

7/14/22 Thursday

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Ivana Trump, First Wife of Former US President Donald Trump, Has Died
By - Mary Manley

The ex-wife of former President Donald Trump and the mother of Donald Jr., Ivanka and Eric Trump has died at the age of 73.

On Thursday, the family of Ivana Trump informed ABC News of the Czech-American model and businesswoman's death at the age of 73.

Ivana Trump was better known as former President Donald Trump's first wife, to whom she was married from 1977 to 1992, and was the mother of his first three children: Donald Trump Jr., 44, Ivanka Trump, 40, and Eric Trump, 38. She is survived by her 10 grandchildren.

Donald Trump announced the death of his ex-wife on the social media platform Truth Social, which he founded after he was permanently [suspended](#) from Twitter following the January 6, 2021 attack on the United States Capitol Building by his supporters.

"Ivana Trump was a survivor. She fled from communism and embraced this country. She taught her children about grit and toughness, compassion and determination. She will be dearly missed by her mother, her three children and 10 grandchildren," the Trump family revealed in a [statement](#).

Ivana's death was caused by a cardiac arrest she suffered in her Upper East Side apartment at around 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, FDNY [revealed](#).

Ivana and Donald divorced in part because Donald cheated on her with model Marla Maples, 58, who became his second wife and is the mother of his daughter, Tiffany Trump, 28.

Despite a tumultuous divorce, Ivana and Donald would maintain a cordial relationship. Ivana was known for the major role she played in the Trump family business and was often regarded as a "workaholic." She would later launch her own lines of jewelry, clothing and perfumes following her divorce from Donald, which left her with an additional \$14 million [settlement](#), a Connecticut mansion, a Trump Tower apartment and the use of Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate for one month a year.

Ivana went on to have two more marriages following her divorce from Donald. She dated the Italian actor and model Rossano Rubicondi, whom she married in 2008 in a \$3 million wedding hosted at Donald's Mar-a-Lago, and divorced a year later.

Ivana has taken credit for raising Donald Trump's first three children. In several interviews as well as her memoir, "Raising Trump," she claimed she was responsible for the children's education and overall upbringing until they reached 21 years of age and were handed over to their father, Donald, to work for the family business.

"I'm often asked about the secret to mothering success, and my answer is always the same: there's no magic recipe. I told the kids, 'Don't lie, cheat, or steal. Don't smoke, do drugs, or drink.' I was strict and demanding but always loving and affectionate. I encouraged sports and

competitiveness, and enriched their lives by exposing them to different cultures and the arts," wrote Ivana Trump in her memoir, "[Raising Trump](#)."

"I always held them accountable for their actions and didn't let them get away with anything. I showed them dignity, diligence, and determination by example, and gave them age-appropriate responsibilities and rules, which they followed without question—or there'd be hell to pay."

"I believe the credit for raising such great kids belongs to me. I was in charge of raising our children before our divorce, and I had sole custody of them after the split. I made the decisions about their education, activities, travel, child care, and allowances. When each one finished college, I said to my ex-husband, 'Here is the finished product. Now it's your turn,'" Ivana wrote.

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January 6 Rioter From Maryland Sentenced to Five Months in Prison
By - Mary Manley

On Thursday, David Alan Blair, 27, was sentenced to five months in prison for his involvement in the US Capitol riot on January 6, 2021. Blair was also sentenced to 18 months of federal supervised release following his 5-month prison sentence and will be required to pay \$2,000 in restitution.

The 27-year-old man from Clarksburg, Maryland, was charged with interfering with law enforcement during a civil disorder, to which he pleaded guilty.

Blair left his home in Clarksburg, Maryland, and drove to Washington, D.C. to join the January 6 Capitol riot, which was ongoing. He arrived at the riot wearing a skull-themed neck gaiter and Oakley gloves and carrying a makeshift Confederate flag that he had attached to a lacrosse stick. He was also armed with a serrated knife and a roll of duct tape.

At one point during the riot, Blair shoved a police officer with the lacrosse stick after refusing to leave the U.S. Capitol West Lawn. The officer, who Blair shoved, responded by hitting him three times on his head with a police baton. Blair's attorney claimed the officer's use of force left the Maryland resident bleeding and concussed.

