

10/21/21 Thursday

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.

'Sounds a Little Scary': US Media Calls Deripaska 'Russian Oligarch' to Confuse People, Journo Says
By - Morgan Artyukhina

After the FBI raided several houses connected to Russian businessman Oleg Deripaska on Tuesday, the old labels of "oligarch" and "Putin's buddy" reappeared throughout US media. According to one journalist, it's part of a bipartisan trend since Russiagate, the sole purpose of which is to demonize Russia by making Russians "sound a little scary."

It remains unclear what exactly the FBI was looking for, but a spokesperson for the businessman [said it was connected](#) to the sanctions against him.

The FBI on Tuesday conducted what it euphemistically called "[law enforcement activity](#)" at two homes owned by Deripaska in Washington, DC, and New York. The founder of Russian aluminum corporation Rusal, the world's second largest producer of the malleable metal, has been sanctioned by the US since 2018 for his alleged connections to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Those sanctions against him remain, even though those against his companies were dropped after he ceded direct control over those assets to Americans.

"The raid yesterday on a home that Deripaska doesn't live in, wasn't at, is something that ... was a media stunt," Lee Stranahan, Sputnik News analyst and host of [The Back Story](#), told Radio Sputnik's Fault Lines on Wednesday.

"He's Russian. He's associated with Vladimir Putin the same way that Tim Cook, from Apple, is associated with Donald Trump. I could show you photos of Tim Cook ... sitting at a table with Donald Trump, sitting in the White House with him when Trump was in office. Is he associated with him? Is he a Trump supporter? Is he Trump-linked? Kind of, but not really."

"In that same way, Vladimir Putin, leader of Russia; Oleg Deripaska, important businessman ... that's about the association," he added, explaining that it's "not true" that Deripaska "works directly for Putin," as some have claimed. "That would be like saying Tim Cook works directly for Donald Trump."

"The reason he's called an 'oligarch' is because he's Russian," he explained about Deripaska. "Actual oligarchs, who ran Russia in the 1990s, before Vladimir Putin came into power, after the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia was run by oligarchs," he said, noting that some, like Mikhail Khorodokovsky, do actually "[have direct connections](#)" to American political leaders like former US President Barack Obama, US President Joe Biden, and the late Senator John McCain (R-AZ).

"They're not buddies," he later added, referencing [a 2009 incident](#) in which Putin publicly embarrassed Deripaska with a "power play" by making him [sign a statement](#) promising to reopen shuttered factories in the economically depressed town of Pikalyovo.

Speaking of the oligarchs, Shanahan said that “these people had taken over businesses that had been [state-owned] under the Soviet Union, and after they’d taken them over, buying them for pennies on the dollar, they were really running things. Those were the oligarchs. And so the purpose of calling Deripaska an oligarch is to confuse people. It sounds a little scary,” he explained, adding that even someone like Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, whose \$200 billion net worth is 40 times Deripaska’s, doesn’t exert the kind of power over US politics as Russian oligarchs did.

“This is why Vladimir Putin is very popular in Russia, because under the oligarchs in the 90s, things in Russia were literally a bloody mess,” Stranhan said, adding that Deripaska “didn’t just buy something at bargain-sale prices that used to be part of the Soviet Union, he’s actually built a business.”

The journalist noted that the litany of offenses attributed to Deripaska had no connection to the raids on his houses and aren’t even supposed to have taken place in the United States, making the purpose of the raids all the more obscure.

“The Democrats have used him and the Republicans have used him because ... Russiagate was not about Trump, wasn’t about [Vermont Independent Sen. Bernie] Sanders, wasn’t about Hillary Clinton - Russiagate was essentially about demonizing Russia under Vladimir Putin. That’s what it’s about. And that’s why both sides ultimately demonize Vladimir Putin ... everybody goes along with this.”

Hunter Biden Peddles Deripaska Dirt

On top of all this, on Wednesday the [New York Post](#) dropped another bombshell: Hunter Biden, the businessman son of US President Joe Biden who was at the center of the Burisma scandal two years ago, also tried to turn a quick buck by selling knowledge about Deripaska’s business empire to an American competitor.

The revelation comes from a forthcoming book by New York Post journalist Miranda Devine called “Laptop From Hell: Hunter Biden, Big Tech, and the Dirty Secrets the President Tried to Hide,” about the extensive contents of the MacBook Biden inadvertently abandoned at a repair shop in 2019.

According to Devine, Biden emailed executives at American aluminum giant Alcoa, which had just penned a two-year supply agreement with the Deripaska-owned aluminum giant Rusal, in the summer of 2011 offering them analysis of “elite networks” connected to Deripaska. In turn, he wanted \$25,000 for an initial analysis, and \$55,000 for a larger analysis.

However, the folks at Alcoa didn’t think the information was worth the price Biden was asking and passed on the offer.

“It is another example of how Hunter Biden was associated with an element of - they’re not all criminals, but they are all very suspect people in these parts of the world. How he was willing to do business with them, knew them,” New York Post journalist Michael Goodwin told Radio Sputnik’s Fault Lines on Thursday.

“This was Hunter Biden’s world, it’s the netherworld, really,” he added, “he was comfortable in it.”

“They were all paying him because his father was vice president at the time. I mean there’s no other explanation why Hunter Biden would have a cache with these people other than he is selling the perception that this person who - ‘if you pay me, Hunter Biden, a hundred thousand

dollars, a million dollars, multiple million dollars, you will also be buying the influence of my father,” Goodwin explained. “That is the unspoken, as far as we know, but the clear implication.” However, he noted that this case is unusual, because he wasn’t selling his name to foreign nationals, but rather selling knowledge about his foreign contacts to Americans.

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.

Houthis Claim Ballistic Missile Attack on Jazan Command HQ Killed, Wounded 35 Saudi Troops
By - Morgan Artyukhina

A recent missile strike by Yemen’s Ansarallah, or Houthi movement, against a Saudi airport near the border is reported to have killed dozens of soldiers in a command headquarters. The strike came as the United Nations Security Council voted to condemn Houthi cross-border attacks, but not Saudi airstrikes in Yemen.

A Wednesday attack on al-Wajab military camp in the Saudi city of Jazan accurately struck its target, killing or wounding at least 35 Saudi officers and soldiers, including two pilots of Apache attack helicopters, according to a report by the [Yemen Press Agency](#) in Sana’a, which is controlled by the Houthis. The strike also reportedly destroyed weapons stores and Apache hangars.

According to the report, the camp was hit by five ballistic missiles, although the Saudi Defense Ministry [on Wednesday claimed](#) to have intercepted at least one missile targeting Jazan.

“This attack comes in response to the aggression, aerial bombardment, and its continued siege on Yemen,” Brig. Gen. Yahya Sarie, a spokesperson for the Houthi military forces, told YPA. “If the coalition continues its air escalation, our response will be painful and extensive.”

The Jazan strike comes days after [another attack](#) on King Abdullah Airport in Jazan on October 8 that injured at least 10.

The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, which includes forces loyal to Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, has significantly escalated its air operations against the Houthis over the last few weeks as the Zaidi Shiite group [continues its advance](#) through Mar’ib and Shabwa Provinces, the last stronghold of Hadi’s government in the north.

“We carried out 32 strikes... in Abdiya over the past 24 hours,” [the coalition said](#) on October 16, referring to the district at the southernmost time of Mar’ib Province, adding that “11 military vehicles were destroyed and more than 160 terrorist elements eliminated.”

By Thursday, the tenth consecutive day of Saudi airstrikes in Mar’ib, Houthi forces had suffered more than 1,300 casualties, [according to the coalition](#).

Houthi spokesperson Mohammed Abdusalam was [quoted by AFP](#) as saying that their fighters were facing “elements linked to Al-Qaeda* and Daesh*” in southern Mar’ib, which were linked to the Saudi coalition. [Sputnik has also](#) previously reported on allegations of Daesh forces fighting on the coalition’s side in Mar’ib.

The ancient region, which is believed to have been home to the Biblical Queen of Sheba, is today rich in oil, with pipelines running across Houthi territory to the Red Sea coast. However, it is also the temporary home of some 2.2 million refugees, who fled to the region earlier in the

war when it was far from the front line and are staying in 139 different refugee camps. The UN has warned that war in Mar'ib could further threaten those already displaced, making their precarious situation worse.

The United Nations [Security Council on Wednesday](#) condemned "Houthi cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia" as well as the offensive in Mar'ib, and called for an immediate ceasefire. However, the statement made no mention of Saudi airstrikes.

Another UN agency, the UN Children's Fund or UNICEF, [reported on Tuesday](#) that a "shameful milestone" had been reached, with more than 10,000 children wounded by the conflict, which has raged since March 2015.

"Yemen's humanitarian crisis – the world's worst - represents a tragic convergence of four threats: (1) A violent and protracted conflict, (2) economic devastation, (3) shattered services for every support system - that is, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, protection and education, (4) & a critically under-funded UN response," UNICEF spokesperson James Elder told reporters in Geneva.

The most recent [estimates from the UN](#) on deaths in the Yemen war, which date to December 2020, are that more than 233,000 have been killed, including 131,000 from indirect causes such as hunger, disease, and lack of access to medicine.

The war began in March 2015, when the Houthi movement rebelled against planned austerity measures and a federalization plan pitched by Hadi. After they captured Sana'a, Hadi fled to Saudi Arabia, which formed an anti-Houthi coalition that included Hadi's government, as well as the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Sudan, and the United States.

While the coalition enjoyed air supremacy in the war's early years and waged a relentless bombing campaign, the Houthis have mounted increasingly daring attacks into Saudi Arabia itself, targeting Saudi military facilities, oil infrastructure, and civilian targets. They have been accused of being Iranian proxies, but significant aid from Tehran has never been demonstrated.

