weapons.

The Russian satellite Kosmos 2542 was launched in November 2019 and in December 2019, it released a sub-satellite, Kosmos-2543 which then carried out a series of maneuvers that US military officials interpreted as a show of force, published reports said.

Russia has given no credence to the claims that the satellite system was offensive in nature.

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.

Biden Calls for Protecting Rights of 'LGBTQI Individuals' in Russia's Chechen Republic

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden called during his address at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday for protecting the rights of individuals belonging to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) community across the globe, including in Russia's Chechen Republic.

"We all must defend the rights of LGBTQI individuals so they can live and love openly without fear whether it's Chechnya or Cameroon or anywhere," Biden said.

The United States and the European Union have repeatedly accused Chechen authorities of serious human rights violations and, in particular, of members of the LGBTQI community by authorizing illegal arrests and extrajudicial punishments. The United States and the European Union have imposed sanctions against Chechen officials for the alleged violations of human rights.

Moscow has repeatedly denied these accusations and stated that the West's criticism and actions represent meddling in Russia's domestic affairs. Russia insists that it has an efficient system of human rights protection, namely via judicial institutions, and the allegations have been based on unofficial reports and statements that have nothing to do with the real situation on the ground.

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 Russia-Based Cryptocurrency Exchange Platform SUEX OTC - Treasury

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - The United States has for the first time imposed sanctions against a Russia-based cryptocurrency exchange platform SUEX OTC over what it claims was facilitation of financial transactions for various ransomware actors, the Department of the Treasury said on Tuesday.

"Today's actions include the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control's (OFAC) designation of SUEX OTC, S.R.O. (SUEX), a virtual currency exchange, for its part in facilitating financial transactions for ransomware actors," the Treasury Department said in a press release. "This action is the first sanctions designation against a virtual currency exchange and was executed with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

The Treasury Department alleges that SUEX OTC has processed illicit transactions related to at least eight ransomware variants and more than 40 percent of all transactions have been associated with ransomware actors, the release said.

SUEX OTC is registered as a legal entity in Russia and the Czech Republic, according to the information published by the Treasury Department.

The United States has claimed a number of ransomware attacks over the past year, including against Colonial Pipeline, Republican National Committee and the automation software provider Kaseya.

In 2020, ransomware-forced payments to cybercriminals reached more than \$400 million or more than four times than those paid in 2019, 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.

Biden on Migrant Crisis on US Southern Border: 'We Will Get It Under Control'

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - Washington will get the migrant crisis at the US-Mexico border under control, US President Joe Biden said in response to a question after his address at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday.

"We Will Get It Under Control," the US leader said in response to reporters' questions outside the Assembly Hall.

Refugee and migration issues did not feature heavily in Biden's speech to the UN.

His statement comes on the heels of the reports that nearly 13,000 migrants, mostly from Haiti, arrived at the Texas border town of Del Rio along the US-Mexico border over the last week. The migrants waited to be processed in a makeshift camp under an overpass bridge. The situation forced the federal government to shut down the Del Rio port of entry, which still remains closed. Many videos from the ground appear to show law enforcement officers on horseback aggressively pushing migrants, prompting Mayorkas to decry the evidence.

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 Announce Additional Commitments at COVID-19 Summit Wednesday - Biden

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden told leaders at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday that the United States will announce additional commitments in the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic during a summit planned to be held the day after.

"Tomorrow, at the US-hosted Global COVID-19 Summit I'll be announcing additional commitments as we seek to advance the fight against COVID-19 and hold ourselves accountable around specific targets on three key challenges: saving lives now, vaccinating the world, and building back better," Biden 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.

Biden Says US Ready to Return to Full JCPOA Compliance if Iran Does the Same

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The United States is ready to return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran nuclear agreement, if Tehran agrees to do the same, President Joe Biden said during a speech at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday.

"The United States remains committed to preventing Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon. We are working with the P5+1 to engage Iran diplomatically and to seek a return to the JCPOA. We're prepared to return to full compliance if Iran does the same," Biden 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 Not Seeking New Cold War - Biden at UNGA

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The United States is not seeking another Cold War and is ready to work with any nation that pursues peaceful resolutions, US President Joe Biden said on Tuesday at the United Nations General Assembly.

"We are not seeking a new Cold war... The United States is ready to work with any nation that steps up and pursues peaceful resolution to share challenges," Biden 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 Committing \$10Bln to End Hunger, Invest in Food Systems at Home and Abroad - Biden

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said during his speech at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday that the US is committing \$10 billion to combat hunger and invest in food systems domestically and globally.

"The United States is making a \$10 billion commitment to end hunger and invest in food systems at home and abroad," Biden said from the podium at the Assembly Hall.

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 Double Public International Financing to Help World Cope With Climate Change - Biden

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The United States will double climate investment to help the world cope with climate change, US President Joe Biden said in an address at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday.

"In April, I announced the United States will double our public international financing to help developing nations tackle the climate crisis. Today, I'm proud to announce that we'll work with the Congress to double that number again, including for adaptation efforts, this will make the United States the leader of public climate finance," Biden 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 Has Right to 'Respond Decisively' to Cyberattacks - Biden

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) - The United States reserves the right to respond decisively to cyberattacks that threaten its national interests and those of its partners, US President Joe Biden said in an address at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday.

"We reserve the right to respond decisively to cyberattacks that threaten our people, our allies, our interests," Biden 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.

Biden in UNGA Address Calls to Create New Mechanism to Finance Global Health Security

UNITED NATIONS, September 21 (Sputnik) – The world needs a new financing mechanism for global health security in order to monitor and prevent future pandemics like the ongoing COVID-19 one, President Joe Biden said on Tuesday.