Obstructing law enforcement "in the commission of their duties during a civil disorder" is a statute that was first written into law in [1968](#) following civil rights and anti-war protests. That statute is a felony offense and carries with it a five year prison sentence. For Blair, prosecutors were originally seeking eight months in prison with 18 months of supervised release following his prison sentence.

According to a U.S. [court filing](#), Blair told investigators that he had joined the Capitol riot not to protest the results of the 2020 election—which saw former President Donald Trump lose to President Joe Biden—but because he believed the United States was "falling apart" and that he had to "stand up" to Communism and "fight Antifa" (a post-World War II political protest group fighting fascism and racism).

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Liebman also wrote in that same court filing that Blair had spoken with a person over social media in the year leading up to the Capitol attack, and that in

these discussions he and this individual exchanged anti-Semitic viewpoints, blaming Israel for various global issues while claiming that “bankers” were “running the country” and the world. Thus far at least 876 people have been charged in the Capitol riots, according to an [Insider](#) article. A U.S. House Select Committee has been investigating the January 6th attack. It has been suggested that Donald Trump has attempted to tamper with the investigation by contacting individuals who have been [subpoenaed](#) by the committee.

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Fist Bumbling Biden - Cartoon
By - Ted Rall/Mary Manley

The fist bump has come under intense scrutiny, with predictions about whether or not President Joe Biden will shake the hand of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud, whom he is supposed to meet on Friday.

Biden greeted Israeli leaders Yair Lapid and President Isaac Herzog with [fist bumps](#) on Wednesday in what the White House is referring to as a COVID-19 precaution due to rising rates of the virus in the country. However, Biden contradicted his aides by then shaking hands with former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later in the day.

[Biden](#) is scheduled to meet with bin Salman on Friday, despite vowing to make Saudi Arabia “the pariah that they are” during his presidential campaign after U.S. intelligence assessed that bin Salman approved of a 2018 operation that killed the Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Biden contends that he is visiting Saudi Arabia in an effort to “benefit” Americans by securing global trade and supply chains as well as to repair diplomatic relations left in tatters by his predecessor former President Donald [Trump](#). Still, the White House has yet to reveal whether or not Biden will be photographed meeting with bin Salman, leaving political pundits to speculate if a Biden “fist-bump” is in the works for Friday.

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Intercept: DHS Inspector General Says Secret Service Deleted Text Messages From Jan 5 & 6
By - Ian DeMartino

The Secret Service has become a focal point of the January 6 committee after testimonies alleged they played a pivotal role on that day.

The Secret Service [may have deleted text messages](#) from January 5 and January 6, 2021, according to a letter sent to the January 6 committee and viewed by The Intercept.

The letter was sent from the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General to the House and Senate homeland security committees. It claims that the Secret Service deleted

the messages shortly after receiving a request from the Inspector General to hand over the electronic communications.

The Secret Service falls under the Department of Homeland Security and is therefore beholden to requests from the Inspector General. The Secret Service previously claimed that the text messages were accidentally deleted during a device exchange program, but the letter puts those claims in doubt.

The Secret Service did not respond to requests for comment from The Intercept. It is also not clear if all the text messages from those two days were deleted or if only some were.

During the January 6 hearings, it had previously been revealed that the Secret Service attempted to move Pence away from the Capitol as pro-Donald Trump rioters stormed the building. Pence refused their recommendation, staying to certify the results. Had he allowed himself to be taken away, the election results would not have been certified and it would have put the United States into a constitutional crisis it has not previously faced.

"People need to understand that if Pence had listened to the Secret Service and fled the Capitol, this could have turned out a whole lot worse," a congressional official told The Intercept under the condition of anonymity. "It could have been a successful coup, not just an attempted one."

Tony Ornato, a Secret Service agent who Trump appointed to be the White House Chief of Staff, reportedly told Pence's national security adviser Keith Kellogg that he planned to move Pence to Andrews Airforce Base in Maryland. Kellogg told Ornato that he cannot do that.

"Leave him where he's at. He's got a job to do. I know you guys too well. You'll fly him to Alaska if you have a chance. Don't do it."

Ornato has denied that account. He also denied parts of Cassidy Hutchinson's testimony. The former White House aide testified that Trump attempted to convince the Secret Service to drive him to the site of the riot on January 6, and when they refused he lunged at the wheel, attempting to force the issue.