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

Ex-Trump Aide Steve Bannon Found in Contempt of Congress Over Capitol Riot Probe
By - Morgan Artyukhina

The former Donald Trump aide defied a subpoena from a committee investigating the events of 6 January 2021, when crowds stormed the Capitol building in a bid to stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden's win in the 2020 presidential election.

Former White House Chief Strategist Steve Bannon has been found in contempt of Congress following a Thursday vote in the House of Representatives for defying a subpoena to testify before a panel investigating the 6 January Capitol riot.

The House voted 229-202 for the resolution, essentially falling along party lines, aside from nine Republicans who sided with the Democratic majority. They have now referred the issue to the US Department of Justice. [If found guilty](#) by the DOJ, he could face a year in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

Bannon was just one of many subpoenaed by the US House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol, a group set up to gather files and testimony about the insurrection launched by supporters of Trump. Earlier this week, [Trump filed a lawsuit](#) against the committee and the National Archives in an attempt to block the transfer of records under the aegis of executive privilege.

A former senior adviser to Trump, the far-right ideologue was fired in August 2017 after [publicly contradicting](#) Trump's policies toward China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, he continued to be a strong supporter of Trump and played a major role in constructing the media effort pushing the "Stop the Steal" campaign.

"It's not going to happen like you think it's going to happen," [Bannon told listeners](#) of his radio show on January 5, the day before the riot, referring to the White House rally scheduled for the following day. "It's going to be extraordinarily different. And all I can say is: Strap in."

Thousands of Trump supporters stormed the national legislative building on the afternoon of January 6, 2021, following a rally by Trump outside the White House at which he encouraged them to "stop the steal," alleging now-US President Joe Biden had won the November 2020 election fraudulently. While they temporarily succeeded at dispersing Congress, which was then in the middle of certifying the election results, they failed at the goal of stopping the certification outright, and were soon cleared from the building by thousands of US National Guardsmen deployed to garrison the capital city.

Five people died in the assault, including a US Capitol Police officer and a rioter who was shot outside the House chamber by a USCP officer. Trump was impeached on charges of inciting acts of insurrection, but was acquitted in a trial weeks after he left office.

'Having Knowledge and Speaking About Rally is Not The Same as Participating in a Conspiracy'
David Levine, professor of law at the University of California's Hastings College of Law expressed his opinion after the US House of Representatives voted to hold Steve Bannon in criminal contempt of Congress.

According to David Levine, other charges would depend on whether Mr. Bannon did anything to participate in a conspiracy to attack the Capitol building.

"Based on things he said on the radio on 5 January, he appears to have had some foreknowledge of the events of 6 January. But just having knowledge and speaking about the rally is not the same as participating in a conspiracy," Levine said.

David Levine suggests that "Mr. Bannon's best strategy is to seek as much delay as possible. The more he can use the legal system to delay any prosecution, the more likely it is that he will escape any punishment for contempt of Congress."

"The reason is that if the Republicans take over the House of Representatives in the fall 2022 elections, the committee will not be able to proceed and the matter will probably be dropped in January 2023," 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.

IDF Training 'Intensely' for Strike on Iranian Nuclear Facilities, Israeli Media Claims
By - Morgan Artyukhina

After gaining approval for a special \$1.5 billion budget to bankroll the program, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are reportedly drilling for a potential airstrike against Iranian nuclear facilities, in case the Vienna negotiations fall through.

The [report first appeared](#) on Israel's Channel 12 on Thursday, claiming that IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi had directed the Israeli Air Force to train "intensely" for an attack on facilities central to Iran's nuclear program.

The report didn't say where the drills were being performed or if they were simulated or being rehearsed in actual aircraft. It also gave no source for the report.

The news comes just two days after the government [approved a \\$1.5 billion](#) addition to the 2022 defense budget for preparing for such a strike - a program which was given a two-year hiatus after the Trump administration unilaterally pulled out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions designed to strangle Iran's economy.

Tel-Aviv has [always disapproved](#) of the JCPOA, and then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was among the few leaders who backed then-US President Donald Trump's claims that Iran had been secretly circumventing the deal's restrictions.

In response to Trump's move, Iran began producing higher purities of refined uranium and in larger quantities than had been permitted under the nuclear deal, although nothing approaching that capable of being used to build a nuclear bomb. While Israeli and US leaders have claimed time and again that Iran is just a short time away from having a viable weapon, Israeli military [intelligence recently said](#) Iran is "not heading toward a bomb right now."

Since US President Joe Biden took office, six rounds of talks directed toward reviving the JCPOA have been held in Vienna, but no deal has yet been reached. [A seventh round](#) is set to begin soon, and the administration of Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has made increasing noise about the need for a stronger deal and for Israel and the US to [draw up a "Plan B"](#) in case talks ultimately fail.

It's unclear how Israel would go about striking Iranian nuclear facilities, many of which are deep inside the country and under the solid rock of the Zagros Mountains. It's been speculated that a new massive [5,000-pound bunker buster bomb](#) tested by the United States earlier this month might be the key, as the recent test was performed by an F-15E Strike Eagle, which the IAF operates under the name Ra'am - "thunder."

However, it won't be like the IDF's 1981 surprise hit on Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor, which was relatively undefended, unfortified, and sitting on an open plain. Iran has [advanced air defense](#) systems reportedly comparable to the better weapons an advanced military like Russia operates.

Majid Takht Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, [recently warned Israel](#) against "any miscalculation or military adventure targeting Iran and its nuclear program."

Further, on Thursday and Friday, Iran is practicing its [own nationwide drills](#) involving five air bases and a host of Iranian fighters, strike aircraft, transports, and surveillance planes.

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.

Trump's New Social Media Platform 'TRUTH' Hacked By Pranksters By - Adriana Montes

Trump's new beta social media platform TRUTH was hacked within two hours of Trump's Wednesday night announcement that the site would be launched in early 2022.

On Wednesday night, Trump announced through a [press release](#) the formation of his new media venture called the Trump Media & Technology Group, which will include a social networking service called TRUTH Social. Several tech reporters allegedly found the site, and created fake accounts for former President Donald Trump and former Vice President Mike Pence.

This led to the site's public domain being immediately taken offline, according to the Daily Dot's Mikael Thalen, who created the fake Trump profile.

Thalen said he managed to grab a screenshot of the account settings menu before access was blocked.

Washington Post technology reporter Drew Harwell was also able to make a fake account for Pence, and [said on Twitter](#) Wednesday that people were able to sign up to create accounts using a publicly available link.

"I literally just registered 'mikepence.' The site hasn't even launched yet and it's already this vulnerable," Harwell added. In a subsequent tweet, he revealed that account had been suspended.

Additionally, online trolls found an unreleased test version of Trump's social network site, made a fake Trump account and used it to post the [meme image](#) of "pig poop balls," according to Harwell.

The site bans criticism of itself, clings to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA) and adopts many other measures Trump has criticized Big Tech for after being permanently banned from Twitter following the 6 January Capitol riot.

Twitter justified its decision to "due to the risk of further incitement of violence."

Trump is also planning on releasing a streaming video service to compete with the likes of Disney and Netflix, according to Trump Media & Technology Group pitch deck.

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

Video: Former Alitalia Flight Attendants Strip Off Uniforms in Flash Mob Protest By - Adriana Montes

Former employees from Alitalia are having difficulty finding comparable jobs at other airlines, considering that the airline industry is heavily seniority-based. In response, union leaders have been pressing for the government to extend unemployment benefits to former employees for as long as five years.

Dozens of former Alitalia flight attendants took to the streets of Rome on Wednesday and stripped off their uniforms to protest their frustration over losing their jobs, and the significantly lower pay rates at ITA Airways — Italy's new national airline that replaced Alitalia on October 15.

The all-female group of cabin crew began by taking off their overcoats to reveal their full Alitalia uniforms, before eventually stripping down to their camisoles.

Footage of the protest shows as the barefoot ex-flight attendants chanted “we are Alitalia” and held hands in the famous Campidoglio piazza in Rome.

On October 14, Alitalia [ceased operations](#) to Italia Trasporto Aereo (ITA) after being in bankruptcy since 2017 and struggling for so many years. The company discontinued ticket sales on August 25.

Italy’s new national carrier is significantly smaller than Alitalia, and will initially have under 3,000 employees compared to Alitalia, which had around 10,000 employees. As a result, ITA took on a portion of former Alitalia flight attendants, leaving a vast majority of employees unemployed, according to a Washington Post [report](#).

Those that will work for ITA are being hired at notably lower pay scales, according to union officials.

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.

Republicans Block Voting Rights Legislation, Reigniting Debate Over Ending Filibuster
By - Adriana Montes

On Wednesday, Republicans in the Senate blocked the Freedom to Vote Act — a bill claimed to strengthen federal voting rights — in a move likely to renew calls among some Democratic leaders to alter filibuster rules.

The Senate voted 49 in favor to 51 against, falling short of the 60 votes needed to overcome a GOP filibuster. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) [reportedly](#) changed his vote to a “no,” in a procedural move that will allow him to submit the legislation for a re-vote and said the Senate will consider the [John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#) as soon as next week. Schumer’s [statement](#) when he announced the vote demonstrated what was predicted of the debate.

“I hope that our Republican colleagues will join us in good faith, and as I have said before, if they have ideas on how to improve the legislation, we are prepared to hear them, debate them, and if they are in line with the goals of the legislation, include them in the bill,” Schumer said. “But Republicans must come to the table to have that conversation and, at the very least, vote to open debate.”