"For the future, we need to create a new mechanism to finance global health security that builds on our existing development assistance, and a global health threat council that is armed with the

tools we need to monitor and identify emerging pandemics so that we can take immediate action," Biden said while addressing the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

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.

Biden Will Use Multilateral Institutions to Deal With Challenges Including in Indo-Pacific

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) – The United States will cooperate with its allies and partners through multilateral institutions like the United Nations to address global challenges, including those in the Indo-Pacific region, President Joe Biden said on Tuesday.

"As the United States turns our focus to the priorities and the regions of the world, like Indo-Pacific, that are most consequential today and tomorrow, we will do so with our allies and partners through cooperation of multilateral institutions like the United Nations to amplify our collective strength and speed, our progress towards dealing with these global challenges," Biden said while addressing the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

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.

Biden Says at UNGA US Military Power Must Be Tool of Last Resort

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - US military power should not be a primary tool to solve world problems but rather a tool of last resort while Washington stands ready to defend its national interests if needed, President Joe Biden said on Tuesday.

"US military power must be our tool of last resort, not our first. It should not be used as an answer to every problem we see around the world. Today, many of our greatest concerns cannot be solved or even addressed through the force of arms," Biden said while addressing the 76th session of the UN General Assembly.

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.

Mayorkas Says DHS to Investigate Abuse of Migrants at US Border Swiftly

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) – The US government will swiftly investigate reports of abuse of the mostly Haitian migrants at the nation's border, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said on Tuesday.

"We have a directed investigation, this investigation is underway and it will be conducted swiftly," Mayorkas told CNN, adding that any mistreat or abuse of a migrant is unacceptable and contradicts US values and border patrol policy.

Nearly 13,000 migrants, mostly from Haiti, arrived to the Texas border town of Del Rio along the US-Mexico border over the last week. The migrants waited to be processed in a makeshift camp under an overpass bridge. The situation forced the federal government to shut down the Del Rio port of entry, which still remains closed.

Many videos from the ground appear to show law enforcement officers on horseback aggressively pushing migrants, prompting Mayorkas to decry the evidence.

"We are very troubled by what we have seen. We are going to let the investigation unfold very quickly, determine the facts, and then we will take the action that is appropriate based on those facts," he said.

The secretary went to say that up to 4,000 migrants have already been moved from under the bridge and they are being processed at a fast rate to ensure the safety of the local community.

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.

EU to Provide Minimal Presence in Kabul, Keep Stance on Taliban Gov't As Illegitimate

MOSCOW, September 21 (Sputnik) - The European Union said on Tuesday that it will keep a minimal presence in the Afghan capital of Kabul for the humanitarian needs of the population, and refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the Taliban (a terrorist organization, banned in Russia) cabinet.

"A minimal EU presence on the ground in Kabul, dependent on the security situation, would facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and monitoring of the humanitarian situation, and could also coordinate and support the safe, secure and orderly departure of all foreign nationals, and Afghans who wish to leave the country," a statement read.

The EU member states will pursue careful joint policies in Afghanistan in regard with the recently-appointed Taliban government, the statement went on, adding that they "will not bestow any legitimacy on it."

The bloc will assess the actions of the interim Afghan government in line with the five conditions adopted by the member states in early September, the statement noted. They include respect for human rights, particularly women's rights, the rule of law, and freedom of the media as well as the formation of "an inclusive and representative transitional government" among a other conditions.

Last week, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said that Brussels had no choice but to engage with the Taliban-backed government, adding that the interaction does not mean the recognition of the regime.

Over a month ago the militants of the radical movement entered Kabul, and several weeks later obtained control over the last standing Afghan province of Panjshir, completing a large-scale offensive across Afghanistan. As international troops withdrew from the country and foreign evacuations were completed, the Taliban unveiled the composition of the all-male interim cabinet, headed Mohammad Hasan Akhund, former foreign minister during the Taliban rule, who has been under UN sanctions since 2001.

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 Housing Starts Up 17% in Year to August in Supply-Starved Market - Commerce Dept.

WASHINGTON, September 21 (Sputnik) - US housing starts grew more than 17% in the year to August while permits issued for new construction also rose double-digits, the Commerce Department said on Tuesday, signaling efforts by builders to put up more homes in a supply-starved market.

"Privately-owned housing starts in August were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1,615,000," the department said in a statement. "This is 3.9% above the revised July estimate of 1,554,000 and is 17.4% above the August 2020 rate of 1,376,000."

Housing starts refer to the number of new residential construction projects that begin during any particular month.

Economists polled by US media had projected August housing starts to come in just slightly better at 1.55 million versus July's 1.53 million.

The Commerce Department said permits issued for new construction totaled 1,728,000 in August, up 6% from July's tally of 1,630,000 and 13.5% higher than the August 2020 figure of 1,522,000.

Authorizations for highly-sought single-family homes grew by 1,054,000 in August, about 0.6% higher than the revised July figure of 1,048,000.

"Both housing starts and building permits rebounded in the month of August," economist Greg Michalowski said in a comment posted on ForexLive that noted efforts by builders to ramp up supply in a red-hot housing market.

The stronger building activity comes as the Biden administration vowed earlier this month to tackle America's housing crisis of overpriced and undersupplied homes by adding at least 100,000 new and affordable units over the next three years.

Housing shortages have become dire since the financial crisis of 2008 and last year's coronavirus outbreak.

Decades of underbuilding have left the United States with a 6.8-million-home deficit, the National Association of Realtors said. While construction has steadily increased, it's still well below the levels needed to match supply with demand.

The median selling price for existing homes in the United States rose 17.8% in July from a year earlier to hit a record high of \$359,900, according to the realtors' association. Prices jumped especially after the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020 as investment firms rushed to snap up properties at low prices and earn steady incomes from rent. The trend accelerated as more institutional investors started buying rapidly appreciating homes, further eroding affordability.