Ornato currently remains at his post as the assistant director of the Secret Service Office of Training.

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The Simple Solution to Inflation No One is Talking About

By - Ian DeMartino

Inflation has hit a 41-year high, currently sitting at 9.1%, forcing Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen to admit that the rate "remains unacceptably high" and it is the president's top priority to "bring it down."

There are many theories about why inflation has spiked out of control. Most economists point to a few factors: increased spending, mainly through economic stimulus, decreased supply due to pandemic-related supply chain issues, and increased production costs, mostly due to increased energy costs.

Those factors undoubtedly played a big role in contributing to inflation, but it could be argued that some of them, like economic stimulus during a pandemic, were necessary, while others, such as supply chain issues, were beyond the control of the US government and that gas prices, while certainly a result of policy, have proven resistant to attempts to address the issue. So far, the Federal Reserve's plan of action is to raise interest rates, decrease wages for workers, and risk a recession. That may slow inflation somewhat, though their first attempt did not seem to have the effect they wanted, and decreasing wages is probably not the solution most Americans want.

But there are some things we can do, things that do not involve adversely affect the lives of most Americans and that would restore purchasing power and possibly bring us back from the brink: reduce military spending and take a softer economic and militaristic stance with nations around the globe. First, it is important to remember how we got here and how the people in charge were consistently incorrect in their predictions on how the economy would respond to their actions.

When President Biden took office in 2021, inflation stood at 1.4%. By the time he signed the third coronavirus stimulus bill in March of that year, inflation had risen to a still acceptable 2.6%. That \$1.9 trillion spending package came after the Trump administration had injected \$3.1 trillion into the economy in 2020.

While some, like Obama's Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, predicted that such stimulus would lead to massive inflation, Yellen disagreed: "Is there a risk of inflation? I think there's a small risk and I think it's manageable." She would go on to blame inflation on prices falling during the pandemic and predicted that there would only be "a temporary movement in prices." By June of that year, inflation had risen to 5% and the situation was beginning to concern economists. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell started to see the cracks. "Inflation could turn out to be higher and more persistent than we expect," he said that month. But Yellen remained undeterred, calling the inflation temporary.

In July, with inflation at 5.4%, Biden doubled down, echoing Yellen's words by saying the increase was temporary and blaming supply chain issues. But by November, with inflation at a 30-year high of 6.2%, he had to admit it was becoming a problem and called it a "top priority" to fix. Powell likewise had to admit that the inflation the US was experiencing was not transitory. Then in February, Russia began its special military operation in Ukraine, and in response, the United States and European countries imposed sanctions on Russia and removed them from the SWIFT network. This led to an increase in the price of food and energy, directly contributing to inflation. It also encouraged countries, including Russia, China, India, and others to move away from using the dollar for international business. How that move relates to inflation will be explained later.

In June, the Federal Reserve increased interest rates by 0.75%, the largest increase since 1994. This attempt to curb inflation was long called for by many mainstream economists, and though just about everyone agreed it would slow economic growth, the hope was that the effect on inflation would be greater.

Yet here America stands in July and inflation rates are now at a 41-year [high of 9.1%](#), and the only thing the Federal Reserve can think to do is increase rates further, [with insiders saying](#) the next increase could be an additional 1% or higher. The Department of Labor's [most recent](#) Real

Earning Summary indicated that while there was an increase in wages during the past year, that has been wiped out by inflation, and then some. Real wages are down 3.9% in average weekly earnings.

But is slowing the economy, thereby decreasing wages, the only tool the Federal Reserve has in its playbook to combat inflation? Must the American worker always be the one to take the consequences of bad policy on the chin? The Federal Reserve may not have any other moves to make, but the government does, if only we can gather the political will.

It is worth looking back at the last time we experienced inflation this high and what economists were worried about then. In the 1970s, the US experienced historic inflation rates. President Lyndon Johnson's dual expenditures of the war in Vietnam and his "Great Society" anti-poverty plan led to record high deficits and inflation. The agenda was a failure and the saying at the time was "You can have guns or butter, not both." After both the Vietnam War and the Great Society fizzled out, the US economy started growing again and things were looking up. But Reagan had a plan to once again increase the military budget and it started a debate among economists: "Will an increase in military spending lead to a rise in inflation?"