All 50 Republicans, however, unified for the third time this year to block its consideration — a sweeping election legislation that Democrats have supported as a powerful counterweight to new voting restrictions in conservative-controlled states.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) had [vowed Tuesday](#) that Republicans would oppose the measure, according to a report from NBC News.

“It is my hope and anticipation that none of us will vote for this latest iteration of Democratic efforts to take over how every American votes all over the country.”

The Freedom to Vote Act, which is known to contain similar provisions to the [For the People Act](#) (HR1) with terms that appease more to moderate Democrats, is claimed to give more flexibility

to states and election officials in implementing some provisions, [according to the Brennan Center](#).

These include early voting and making Election Day a holiday — allowing automatic same-day voter registration and no-excuse mail voting, while also seeking to protect federal election records and local election officials from undue interference.

US Senator Angus King (I-ME), who advocated for the US Senate to move forward with the major voting rights bill, recently eased his long-standing opposition to changing the filibuster rules, which require 60 votes for most legislation to proceed in the Senate.

King was among the 49 Democrats and independents who voted in favor of starting floor debate on the Freedom to Vote Act, and acknowledged that weakening the filibuster would result in a “double-edged sword” under a Republican majority.

"I've concluded that democracy itself is more important than any Senate rule," said King.

President Joe Biden said in a [statement](#) Wednesday after the vote that the Senate "needs to act to protect the sacred constitutional right to vote, which is under unrelenting assault by proponents of the Big Lie, and Republican Governors, Secretaries of State, Attorneys General, and state legislatures across the nation."

"It is urgent," he added. "Democracy — the very soul of America — is at stake."

Biden's statement did not mention making any changes to the long-standing filibuster rule, but he did emphasize how the right to vote should be simple and straightforward.

"Let there be a debate and let there be a vote," he added.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki made implications in a [press briefing](#) Monday about Biden softening his opposition to filibuster changes after being asked if he'd reconsider his position on the filibuster if the Senate Republicans did block the Freedom to Vote Act.

"Are [Republicans] going to protect this fundamental right? Or are they going to continue to be obstreperous — to use a word the president has used in the past — and put Democrats in a position where there's no alternative but to find another path forward?" Psaki said.

Meanwhile, the Democratic base is experiencing a great amount of pressure for Biden and Senate Democrats to take further action.

"They have failed to pass substantive legislation, and they are failing to act now," [said](#) Joseph Geevarghese, the executive director of Bernie Sanders-aligned group Our Revolution. "It needs to be made even more clear by the President that he is 100% on the side of the American people's most sacred right, and if that means fixing the filibuster, then we must do it for the sake of our democracy."

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.

Miniature-Sized Brains Grown in a Lab Could Help Treat Neurological Diseases

By - Adriana Montes

The organoids — at times called “mini brains,” to the chagrin of some scientists — are not a fully accurate representation of normal developmental processes, according to the study. Cerebral organoids do, however, represent a “promising tool for understanding human brain physiology and disease processes.”

A group of scientists from the University of Cambridge are growing miniature models of human brains in the lab in order to learn how to treat fatal neurodegenerative conditions. Previous efforts had grown stem cells into brainlike collections of neurons, but none demonstrated brain activity mimicking the real thing until now.

In results [published](#) Thursday, the team reported a breakthrough that could help scientists study a range of neurological and psychiatric disorders, such as epilepsy, stroke and schizophrenia. Developed from a culture of skin cells from dementia and neurone patients, the organoids are then reverted to stem cells and reprogrammed to grow into the elements of a particular tissue or organ. Those cells are then modeled to mimic certain diseases or genetic disorders. Scientists believe that understanding exactly how the human brain develops and functions is the greatest challenge of modern biology. Most of what we have learned about the organ since the birth of neuroscience more than 100 years ago derives from experiments done on animals — frequently mice or rats.

“The brain is probably our most complex organ,” study co-author András Lakatos, a neuroscientist at the University of Cambridge, [reportedly](#) told The Daily Beast. “It has the widest range of different types of cells that have yet to be fully explored.”.

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.

Miniature-Sized Brains Grown in a Lab Could Help Treat Neurological Diseases

By - Adriana Montes

The organoids — at times called “mini brains,” to the chagrin of some scientists — are not a fully accurate representation of normal developmental processes, according to the study. Cerebral organoids do, however, represent a “promising tool for understanding human brain physiology and disease processes.”

A group of scientists from the University of Cambridge are growing miniature models of human brains in the lab in order to learn how to treat fatal neurodegenerative conditions. Previous efforts had grown stem cells into brainlike collections of neurons, but none demonstrated brain activity mimicking the real thing until now.

In results [published](#) Thursday, the team reported a breakthrough that could help scientists study a range of neurological and psychiatric disorders, such as epilepsy, stroke and schizophrenia. Developed from a culture of skin cells from dementia and neurone patients, the organoids are then reverted to stem cells and reprogrammed to grow into the elements of a particular tissue or organ. Those cells are then modeled to mimic certain diseases or genetic disorders. Scientists believe that understanding exactly how the human brain develops and functions is the greatest challenge of modern biology. Most of what we have learned about the organ since the birth of neuroscience more than 100 years ago derives from experiments done on animals — frequently mice or rats.

“The brain is probably our most complex organ,” study co-author András Lakatos, a neuroscientist at the University of Cambridge, [reportedly](#) told The Daily Beast. “It has the widest range of different types of cells that have yet to be fully explored.”.

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 - Pentagon Chief May Have 'Overplayed' Role in Promoting Ukraine NATO Bid - Experts

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin may have gone too far in publicly voicing strong support for Ukraine joining NATO during a visit to Kiev, analysts told Sputnik.

Earlier in the day, Russian President Vladimir Putin at a meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club said that Austin's recent comments about Kiev's membership in the alliance could be interpreted as "opening the doors" for Ukraine to enter NATO.

On Wednesday, commenting on prospects for Ukraine's NATO membership, Austin confirmed Washington's support for Kiev's aspirations and emphasized that third countries have no right to veto the accession, in an obvious reference to Moscow.

"Putin's words leave no doubt that he seriously takes Austin's statement about opening doors for Ukraine to NATO," American University in Moscow President Edward Lozansky told Sputnik. "Taking into account his previous repeated warnings about crossing red lines means that Austin overplayed his role."

Given the Russian leader's experience on the geopolitical chessboard, Lozansky added, Putin likely has a clear scenario in mind of how to respond in case "the crossing does take place."

"We don't know, of course, the details of his scenario but I do not think Biden and many responsible European leaders are ready to find out what they are," Lozansky said. "Fortunately, the final decision will be made by them and not Austin."

Former CIA station chief and analyst Philip Girdi told Sputnik the Biden Administration has sent every possible signal to indicate that it favors inclusion of Ukraine and Georgia in the security alliance.

"We can expect the pressure to increase in the next several months and there is no NATO member who will be engaged enough on the issue to try to oppose it," Girdi said.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko told Sputnik on Thursday that Ukraine's possible NATO entry would be an extremely dangerous step that would force Moscow to react. Russia has repeatedly warned that NATO's expansion and reckless military buildup in the region threatens to spark an unnecessary confrontation.

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: REVIEW - Biden at Town Hall Addresses Gas Price, Supply Chain Crises, Vows to Defend Taiwan

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden at a town hall meeting

addressed the country's gas price, supply chain, and border crises along with tensions with China over Taiwan, among other issues.

Biden spent most of the 90-minute town hall meeting hosted by CNN on Thursday on domestic issues - from tax policy to talks over infrastructure and spending legislation - before he dove into energy, nationwide shortages, and international challenges.

GAS PRICE/SUPPLY CHAIN CRISES

Earlier this week, the White House said the Biden administration is continuing to press member states of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to address the problem of the ongoing global oil supply.

"My guess is you'll start to see gas prices come down as we go into next year in 2022," Biden said. "There's a possibility to be able to bring it down, depends a little bit on Saudi Arabia and a few other things."

Biden said there are a lot of negotiations and "Middle Eastern folks" who want to talk to him, but he is not sure he will talk to them.

Biden added that oil supply has been withheld by OPEC.

Earlier this month, the American Automotive Association (AAA) told Sputnik US gas prices, which just reached a 7-year record high, are likely to remain elevated through the fall due to high crude oil prices and a slight uptick in domestic demand.

The average gas price in the US hit \$3.36 per gallon this week - the highest Americans have seen at the pump since 2014, as global oil prices jumped after OPEC+ stuck to planned output levels.

Regarding the supply chain crisis, Biden said he would consider calling up the US National Guard to help with trucking to address shortages.

SECURITY ISSUES

Biden during the event was asked to comment on border security and the tense situation with China over Taiwan. Biden also sent a warning to both Moscow and Beijing, bragging about US military might.

"China, Russia and the rest of the world knows we have the most powerful military in the history of the world," Biden said.

Tensions have risen between the US and China over the situation with Taiwan, which has been governed independently from mainland China since 1949.

Beijing views the island as its province, while Taiwan - a territory with its own democratically elected government - maintains that it is an autonomous country and has political and economic relations with several other nations that recognize its sovereignty.

"Yes, we have a commitment to do that," Biden said on Thursday when asked if the United States would defend Taiwan if China attack the country.

On the border crisis, Biden signaled a need to visit the area, if he only had the time.

"I've been there [southern border] before, I know it well, I guess I should go down but the whole point of it is I haven't had a whole hell of a lot of time to get down [there]," Biden said.

Biden said he has been busy overseeing damages done by hurricanes that hit the United States this year and traveling around the world for meetings with foreign leaders.

However, Biden pointed out that the First Lady Jill Biden recently visited both sides of the US-Mexico border.

More than 1.5 million undocumented migrants have crossed in the United States unlawfully since October 2020, including more than 200,000 in August, according to the US Customs and Border Protection.

The border crisis has put a strain on federal, state and local resources trying to handle the influx of migrants.

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 - Trump's 'TRUTH Social' App Expected to Gain Popularity, Face Censorship Issues - Experts

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - Former President Donald Trump's new social media platform TRUTH Social is expected to gain some popularity after its full launch early next year but it may spur infrastructure and content moderation issues that could jeopardize its success, experts told Sputnik.

Trump, who is the company chairman of the Trump Media and Technology Group (TMTG) that created the platform, said the new social network will stand up to the tyranny of Big Tech and to serve as an alternative to liberal media.

"As soon as Donald Trump attaches his name to a platform what you're suddenly talking about is a social media platform that is known around the world almost instantaneously, everyone is going to take an interest in it and that's going to make it very difficult because of all the issues that arise from the infrastructure," University of Florida social media professor Andrew Selepak said on Thursday.

Selepak stressed the difficulty of starting a social media company from scratch, pointing out Google's failed attempt with Google Plus despite all the money and resources it had available. "Creating one of these platforms is difficult and what Apple, Google and Amazon had an issue with was the content moderation," Selepak said. "While algorithms and AI can play a role in content moderation, a lot of it requires literally humans to do that, having a tremendously large staff, which means you have to have the money, the profits and the capital to be able to hire that large staff."

Former merchant banker and financial analyst Martin Hutchinson told Sputnik Trump has an extremely strong brand that he wants to maintain using the social media network, and although making some profit off the project would not hurt, it's not the main objective.

"They better make sure that they control their net infrastructure, otherwise service providers will do their censorship for them, the worst of all worlds," Hutchinson said. "Trump's entry will gather lots of support, but it will be bedeviled by the censorship question."

Hutchinson predicts that if TRUTH Social exerts tight censorship, it won't take off, and if it allows every racist anti-Semite person to expound their views, the views so expounded will be used against them.

However, Hutchinson does not expect Trump to run for re-election and instead thinks it will be time for a new leader to lead the movement.

"I think Trumpism is here to stay, but will need a new leader by 2024," Hutchinson said. "In an ideal world, a strong Trump social media presence will make money for Trump, burnish his image and support that new leader."

POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN POLITICS

Trump needs to have a social media presence if he decides to run for re-election in 2024, Selepak said.

"I think it would be next to impossible to run a national campaign and be de-platformed from all the social media that people are going to turn to get information about your campaign, for you to be able to talk about your campaign, for you to be able to promote your campaign, to talk about the issues, and you could easily see where that would be a concern if any politician was running for some kind of state-wide or national office," Selepak said.

University of California professor of politics Beau Grosscup agreed it will be important for Trump to establish a social media presence since he has either no or limited access on other platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

"He's tried this before and failed, but maybe because there is institutional support it might give his prospects more of a chance," Grosscup told Sputnik. "It's clear that ruling class corporate media has turned against him for now."

Grosscup said Trump's consistent personality will make his social media network stand out from other right wing media outlets.

TRUTH Social is available for Pre-Order in the Apple App store and there will be a Beta Launch for invited guests in November 2021. A nationwide rollout is expected in the first quarter of 2022 for those who sign up at www.truthsocial.com.

TMTG said it intends to launch a subscription video on demand service (TMTG+).

TMTG+ will also feature "non-woke" entertainment programming, news, and podcasts, 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.

RPT - DHS Says Does Not Tolerate Misconduct Amid Reports Migrants Abused By US Officials

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) does not tolerate abuse conducted by its personnel, a DHS spokesperson told Sputnik when asked to comment on a watchdog report alleging US officials abused asylum-seeking migrants.

Human Rights Watch said earlier that it obtained more than 160 internal reports that document allegations of physical, sexual and other abuses of asylum seekers by US border authorities.

"The Department does not tolerate any form of abuse or misconduct," the spokesperson said in a statement.

DHS has conducted an internal review to address any abuses within the DHS since Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has been office, including terminating those engaged in misconduct, the spokesperson said.

However, the spokesperson did not disclose if DHS took action to address the allegations brought to light in the documents obtained by the human rights organization.

Human Rights Watch said the heavily redacted documents, which it obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, also include reports of due process violations, harsh detention conditions, denial of medical care and discriminatory treatment at or near the US-Mexican border.

In one example cited, the records show that a supervisor in the San Francisco Asylum Office communicated the following internally at DHS:

"AO [asylum officer] [redacted] brought a serious matter to our attention just now: one of the applicants she interviewed today has a young child who was sexually molested by someone we believe to be a CBP [Customs and Border Protection] or Border Patrol Officer. They were apprehended by Border Patrol, sent to the Ice Box [a border holding cell], then this occurred: the young girl was forced to undress and touched inappropriately by a guard in the Ice Box wearing green, with the nametag [redacted]."

The documents do not record how DHS responded to the allegations, prompting HRW to question whether serious charges reported internally are being effectively investigated, the release 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.

REVIEW - Biden at Town Hall Addresses Gas Price, Supply Chain Crises, Vows to Defend Taiwan

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden at a town hall meeting addressed the country's gas price, supply chain, and border crises along with tensions with China over Taiwan, among other issues.

Biden spent most of the 90-minute town hall meeting hosted by CNN on Thursday on domestic issues - from tax policy to talks over infrastructure and spending legislation - before he dove into energy, nationwide shortages, and international challenges.

GAS PRICE/SUPPLY CHAIN CRISES

Earlier this week, the White House said the Biden administration is continuing to press member states of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to address the problem of the ongoing global oil supply.

"My guess is you'll start to see gas prices come down as we go into next year in 2022," Biden said. "There's a possibility to be able to bring it down, depends a little bit on Saudi Arabia and a few other things."

Biden said there are a lot of negotiations and "Middle Eastern folks" who want to talk to him, but he is not sure he will talk to them.

Biden added that oil supply has been withheld by OPEC.

Earlier this month, the American Automotive Association (AAA) told Sputnik US gas prices, which just reached a 7-year record high, are likely to remain elevated through the fall due to high crude oil prices and a slight uptick in domestic demand.

The average gas price in the US hit \$3.36 per gallon this week - the highest Americans have seen at the pump since 2014, as global oil prices jumped after OPEC+ stuck to planned output levels.

Regarding the supply chain crisis, Biden said he would consider calling up the US National Guard to help with trucking to address shortages.

SECURITY ISSUES

Biden during the event was asked to comment on border security and the tense situation with China over Taiwan. Biden also sent a warning to both Moscow and Beijing, bragging about US military might.

"China, Russia and the rest of the world knows we have the most powerful military in the history of the world," Biden said.

Tensions have risen between the US and China over the situation with Taiwan, which has been governed independently from mainland China since 1949.

Beijing views the island as its province, while Taiwan - a territory with its own democratically elected government - maintains that it is an autonomous country and has political and economic relations with several other nations that recognize its sovereignty.

"Yes, we have a commitment to do that," Biden said on Thursday when asked if the United States would defend Taiwan if China attack the country.

On the border crisis, Biden signaled a need to visit the area, if he only had the time.

"I've been there [southern border] before, I know it well, I guess I should go down but the whole point of it is I haven't had a whole hell of a lot of time to get down [there]," Biden said.

Biden said he has been busy overseeing damages done by hurricanes that hit the United States this year and traveling around the world for meetings with foreign leaders.

However, Biden pointed out that the First Lady Jill Biden recently visited both sides of the US-Mexico border.

More than 1.5 million undocumented migrants have crossed in the United States unlawfully since October 2020, including more than 200,000 in August, according to the US Customs and Border Protection.

The border crisis has put a strain on federal, state and local resources trying to handle the influx of migrants.

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 He Should Visit US Southern Border But Does Not Have Time

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden said in a town hall meeting he should visit the US southern border with Mexico but that he does not have time.

"I've been there [southern border] before, I know it well, I guess I should go down but the whole point of it is I haven't had a whole hell of a lot of time to get down [there]," Biden said on Thursday during the event hosted by CNN.

Biden said he has been busy overseeing damages done by hurricanes that hit the United States this year and traveling around the world for meetings with foreign leaders.

However, Biden pointed out that the First Lady Jill Biden recently visited both sides of the US-Mexico border.

More than 1.5 million undocumented migrants have crossed in the United States unlawfully since October 2020, including more than 200,000 in August, according to the US Customs and Border Protection.

The border crisis has put a strain on federal, state and local resources trying to handle the influx of migrants.

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 Would Come to Taiwan's Defense if China Attacked

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said in a CNN town hall meeting that the United States would come to Taiwan's defense if it came under attack by China.

"Yes, we have a commitment to do that," Biden said on Thursday when asked if the United States would defend Taiwan if China attack the country.

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 China, Russia Know US Has Most Powerful Military in World History

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said in a town hall meeting that China and Russia know the United States has the most powerful military in the history of the world.

"China, Russia and the rest of the world knows we have the most powerful military in the history of the world," Biden said at the CNN town hall on Thursday.

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 He Sees Gas Prices Coming Down in 2022

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said in a town hall meeting that gas prices may come down sometime next year.

"My guess is you'll start to see gas prices come down as we go into next year in 2022," Biden said on Thursday during a CNN town hall.

Biden added that he does not see anything happening in the meantime that will substantially lower gas prices.

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 There May Be Change to Lower Gas Prices, Depends on Action From Saudi Arabia

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said there may be an opportunity to lower gas prices in the United States but it depends on actions from Saudi Arabia. "There's a possibility to be able to bring it down, depends a little bit on Saudi Arabia and a few other things," Biden said on Thursday.