In 1984, economists Harvey Starr, Francis W. Hoole, Jeffrey A. Hart, and John R. Freeman wrote an article titled "[The Relationship between Defense Spending and Inflation](#)" in The Journal of Conflict Resolution, which looked at arguments, both for and against, from previous academic studies and then attempted to apply a custom made formula using empirical data to find out if inflation was affected by military spending and vice versa.

The argument that military spending does affect inflation is that it is a government expenditure that does not increase supply but does increase demand. When the government orders a hundred new cruise missiles, someone has to make those missiles and they must be paid for their labor. But consumers do not buy cruise missiles. Either they are purchased by an allied state, sit in a warehouse somewhere, or are blown up either in training exercises or actual warfare. Untold trillions of dollars have been pumped into the economy through military spending over the last century, with hardly any of that going to increase supply.

In the article, Starr et al quote a 1981 article from James Fallows arguing that military spending increases inflation: "The first principle is that defense spending is inherently more inflationary than other kinds of government spending... the problem with military spending, simply put, is that it adds to the demand of goods without adding to the supply... Military and non-military spending add to the demand; military spending does not add to the supply."

Additionally, Fallows argued that military contractor spending is intentionally designed to maximize cost, rather than efficiency, and that in addition to the massive amounts of fraud that is typically involved, military contractor spending can have a larger impact on the deficit and spill over to civilian product pricing. If our factories are being used to build fighter jets, they cannot be used to make cars, so the price of cars should increase.

Starr et al also laid out the argument against military spending increasing inflation. The arguments made some good points. They say that there is nothing particularly special about the relationship between military spending and inflation compared to other types of government spending. That is particularly true about the stimulus package. We all got paid by the government, and like cruise missiles, it did not produce any products that would contribute to supply. But cruise missiles and wars overseas do not help Americans struggling to make ends

meet, and another contract for Boeing does not help the economy outside of Boeing's stock price and bonuses for the company's executives.

Furthermore, the pro-military side caveated their arguments by saying that any increase in military spending should be counteracted with a decrease in domestic spending or higher taxes. Quoting Charles L. Schultze in the *Brooking Bull* from 1981, the authors explain the argument: "The United States is fortunate in having an economy, that, with proper policies, can adjust to about as high or low a level of defense spending as the nation and its leaders think is appropriate." Schultze admits that problems arise when that spending is ramped up quickly, but so long as that is kept in check, military spending is little different than other types of government spending. "In sum, government purchases do not add to market supply in the economic sense of the term. Hence taxes must be levied. But the military nature of the goods is absolutely irrelevant" [emphasis mine].

To further help the United States in its fight against inflation, the economy had a lot of "slack," i.e. unused potential in an economy such as empty factories, excess workers, and other unutilized assets that could be used to offset the lack of supply created by military spending. In concluding their study, Starr et al looked at empirical data of countries that increased their military budget and put it through a proprietary formula that was a modification of the Direct Granger Causality. They looked at four countries that increased their military budgets over the 1950s and 1960s and attempted to determine if military spending causes inflation. They concluded that it depends. The United States and the United Kingdom did not see inflation rise as a result of military spending, while France and West Germany did.

"[I]t seems reasonable to conjecture that in the 1950s and 1960s defense spending put a much greater strain on the industrial bases of Germany and France," Starr et al explained. "This showed up in terms of inflation, both in the effect of defense expenditure on investment and in the lack of slack in the French and German economies compared to those of the United Kingdom and the United States. Recall that the amount of slack in the American economy was a prominent variable in several recent analyses of defense spending and the US economy." However, offshoring jobs and then the pandemic has done a lot to eliminate that slack in the US economy today. We are simply not able to replace that supply with an ever-growing workforce and increases in infrastructure and technology like we once were able to. But Starr et al also pointed to another key factor that applied to both the United States and the United Kingdom, the strength of their currency.

"The United States used the key currency status of the dollar to export its inflation by running balance of payment deficits in the 1950s and 1960s. Although the United States has had by far the highest defense spending as a percentage of GNP of all the countries under study, the special position of the dollar may have allowed the United States not only to use slack in its own economy to absorb possible inflationary effects of defense spending, but to use slack in the world economy as well."