Biden said there are a lot of negotiations and "Middle Eastern folks" who want to talk to him, but he's not sure he will talk to them. Biden added that oil supply has been withheld by OPEC.

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 Would Consider Using National Guard to Address Supply Chain Crisis

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden during a nationally-televised town hall meeting said he would consider using the US national guard to address the supply chain crisis that has gripped the country.

Biden said "yes" when asked by CNN if he would consider calling up the national guard to help with trucking to address supply chain shortages.

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.

Pentagon Chief May Have 'Overplayed' Role in Promoting Ukraine NATO Bid - Experts

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin may have gone too far in publicly voicing strong support for Ukraine joining NATO during a visit to Kiev, analysts told Sputnik.

Earlier in the day, Russian President Vladimir Putin at a meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club said that Austin's recent comments about Kiev's membership in the alliance could be interpreted as "opening the doors" for Ukraine to enter NATO.

On Wednesday, commenting on prospects for Ukraine's NATO membership, Austin confirmed Washington's support for Kiev's aspirations and emphasized that third countries have no right to veto the accession, in an obvious reference to Moscow.

"Putin's words leave no doubt that he seriously takes Austin's statement about opening doors for Ukraine to NATO," American University in Moscow President Edward Lozansky told Sputnik.

"Taking into account his previous repeated warnings about crossing red lines means that Austin overplayed his role."

Given the Russian leader's experience on the geopolitical chessboard, Lozansky added, Putin likely has a clear scenario in mind of how to respond in case "the crossing does take place."

"We don't know, of course, the details of his scenario but I do not think Biden and many responsible European leaders are ready to find out what they are," Lozansky said. "Fortunately, the final decision will be made by them and not Austin."

Former CIA station chief and analyst Philip Girdali told Sputnik the Biden Administration has sent every possible signal to indicate that it favors inclusion of Ukraine and Georgia in the security alliance.

"We can expect the pressure to increase in the next several months and there is no NATO member who will be engaged enough on the issue to try to oppose it," Girdali said.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko told Sputnik on Thursday that Ukraine's possible NATO entry would be an extremely dangerous step that would force Moscow to react. Russia has repeatedly warned that NATO's expansion and reckless military buildup in the region threatens to spark an unnecessary confrontation.

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.

Trump's 'TRUTH Social' App Expected to Gain Popularity, Face Censorship Issues - Experts
WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - Former President Donald Trump's new social media platform TRUTH Social is expected to gain some popularity after its full launch early next year but it may spur infrastructure and content moderation issues that could jeopardize its success, experts told Sputnik.

Trump, who is the company chairman of the Trump Media and Technology Group (TMTG) that created the platform, said the new social network will stand up to the tyranny of Big Tech and to serve as an alternative to liberal media.

"As soon as Donald Trump attaches his name to a platform what you're suddenly talking about is a social media platform that is known around the world almost instantaneously, everyone is going to take an interest in it and that's going to make it very difficult because of all the issues that arise from the infrastructure," University of Florida social media professor Andrew Selepak said on Thursday.

Selepak stressed the difficulty of starting a social media company from scratch, pointing out Google's failed attempt with Google Plus despite all the money and resources it had available. "Creating one of these platforms is difficult and what Apple, Google and Amazon had an issue with was the content moderation," Selepak said. "While algorithms and AI can play a role in content moderation, a lot of it requires literally humans to do that, having a tremendously large staff, which means you have to have the money, the profits and the capital to be able to hire that large staff."

Former merchant banker and financial analyst Martin Hutchinson told Sputnik Trump has an extremely strong brand that he wants to maintain using the social media network, and although making some profit off the project would not hurt, it's not the main objective.

"They better make sure that they control their net infrastructure, otherwise service providers will do their censorship for them, the worst of all worlds," Hutchinson said. "Trump's entry will gather lots of support, but it will be bedeviled by the censorship question."

Hutchinson predicts that if TRUTH Social exerts tight censorship, it won't take off, and if it allows every racist anti-Semite person to expound their views, the views so expounded will be used against them.

However, Hutchinson does not expect Trump to run for re-election and instead thinks it will be time for a new leader to lead the movement.

"I think Trumpism is here to stay, but will need a new leader by 2024," Hutchinson said. "In an ideal world, a strong Trump social media presence will make money for Trump, burnish his image and support that new leader."

POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN POLITICS

Trump needs to have a social media presence if he decides to run for re-election in 2024, Selepak said.

"I think it would be next to impossible to run a national campaign and be de-platformed from all the social media that people are going to turn to get information about your campaign, for you to be able to talk about your campaign, for you to be able to promote your campaign, to talk about the issues, and you could easily see where that would be a concern if any politician was running for some kind of state-wide or national office," Selepak said.

University of California professor of politics Beau Grosscup agreed it will be important for Trump to establish a social media presence since he has either no or limited access on other platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

"He's tried this before and failed, but maybe because there is institutional support it might give his prospects more of a chance," Grosscup told Sputnik. "It's clear that ruling class corporate media has turned against him for now."

Grosscup said Trump's consistent personality will make his social media network stand out from other right wing media outlets.

TRUTH Social is available for Pre-Order in the Apple App store and there will be a Beta Launch for invited guests in November 2021. A nationwide rollout is expected in the first quarter of 2022 for those who sign up at www.truthsocial.com.

TMTG said it intends to launch a subscription video on demand service (TMTG+).

TMTG+ will also feature "non-woke" entertainment programming, news, and podcasts, 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.

Gyetvay Asks US Court to End Electronic Monitoring, Set Speedy Trial - Filings

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The chief financial officer of Russian energy company Novatek, Mark Gyetvay, is asking a US court to remove electronic monitoring and proceed with a speedy trial in connection to his tax evasion charges, according to court documents.

"Mr. Gyetvay has surrendered his passports, is willing to agree to reasonable domestic travel restrictions, a curfew of 11pm to 6am, and a reasonable bond amount to be secured by his Novatek shares. Under the true facts and circumstances of this case, however, the electronic monitoring requirement is unduly restrictive," Novatek's defense team said in court documents on Thursday.

Moreover, according to court documents, Novatek's defense counsel urged the court to hold a speedy trial.

Novatek's status conference hearing over his tax evasion charges will be held on December 16. Gyetvay was arrested by US authorities on September 23 on tax evasion charges related to the \$93 million he had saved in offshore accounts. The Justice Department alleges that Gyetvay was engaged in a scheme to defraud the US government by failing to disclose and pay taxes on those assets.

The status conference, which will take place prior to the jury trial, allows the government prosecution team and Gyetvay's defense attorneys to exchange evidence about the case. However, the possibility of a plea bargain may also be discussed or negotiated in the conference.

Gyetvay is currently released on a \$80 million bail. He said in a tweet that he was indicted on "baseless" tax charges that had already been settled through a voluntary program, during which he pleaded not guilty. He added that he intends to fight the charges.

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

Biden to Pick Antisemitism Fighter Michele Taylor as US Envoy to UN Human Rights Council

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden nominated antisemitism advocate Michele Taylor to be the US Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Council, the White House said in a press release.

"Today, President Joe Biden announced his intent to nominate the following individuals to serve in key roles: Michele Taylor, Nominee for United States Representative to the UN Human Rights Council with the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service," the release said on Thursday.

Taylor is currently a board member of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, the release said.

Moreover, Taylor, whose mother was a Holocaust survivor, served as a member of the Committee on State Sponsored Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial, the release said.

Earlier in October, the United States was re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council after a brief hiatus when former President Donald Trump withdrew the country in 2018 due to a so-called anti-Israel bias in the panel.

The Biden administration has also criticized the UN Human Rights Council's bias towards Israel. Other countries on the council include Russian, China, Cuba, Libya, Venezuela and Pakistan.

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.

Man Sentenced to 14 Months in Jail for Online Threats to Lawmakers on January 6 - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US Federal Judge Tanya Chutkan sentenced Troy Smocks to 14 months in jail for threatening lawmakers in online posts on January 6 - the longest sentence handed down in connection with the events at the US Capitol to date - Politico reported.

Smocks pleaded guilty to one count of issuing interstate threats for posting messages on social media the morning and evening of January 6, encouraging people to "go hunting" for politicians and tech executives, according to court documents.

Chutkan denied Smock's appeal, claiming he was the victim of a racist justice system for receiving a harsher sentence than persons who were actually present in the Capitol on January 6. She cited his 17 prior convictions as a factor in her sentencing decision.

Chutkan claimed that she found Smock's comparison of himself to civil rights figures offensive and lacking in remorse for his actions.

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.

Uranium Enrichment Likely Ongoing in North Korea - International Atomic Energy Agency

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Rafael Grossi said that North Korea is likely engaged in enriching uranium.

"What we see is a lot of activity," Grossi said, adding that the program has expanded activity-wise and geographically in the country as compared to 2009.

Grossi went on to say that the site in question in Yongbyon is no longer a compound but "much more than that."

In August, IAEA published a report showing that North Korea resumed operation of its 5MW nuclear reactor for producing plutonium in the Yongbyon complex. IAEA registered signs of the reactor's activity, including the discharge of cooling water, despite North Korea's promise in 2018 to dismantle all nuclear facilities in Yongbyon.

North Korea expelled the IAEA inspectors in 2009 and blew off a nuclear bomb at an underground test site in 2017 in what remains to be its largest nuclear test to date.

The United Nations has imposed several rounds of sanctions against North Korea in a bid to force it to halt its nuclear and ballistic missile research.

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.