In the 1960s, the British pound was already lessening in importance, but it still had immense influence as one of the largest reserve currencies behind the US dollar. Today, the dollar remains dominant but, due to the aforementioned sanctioning of Russia, it is quickly losing that advantage.

Russia [competently moved away](#) from the SWIFT network and started selling its oil using rubles and the yuan. Meanwhile, China, India, Saudi Arabia, and Iran have all signaled interest or have

taken tangible moves away from using the dollar as their reserve currency. This all means that the dollar is no longer in demand like it once was. We cannot offset our deficit by increasing global liquidity as we once did. Even before the world's second and seventh largest economies, plus three major oil producers, started moving away from the dollar, it was already losing its prominence as the global reserve economy.

In 1999, the year the euro was introduced, the US dollar represented 71% of the [global foreign-exchange reserves](#). In 2021, it had fallen to 59%. Most of the change was countries, like the US later forced Russia to do in 2022, switching to local currencies rather than the dollar or British pound. The trend is expected to continue.

The answer to inflation is clear when you are willing to put everything on the table. While the \$5 trillion spent on three stimulus packages certainly was a big number, it is important to note that [we spent at least \\$13.34 trillion](#) on the military from 2000 to 2019 (adjusted for inflation) and none of that money, save for soldiers who had to kill and be killed to get a small portion of it, went to helping Americans.

The pandemic may have been unavoidable (though, it could have certainly been handled far better), and we may have already screwed the pooch when it comes to gas prices (though ending our support for Ukraine and normalizing relations with Russia would be a great first step), but what we can do is draw down our military spending and take a friendlier position with nations around the world, rather than acting like the dollar is their only choice for reserve currencies.

If you want to curb inflation while preserving the US economy, what we need to do is simple: end the war racket.

Unfortunately, no one in the federal government or mainstream media is likely to propose that.

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US Retail Sales Up 1% in June as Inflation Persistently at 4-Decade Highs

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - US retail sales rose 1% in June, the Commerce Department said Friday as it reported a figure just slightly above forecast and suggesting an economy that's still resilient despite inflation at four-decade highs.

"Advance estimates of US retail and food services sales for June 2022, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$680.6 billion, an increase of 1.0 percent from the previous month," the Census Bureau, an unit of the Commerce Department, said in a statement.

Last month's retail sales were also 8.4% above that in June 2021, the statement said.

A breakdown of the data showed consumers spent more last month across a broad range of goods, including furniture, groceries and gas and food.

Spending, meanwhile, declined in building-supply, clothing and department stores.

The Labor Department reported on Wednesday that US consumer prices grew by 9.1% in the year to June, their most since November 1981.

On Thursday, the department followed up with another high inflation data, saying producer prices rose 11.3% in the year to June, the largest increase since a record 11.6% jump registered during the 12 months to March 2022.

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Biden Takes Credit for Opening Saudi Airspace to Israel

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden on Friday took the credit for the efforts to promote the opening of the Saudi airspace to Israel.

"Today, I will be the first president of the United States to fly from Israel to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. As we mark this important moment, Saudi Arabia's decision can help build momentum toward Israel's further integration into the region, including with Saudi Arabia. I will do all that I can, through direct diplomacy and leader-to-leader engagement, to keep advancing this groundbreaking process," Biden said.

He called Saudi Arabia's decision to open its airspace for all civilian planes, including those flying to and from Israel, an "important step towards building a more integrated and stable Middle East region."

"While this opening has long been discussed, now, thanks to months of steady diplomacy between my Administration and Saudi Arabia, it is finally a reality," Biden added.

Biden is on his first visit to the Middle East during his presidency, with stops in Israel, the West Bank and Saudi Arabia.

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Biden to Depart Middle East Without Public Word on Oil Production – Reports

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) – US President Biden will wrap up his Middle East trip without making a public announcement about increasing oil supply, despite soaring gas prices remaining one of the top domestic issues ahead of mid-term elections, Bloomberg reported Friday, citing people in the know.

Citing the need to advance US national security interests, Biden had fended off criticism about traveling to Saudi Arabia on his final stop Friday, which would involve meeting with the country's leadership, including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. This would be Biden's first face-to-face meeting with the Saudi leadership since assuming the presidency and vowing to make the country a "pariah" over bin Salman's alleged order of Jamal Khashoggi's murder in 2018.

Bloomberg reported that US and Saudi officials had already been in close contact about oil production, but it remained unclear whether there would be agreements quietly struck on the side. On Tuesday, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan had declined to discuss specific

details about how Biden would act to bring down gas prices during his Middle East trip, adding that there was no quick fix.

The "most urgent reason" for Biden's trip to Saudi Arabia was high gas prices in the US, The New York Times reported Wednesday. It also said that Biden would not announce any oil deals, as his administration was well aware of the poor optics of appearing to condone human rights violations in order to secure cheaper gas prices. Citing current and former US officials, the Times reported that the US and Saudi Arabia had an understanding that production would increase upon the expiry of a quota agreement in September, ahead of the fall mid-term election campaign in the US.

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US to Push for Full Accounting of Death of Al Jazeera Journalist - Biden

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - The United States will insist on a full and transparent accounting of the death of veteran Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, President Joe Biden said Friday.

"The United States will continue to insist on a full and transparent accounting of her death," Biden said during a joint press conference with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas.

Al Jazeera Arabic, Abu Akleh, 51, was killed by an Israeli-fired bullet to the head on May 11 while on assignment in the occupied Palestinian city of Jenin.

Last week, her family sent a letter to Biden, demanding that he meet with them during his regional tour and help ensure that justice is served in the investigation of her killing.

The White House said on Wednesday that Secretary of State Antony Blinken has invited the Abu Akleh family to the US for direct talks.

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Biden Announces Extra \$200M in Aid for Palestine Via UNRWA

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - The United States will provide an extra \$200 million in financial assistance for Palestine, President Joe Biden said on Friday.

"Today I am announcing that the United States is going to provide an additional \$200 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency [for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, UNRWA] so it can continue its vital work helping the most vulnerable Palestinians," Biden said during a joint press conference with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas.

He also reaffirmed his commitment to the two-state solution.

During his remarks earlier in the day, Biden committed an additional \$100 million to the East Jerusalem Hospital Network.

Biden is on his first visit to the Middle East during his presidency, with stops in Israel, the West Bank and Saudi Arabia.

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RPT - Palestinians Urge Abbas Not to Meet With Biden Due to Biased US Policy - Ex-Official

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - The vast majority of Palestinians oppose their current leader Mahmoud Abbas planned meeting with US President Joe Biden because of the United States' biased policy toward them, Palestinian National Initiative Secretary-General Mustafa Barghouti told.

"We understand that it is useless to meet with Mr. Biden," Barghouti, who also served as Information Minister in the Unity Government, said. "What we need is self-reliance, unity and unity around joint strategy for Palestinian struggle and to achieve our freedom."

Barghouti said Palestinians consider it insulting for Biden to allot them 40 minutes of his time to address their plight while allotting three days to the Israelis.

"It is absolutely insulting to Palestinians to try to marginalize our issue in this manner," Barghouti said. "Mr. Biden loves Israel. His whole policy is dictated by Israel so let him meet the Israelis. Why should we meet with him so that he would use that as a cover for his efforts to liquidate our rights."

Biden is visiting the Middle East for the first time in the role as US president. The trip covers Israel, including the West Bank, and Saudi Arabia and will last through July 16. The US president is scheduled to meet Israel Prime Minister Yair Lapid, United Arab Emirates President Mohammed bin Zayed and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas.

Barghouti said the Palestinians are perceiving complete and total US bias toward Israel, and saw in the US statement an attempt to deny the Palestinian people their rights to self-determination and freedom.

"What we saw is an effort by the US President and Israel to prevent us from having the right to resist for our rights and our freedom," he said. "What we saw is an effort to liquidate the Palestinian issue and to have normalization with the Arab countries at the expense of the Palestinian people. They are trying to marginalize Palestine and we will not allow that."

On Wednesday, the Palestinian movement Hamas said that it considers the Biden's visit to Israel to be a sign of the United States' support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Hamas said Biden's visit also serves as an endorsement for Israel in what it calls an aggression against our Palestinian people and land, and a denial of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights to freedom and independence.