Remains of Missing, Wanted Man Brian Laundrie Found in Florida Nature Park - FBI

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The FBI Denver office said on Thursday that human remains found in a Florida nature park on Wednesday are confirmed to be those of Brian Laundrie, who was sought by the authorities on a federal fraud charge and considered a person of interest in the death of his fiance Gabrielle Petito.

"On October 21, 2021, a comparison of dental records confirmed that the human remains found at the T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Memorial Reserve and Myakkahatchee Creek Environmental Park are those of Brian Laundrie," the FBI Denver office said in a tweet.

Laundrie and Petito left for a cross-country road trip in July and Laundrie returned to Florida in early September without Petito. Her remains were found later in September in a national forest in Wyoming, having died by manual strangulation, according to the autopsy.

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

IMF Says Has No Plans for US to Unfreeze \$9.5Bln of Afghanistan's Financial Reserves

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - There are no plans for the United States to unfreeze an estimated \$9.5 billion of Afghanistan's financial reserves, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) spokesperson told Sputnik.

Earlier in Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said releasing Afghanistan's financial assets would help stabilize the country and doing so is in the interest of all countries in the region.

"At the moment, we do not have any further updates to provide on Afghanistan," the IMF spokesperson said in a statement on Thursday when asked whether the United States may consider unfreezing Afghanistan's reserves.

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 there.

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.

Moderna Booster Provides Strong Protection Against All Variants - Health Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - A trial of two versions of Moderna's COVID-19 booster shot in rhesus monkeys demonstrated effectiveness against all coronavirus variants, including Beta from South Africa with the ability to evade protection from vaccines, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) said.

"The researchers focused on the Beta variant because it has consistently shown the greatest ability to resist neutralization - by likely reducing vaccine effectiveness," the NIH said in a press release on Thursday.

While Delta has become the dominant coronavirus variant in the United States, because of its high transmissibility, Delta has only an intermediate ability to resist neutralization, the release said.

The researchers also determined that the vaccine developed to target the original SARS-CoV-2 virus and a slightly modified version of the vaccine targeting the Beta variant were equivalent in their ability to boost antibody responses and protect.

Researchers wrote in their report, published in the journal Science, that a Moderna booster vaccine in humans could improve the duration and potency of protection against upper and lower airway infection by any of the circulating SARS-CoV-2 variants, including Delta.

The US Food and Drug Administration this week authorized Moderna boosters for the elderly, people with compromised immunity and those in high-risk occupations such as healthcare.

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.

IAEA Chief Says Concerned About Non-Proliferation Aspects of AUKUS Deal

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi said he is concerned about non-proliferation with respect to the recently announced Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) deal and expects to discuss the matter with the parties in the near future.

Grossi noted he was informed of the AUKUS deal prior to the parties announcing the partnership.

"What I told them then is what I told the Board of Governors a few hours later, when I said, for me, I don't have opinions on your military programs geo-strategic approaches, but I have one beacon that guides me, it's non-proliferation," he said on Thursday. "And when we look at that, you have obligations."

Grossi noted that IAEA is not absolutely clear on the kind of technical model that will be applied for AUKUS.

"They have announced a period of 18 months through which they are going to be exploring the [deal], but I've told them that I am not expecting to wait for 18 months until we engage formally," he said. "On my part, I already started and we have a group of experts, some of my best safeguards inspectors and some of my best legal experts, already working on this, so that when they come we will have a number of questions and a number of requests."

Grossi is currently visiting Washington and already met with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. He characterized the conversation with Blinken as "very deep and very serious." AUKUS was announced in mid-September and spurred backlash from the European Union, especially from France, which lost a multi-billion dollar contract on supplying submarines to Australia.

Under the new deal, Australia will obtain US technology to develop its own nuclear submarines, sparking concerns about the future of the non-proliferation regime in the region.

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.

IAEA Chief Says Agency Has No Evidence Iran Covertly Enriches Uranium

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi said during an interview with the Stimson Center that he does not have any information indicating Iran is covertly enriching uranium.

"I don't have any information that they are doing so. Without that indication that they are doing so, I'm confident that I'm looking at all the places where they are enriching," Grossi said on Thursday. "I have very high confidence in the ability of my inspection system to know what is going on if we are allowed in to do that."

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.

IAEA Chief Says Concerned About Non-Proliferation Aspects of AUKUS Deal

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi said he is concerned about non-proliferation concerns the recently announced Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) deal and expects to discuss the matter with the parties in the near future.

Grossi noted he was informed of the AUKUS deal prior to the parties announcing the partnership.

"What I told them then is what I told the Board of Governors a few hours later, when I said, for me, I don't have opinions on your military programs geo-strategic approaches, but I have one beacon that guides me, it's non-proliferation," he said on Thursday. "And when we look at that, you have obligations."

Grossi noted that IAEA is not absolutely clear on the kind of technical model that is going to be done for AUKUS.

"They have announced a period of 18 months through which they are going to be exploring the matter but I've told them that I am not expecting to wait for 18 months until we engage formally," 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.

US Should Stop Dragging Taiwan into War - China's Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, October 21 (Sputnik) - The international community should call on the United States to stop dragging Taiwan into a war, China's Ambassador to the United Nations Zhang Jun said.

"Some countries, the US, in particular, is taking dangerous actions, leading the situation in Taiwan Strait into a dangerous direction," Zhang said during a press briefing on Thursday. "At this moment, what we should call is that the United States stops such practice. Dragging Taiwan into a war, definitely, is in nobody's interest."

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, October 21 (Sputnik) -

US-RUSSIA RELATIONS

* Russia and the United States are fulfilling their plans outlined during the summit in Geneva, this is a systemic signal, Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

* It can be safely stated that after the summit in Geneva, the United States and Russia are on the right track, Putin said.

* Putin said that US President Joe Biden had done the right thing to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

* The intelligence of Russia and the United States are in contact in the fight against terrorism, Moscow is grateful to Washington for the information that made it possible to prevent terrorist attacks, Putin said.

* Moscow paid attention to the "aggressive Russophobic" statements made during the visit of US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to Ukraine, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

SOUTH KOREA SPACE PROGRAM

* South Korea's first domestically developed space rocket Nuri (KSLV-II) failed to place a dummy satellite into orbit, President Moon Jae-in said on Thursday after studying a report on its flight.

* South Korea will make a new attempt to put a satellite into orbit during the second launch of space rocket Nuri in May 2022, Moon Jae-in said.

PUTIN'S SPEECH AT VALDAI CLUB

* Russia and China maintain friendly relations not to confront any country, but in the interests of each other, and do not form a military bloc, unlike NATO, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday.

* The main responsibility for what is happening in Afghanistan lies with the countries that fought there for 20 years, but in order for the state to solve its social and economic problems, it is necessary to unfreeze their assets, Putin said.

* Putin called the situation in Ukraine a dead end, since the country is not ruled by an elected president, but rather by a small group of people with extreme political views.

* The Nord Stream 2 project involves modern technologies and modern pipes, and its CO2 emissions are 5.6 times less than during transit through Ukraine, Putin said.

RUSSIA-NATO RELATIONS

* NATO-Russia relations now are worse than during the cold war because of the actions of the alliance and its Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, Maria Zakharova, the Russian Foreign Ministry's spokeswoman, said on Thursday.

* Turkey is interested in the continuation of the Russia-NATO dialogue, the Foreign Ministry's spokesman, Tanju Bilgic, said.

RUSSIAN CITIZENS ARRESTED IN TURKEY

* The Kremlin has no information yet about the four Russians arrested on espionage charges in Turkey, it believes that Ankara should have informed the consular service if this is true, spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday.

* The Turkish Foreign Ministry is unaware about the detention of four Russian citizens allegedly accused of espionage, spokesman Tanju Bilgic told 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.

DHS Says Does Not Tolerate Misconduct Amid Reports Migrants Abused By US Officials

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) does not tolerate abuse conducted by its personnel, a DHS spokesperson told Sputnik on Thursday when asked to comment on a watchdog report alleging US officials abused asylum-seeking migrants. Human Rights Watch said earlier that it obtained more than 160 internal reports that document allegations of physical, sexual and other abuses of asylum seekers by US border authorities. "The Department does not tolerate any form of abuse or misconduct," the spokesperson said in a statement.

DHS has conducted an internal review to address any abuses within the DHS since Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has been office, including terminating those engaged in misconduct, the spokesperson said.

However, the spokesperson did not disclose if DHS took action to address the allegations brought to light in the documents obtained by the human rights organization.

Human Rights Watch said the heavily redacted documents, which it obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, also include reports of due process violations, harsh detention conditions, denial of medical care and discriminatory treatment at or near the US-Mexican border.

In one example cited, the records show that a supervisor in the San Francisco Asylum Office communicated the following internally at DHS:

"AO [asylum officer] [redacted] brought a serious matter to our attention just now: one of the applicants she interviewed today has a young child who was sexually molested by someone we believe to be a CBP [Customs and Border Protection] or Border Patrol Officer. They were apprehended by Border Patrol, sent to the Ice Box [a border holding cell], then this occurred: the young girl was forced to undress and touched inappropriately by a guard in the Ice Box wearing green, with the nametag [redacted]."

The documents do not record how DHS responded to the allegations, prompting HRW to question whether serious charges reported internally are being effectively investigated, the release 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.

Twenty Year Forecast Values Africa Commercial Aviation Market at Nearly \$400Bln - Boeing

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The value of Africa's commercial airline market is projected to grow to nearly \$400 billion in the next two decades, with the purchase of more than a thousand new aircraft for regional travel and long-haul flights, Boeing said on Thursday.

"Africa's airlines will require 1,030 new airplanes by 2040 valued at \$160 billion and aftermarket services such as manufacturing and repair worth \$235 billion, enabling growth for air travel and economies across the continent," Boeing said in a press release.

Africa's strong, long-term growth prospects for commercial aviation are closely tied to the continent's projected 3 percent annual economic growth over the next 20 years, the release said.

Single-aisle jets are expected to account for more than 70 percent of commercial deliveries, with 740 new planes mainly supporting domestic and inter-regional demand, the release added.

In addition, African carriers are estimated to need 250 new widebodies, including passenger and cargo models, to support long-haul routes and air freight growth, according to the release.

The forecast is included in Boeing's 2021 Commercial Market Outlook - the company's long-term assessment of demand for commercial airplanes and services.

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.

Austin, Danish Defense Chief Discuss Russia Actions in Atlantic, Baltic - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Denmark Defense Minister Trine Bramsen shared their concerns over Russian activities in the Atlantic, the Baltic and Ukraine at a meeting in Brussels, Defense Department spokesperson John Kirby said on Thursday.

"The leaders recognized their shared concerns over issues impacting transatlantic security, including Russian activity in the North Atlantic, Baltic Sea and Ukraine, and agreed to continue working together closely on shared priorities," Kirby said in a readout of the conversation. Austin and Bramsen also reaffirmed the strong bilateral defense relationship between their two nations and discussed the importance of the NATO alliance as the foundation of transatlantic security along with ways to deepen and expand bilateral defense cooperation, the readout said. "The leaders also discussed the end of the military mission in Afghanistan, Denmark's support to evacuation operations, and continued command of NATO Mission Iraq," the readout added. Austin thanked Bramsen for Denmark's long-standing and significant commitments to those and other global security operations and they further agreed to continue working together closely on shared priorities, according to the readout.

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 Boosts Law Enforcement Cooperation With India Against Cybercrime, Fraud - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The US government and India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) have agreed to expand their cooperation in fighting cybercrimes, telemarketing fraud and enforcing consumer protection, the Justice Department said on Thursday.

"[Senior Justice Department and FBI officials] met this week with CBI officials in New Delhi to further strengthen law enforcement cooperation," the Justice Department announced in a press release. "They discussed means for combating emerging crime trends, including fighting rising telemarketing fraud."

Deputy Assistant Attorney General Arun Rao of the department's Civil Division's Consumer Protection Branch led the US delegation in the talks, the release said.

"In their meetings, the parties affirmed their shared commitment to strengthen cooperation in combating crime, specifically with respect to efforts to investigate and prosecute cyber-enabled financial frauds and global telemarketing frauds, including international robocalls and communications," the release added.

The two delegations also discussed the need for continued cooperation in tackling emerging technology-based crimes through faster information exchange and evidence sharing to boost security and protection of citizens in both countries, 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.

White House Calls on WTO for Intellectual Property Waiver to Boost Vaccine Manufacturing

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The White House is calling upon all members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to support the US initiative for intellectual property waiver with

respect to COVID-19 vaccines to boost their manufacturing amid ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Principal Deputy Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Thursday. "We also reiterate support for an intellectual property waiver and bolstering manufacturing here at home and abroad, as we recognize this milestone, it's clear that the world must do more in our global COVID-19 response," Jean-Pierre said during a press briefing. "We also need every WTO member to step up as well and support an intellectual property waiver, and every company must act ambitiously and urgently to expand manufacturing now."

In May, the United States signaled that it would support negotiations on a proposed waiver. But the European Commission, representing the European Union member states, Switzerland, and several other high-income governments have consistently stalled and blocked efforts to swiftly adopt the waiver, according to the release.

Pharmaceutical giants and governments in the United States and the European Union have been roundly criticized for refusing to waive intellectual property patents for vaccine production, which would unlock manufacturing potential for lower-income countries. The UN recently highlighted the stark imbalance in COVID-19 vaccine access, with around 90% of the 5 billion shots delivered in ten countries.

According to a Human Rights Watch report published in September, lobbying in wealthy nations by powerful pharmaceutical firms have stalled a proposal to temporarily waive global trade and intellectual property rules to expand access to COVID-19 vaccines.

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.

California Seeks Ban on New Oil Wells Near Homes to Speed End of Fossil Fuels - Governor

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - Regulations proposed by California's Department of Conservation would prohibit drilling oil wells within 3,200 feet of homes, schools, hospitals and nursing homes, Governor Gavin Newsom said on Thursday.

"California is taking a significant step to protect the more than two million residents who live within a half-mile of oil drilling sites, many in low-income and communities of color," Newsom said in a press release.

A panel of public health experts recently concluded that when oil and gas developments within 3,200 feet correlate with higher rates of adverse birth outcomes, respiratory diseases such as asthma, and heart disease, among other health impacts, the release said.

Although the proposed rules are intended to protect public health, the release also billed the initiative as a step toward a state's goal of phasing out fossil fuels entirely, the release added. Newsom has called for ending oil production in the state no later than 2045, ending the sale of new gasoline-powered cars by 2035, and investing over \$15 billion in climate action to promote the state's green economy, 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 Hypersonic Weapons Test Delayed Due to Rocket Failure - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The US military recently delayed a hypersonic weapons test after the booster rocket carrying the weapon failed to work, Reuters reported on Thursday citing sources familiar with the matter.

The flight was supposed to test one of the hypersonic glide vehicles that the Defense Department is working to develop, the report said.

Earlier on Thursday, the Navy said it conducted a weapons test with the Army that demonstrated advanced hypersonic technologies and capabilities. The collaboration was focused on advancing work on the Navy's Conventional Prompt Strike, a non-nuclear hypersonic weapons system, and the Army's Long Range Hypersonic Weapon offensive strike capability.

The Navy added that the test with the Army was a key step in the development of a Navy-designed common hypersonic missile, consisting of a Common Hypersonic Glide Body (CHGB) and booster, which the Department of Defense successfully tested the CHGB on March 20, 2020.

In July, the US Air Force said its second test of the Air-launched Rapid Response Weapon (ARRW) hypersonic missile failed after the rocket motor did not ignite. The first test failed in April when there was an issue with the first booster vehicle flight test.

The US military is developing at least three types of hypersonic weapons - the Navy's Conventional Prompt Strike, the Army's Long Range Hypersonic Weapon and the ARRW for the Air 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.

IMF Says Inflation Remains Concern in Latin America, Central Banks May Have to Raise Rates

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - Inflation continues to be a concern in Latin America and central banks in the region may have to act decisively to contain inflation expectations, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Western Hemisphere Department Acting Director Nigel Chalk said on Thursday.

"Inflation remains a concern in the region," Chalk said during a press briefing.

The central banks were able to solve the situation by increasing investment and credibility, he said.

"I think this will really help in managing both inflation and inflation expectations," Chalk said. The new inflation expectations and the challenges associated with them may prompt central banks to impose higher interest rates and tighten financial conditions, 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.

Pentagon Launches Year-Long Prototyping of Wireless 5G Network for California Firefighters

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - California first responders, including the National Guard and seasonal firefighters, will be issued 5G communication devices in a year-long trial of equipment that could later be deployed throughout the US, the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) said on Thursday.

"The project has the potential to have emergency responders show up to any site with personal or government issued mobile devices and use networked applications such as push-to-talk voice, geolocation and live maps of their surroundings - all while outside the range of existing cellular networks," DIU Cyber and Telecommunications Director Jeff Kleck said in a press release explaining the project.

The first to arrive can simply bring the private network with them using a vehicle-mounted, backpack, hand carried or wearable node, the release said.

Radios are becoming obsolete and getting everyone a satellite phone is just impractical because of the expense involved, the release added.

DIU is partnering with the California Military Department to procure commercially available equipment for the project. If the year-long prototyping period proves successful, the system could be used for first responders nationwide and scaled to serve other Defense Department organizations, 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.

Kerry to Visit S. Arabia Next Week for Climate Crisis Talks - US State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry will travel to Saudi Arabia next week to talk about efforts to tackle climate crisis, the State Department said on Thursday.

"Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry will travel to Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on October 24-25, 2021 to engage with government counterparts and private sector leaders on efforts to address the climate crisis," the State Department said in a release.

Kerry will also take part in the Middle East Green Initiative Summit in Riyadh, the release said.

"Secretary Kerry's engagements will bolster the United States' bilateral and multilateral climate diplomacy efforts ahead of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which will be held October 31 to November 12 in Glasgow, United Kingdom," the release added.

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) will be held in Glasgow from October 31 to November 12 and is intended to bring parties together to accelerate action toward the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

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.

Electronic Theft of 94,000 Credit Cards Earns Scammer 51 Months in Jail - US Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - A conspiracy that placed counterfeit credit card processors in 80 stores in 19 US states to steal data for fake credit cards resulted in a jail sentence of more than four years for one participant, the Justice Department said on Thursday. "Each counterfeit device was equipped with wireless technology, which the conspirators used to retrieve the stolen information. From February 2011 to April 2011, conspirators stole approximately 94,000 debit and credit card account numbers," the Justice Department said in a press release.

The stolen account information was used to produce counterfeit bank cards, which were used with the stolen personal identification numbers (PINs) to withdraw funds from the compromised bank accounts, the release said.

Jose "Tito" Salazar, 45, was sentenced to 51 months in prison by US Judge Joseph Rodriguez for his role as a leader in the conspiracy and ordered to pay restitution of \$617,534, the release added.

From April 2011 to May 2011, Salazar, Angel Angulo and other conspirators used the fake cards and PIN numbers to withdraw money using automated teller machines from hundreds of bank accounts. Angulo pleaded guilty on June 20, 2017, and was sentenced on March 15, 2018, to three years in prison, according to the release.

The fraudsters targeted Michaels, a leading US retail arts-and-crafts chain, with counterfeit devices placed in 80 stores in 19 states, the release 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.

UPDATE: UN Special Envoy Warns of Impending Full-Blown Armed Conflict in Myanmar

UNITED NATIONS, October 21 (Sputnik) - UN Special Envoy for Myanmar Christine Schraner Burgener warned on Thursday about the possibility of a full-scale internal armed conflict unfolding in the country after the military seized power in a coup in February.

Schraner Burgener said she believed people in Myanmar will not accept the coup and not give up. Instead, civilians have been increasing the anti-military movement, seeking to mobilize a greater number of forces, the special envoy noted.

"If this situation continues, then, I would say, we would have a full-blown internal armed conflict," Schraner Burgener said in the last briefing at the United Nations in her current position. "The situation is very volatile and not stabilized."

Schraner Burgener, who is currently visiting New York, also said she had already met with the 10 non-permanent members of the UN Security Council earlier in the day to discuss Myanmar.

During the next week, Schraner Burgener said she plans to hold bilateral engagements with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States - to present them with the picture of the current situation on the ground.

The military came to power in Myanmar on February 1, 2021, under the pretext that the then-ruling National League for Democracy party rigged the November 2020 general election. The military coup triggered a wave of civil protests and more than 1,180 people have died in clashes with the authorities.

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 CDC Deepening Cooperation With Colombia's National Public Health Institute - Blinken

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Colombia's National Public Health Institute are strengthening collaboration to enhance Colombia's health system and security, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday.

"We are deepening cooperation between US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Colombia's National Public Health Institute to strengthen Colombia's public health system and security from better integrating the use of data to bolstering emergency preparedness and response," Blinken said. "That's not only going to help with this pandemic, it will help prevent, or if necessary, to deal with the next one."

During his visit to Colombia, Blinken met with President Ivan Duque and Vice President and Foreign Minister Marta Lucia Ramirez.

The visit follows Blinken's trip to Ecuador, where he discussed with officials a range of issues such as countering drug trafficking and tackling irregular migration.

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 Says Situation in Myanmar Deteriorating, Over 1,180 People Killed Since February Coup

UNITED NATIONS, October 21 (Sputnik) - UN Special Envoy for Myanmar Christine Schraner Burgener said on Thursday that the situation in Myanmar remains deplorable and continues to deteriorate after the military seized power in February.

"Unfortunately, the situation is really bad in Myanmar. Over eight months since the military takeover, the overall situation in Myanmar continues to deteriorate sharply with the conflict intensifying in many parts of the country, and the repression of the military has led to more than 1,180 deaths," Schraner Burgener said during a press briefing.

The UN Special Envoy pointed out that the military uses a range of additional repressive tactics against the civilian population, including burning villages, looting properties, mass arrests, torture, execution of prisoners, gender-based violence and random fire into residential areas. While civilians are forming an anti-military movement and do not intend to stop resisting the military rule, the military shows no signs of their readiness to compromise and engage in an all-inclusive dialogue to resolve the crisis, Schraner Burgener said.

"I suggested the idea of an all-inclusive dialogue [during] the last long meeting I had with the Tatmadaw on July 16 with the Deputy Commander in Chief, where I presented my idea... in detail. I got no response on these requests to start a dialogue," she said.

Schraner Burgener called on the UN Security Council and the entire international community to act and do "the right thing" to stop violence and civilian suffering in Myanmar.

The military came to power in Myanmar on February 1 under the pretext that the then-ruling National League for Democracy party rigged the November 2020 general election.

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 Navy Secretary Departing for Inaugural Trip to Indo-Pacific Region - Statement

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - US Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro will depart for his inaugural overseas trip to the Indo-Pacific to meet with senior officials across the region, the Navy said on Thursday.

"Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Carlos Del Toro, will depart on his first overseas trip Oct. 21 to visit Sailors, Marines and government leaders in the US Indo-Pacific area of responsibility," the Navy said in a statement.

Del Toro will meet with the leaders Japan, South Korea, Guam and Papua New Guinea to discuss the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific and the importance of international defense partnerships, the statement said.

The announcement comes several weeks after the release of the Secretary's Strategic Guidance for the Department of the Navy, which includes his priorities on maintaining US maritime dominance and bolstering strategic partnerships to strengthen collaboration with partners in the Indo-Pacific region, the statement said.

"The Indo-Pacific region is a priority for the Department of Defense and the Department of Navy. To ensure US dominance against an evolving threat environment, we must be present, persistent and powerful in our integrated maritime strategy. We must invest in the health, readiness and capability of our fleet and strengthen relationships with our naval partners in the region," Del Toro 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.

Documents Reveal Abuse of Migrant Border Crossers By US Officials - Report

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - More than 160 internal reports document "jaw dropping" allegations of physical, sexual and other abuses of asylum seekers by US border authorities, Human Rights Watch said in a report on Thursday.

"The conduct of border and immigration officers reported in these records is jaw-dropping. These internal government documents make clear that reports of grievous abuses - assaults, sexual abuse, and discriminatory treatment by US agents - are an open secret within DHS [Department of Homeland Security]," Human Rights Watch Associate US Director Clara Long said in a press release explaining the report.

In addition to allegations of physical and sexual abuse, the heavily redacted documents obtained by Human Rights Watch under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), also include reports of due process violations, harsh detention conditions, denial of medical care and discriminatory treatment at or near the US-Mexican border, the release said.

In one example cited, the records show that a supervisor in the San Francisco Asylum Office communicated the following internally at DHS:

"AO [asylum officer] [redacted] brought a serious matter to our attention just now: one of the applicants she interviewed today has a young child who was sexually molested by someone we believe to be a CBP [Customs and Border Protection] or Border Patrol Officer. They were apprehended by Border Patrol, sent to the Ice Box [a border holding cell], then this occurred: the young girl was forced to undress and touched inappropriately by a guard in the Ice Box wearing green, with the nametag [redacted]."

The documents do not record how DHS responded to the allegations, prompting HRW to question whether serious charges reported internally are being effectively investigated, the release said.

Last month, Human Rights Watch provided DHS with summaries of 11 cases of abuse detailed in the documents, with a request for information about any investigations or disciplinary actions arising from the allegations. DHS has yet to respond, 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 Existing Home Sales Up 7% in September in Rush to Beat Rate Hike - Realtors Association

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - Sales of existing homes in the United States jumped 7% in September despite their record high prices as buyers appeared eager to lock in before a widely expected interest rate hike next year, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) said Thursday.

"Housing demand remains strong as buyers likely want to secure a home before mortgage rates increase even further next year," NAR said, reporting a sales of 6.29 million units in September versus the August tally of 5.88 million.

Analysts polled by US media had anticipated last month's sales of existing homes to be around 6.1 million.

"This is a good sign for the US housing market," economist Adam Button said in a post on ForexLive. "I think that economists are underestimating the upside from home prices from here."

While the majority of existing home purchasers are typically first-time buyers, there are also those committing on new properties for investment or speculation and taking out loans on their current homes to secure their new acquisitions, Button said.

"Home equity will be tapped and recycled into the economy while higher new home activity will provide a lift to activity and commodity prices," he said.

Dire housing shortages in the United States since the financial crisis of 2007/2008 and last year's coronavirus outbreak have sent home prices to record highs.

The median selling price for existing-homes in the United States rose 17.8 percent in July from a year earlier to hit a record high of \$359,900, according to RAC.

Investment firms rushed to the realty market to buy after the economic crunch of 2007/2008 and 2020, snapping up properties at rock-bottom prices to earn steady income from rent. The trend accelerated as more institutional investors and individuals got into the game over the past year, sending prices higher and higher.

Despite the inflated market and a significant mismatch of demand versus supply, many buyers remain hopeful of locking in before the Federal Reserve raises interest rates sometime next year in what would be its first hike since the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020.

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.

Iran President Raisi Backed by 7 of 10 Adults at Onset of New Government - Poll

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi enjoys support from more than 70 percent of his nation's voters and his approval rating is trouncing that of his more moderate predecessor in his final days in office, a new Gallup poll revealed on Thursday.

"In the last survey during [Hassan] Rouhani's presidency, conducted in November 2020 as the pandemic ravaged Iran, roughly a third of Iranians (32%) approved of the job Rouhani was doing," according to a press release explaining the poll.

In contrast, Gallup surveys in Iran showed Raisi, who was elected in June, had the backing of 72 percent of the Iranian people who expressed approval of the job he was doing, the release said.

Raisi's job approval rating and the spike in Iranians' confidence in their government that coincided with his election should indicate that a leader perceived as hard-line and conservative can still garner substantial public support in Iran, the release added.

While the release cautioned that Raisi's support could be fragile, Gallup attributed the shift in public sentiment to recent progress battling the coronavirus pandemic.

Prior to Raisi's election, about 5 percent of the Iranian population was at least partly vaccinated. Since then, the percentage of vaccinated Iranians has risen to nearly 50 percent, 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.

Climate Change Boosts Global Tension With Country-Level Instability - White House

WASHINGTON, October 21 (Sputnik) - The first ever US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) to address climate change warns of global instability, with the potential for increased conflict between nations amid a struggle to reduce harmful emissions, the White House said on Monday.

"The three broad category of risks are: 1) increased geopolitical tension as countries argue over who should be doing more, and how quickly, and compete in the ensuing energy transition; 2) cross-border geopolitical flashpoints from the physical effects of climate change as countries take steps to secure their interests; and 3) climate effects straining country-level stability in select countries and regions of concern," a White House fact sheet summarizing the NIE said. The NIE is a consensus report drafted with input from 18 US intelligence agencies. It is one of four reports released by the Biden administration on Thursday ahead of an upcoming climate summit in Glasgow, according to the White House.