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RPT: ANALYSIS - Inflation May Sap Demand for High-End Microchips, But Mature Node Crunch to Persist

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - Inflation fueling a reduction in orders for higher end smartphones may ease the supply-demand crunch for advanced semiconductors, but mature node chip constraints exacerbated by the Ukraine crisis will likely continue unabated for a few more years, analysts told sputnik.

On Wednesday, Labor Department data revealed that US inflation has reached a 41-year high of 9.1%, which Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo told CNN could be countered in some industries by boosting semiconductor capacity as called for in a \$52 billion funding bill that has stalled in Congress.

A global semiconductor shortage that cost the US economy \$240 billion last year has hit especially hard companies in the automotive, consumer electronics, power generation, and technology sectors. These industries braced for more problems after Moscow in May announced export restrictions on inert gases used in the production of semiconductor chips. Russia has started to limit exports of neon, argon, and helium gases to certain countries in retaliation to sanctions. In addition, some factories used to purify these gases in Ukraine were destroyed in the ongoing conflict.

Before the Ukraine conflict began in February, Russia and Ukraine together produced about 30 percent of the neon gas needed by the US computer chip industry, CNN reported last month, citing data from the Bain strategy consulting firm. The report also said the restrictions could drive up chip prices and cripple major US industries like auto manufacturing.

"Concerns of inflation and uncertainties have perhaps reduced the orders for higher end smartphones," veteran semiconductor analyst Arun Mampazhy told Sputnik. "This might ease the crunch for chips made using advanced technology node, but I feel that the crunch for mature node chips may continue for a few more years."

Mature node chips are made using older and lower-cost manufacturing processes compared to advanced node semiconductors, which are produced with leading-edge technology.

Overall, the microchip expert said he agrees with forecasts that the world-wide shortages of semiconductors will continue until 2024, driven by factors such as tool supply delays.

With respect to Russia's export restrictions, Mampazhy said chipmakers could find alternate, temporary supply options such as air separator units (ASU) present in industries like steel, which end up producing inert gases as a byproduct.

Texas A&M University Electrical and Computer Engineering Associate Department head Stavros Kalafatis, a former senior director with Intel, last November projected that the semiconductor chip industry may not get back to more normal operating procedures until the middle or end of 2022 after spending hundreds of billions on increasing capacity to meet the demand.

The prediction came, however, before Russia's move to restrict shipment of noble gases, which Kalafatis told Sputnik will "definitely" have an impact on semiconductor supply chains.

CHINA GRABBING MARKET SHARE AMID CRISIS

Earlier this week, Intel CEO Pat Gelsinger, while urging Congress to pass the semiconductor funding legislation, noted that in 1990 about 40% of the semiconductor industry was located in the US alongside a similar share in Europe. However, today, he added, 80% is based in Asia and only 12% in the US and 8 percent in Europe.

However, Mampazhy pointed out that in 2021 US companies dominated the top of the \$614 billion global semiconductor market, excluding pure play foundries. In fact, he noted, seven of the top 10 on the list were headquartered in the United States - including three integrated device manufacturers (IDMs) and four fabless or design-only firms, with none based in China.

On the other hand, the \$108 billion foundry or contract chip manufacturing market, he continued, has some Chinese firms in the top 10 showing the highest growth despite lacking the most advanced technology.

"In other words, they are showing big growth even by offering mature node tech," Mampazhy said.

Hence, he added, the United States may be concerned that if China can increasingly capture chip fabrication market share with mature node technology, it may catch up in advanced node tech as well, which the US has been trying to prevent or slow down by not letting the Chinese get extreme ultraviolet lithography (EUV) tools.

According to Dutch-based ASML, the sole supplier of the systems, EUV lithography tools are used to pattern the finest details on the most advanced microchips that are able to provide more processing brainpower with less energy. It is the most expensive step in making advanced microchips used in products like smartphones, smart cars, homes, and other products, analysts told CNBC. So costly, in fact, that most chipmakers cannot even afford them, the report added. Mampazhy said the United States is also concerned about China taking control of Taiwan, which has so many key companies in the industry such as TSMC - the world's largest semiconductor foundry - United Microelectronics, Powerchip, and Vanguard, in addition to fabless suppliers like MediaTek.

And, at the strategic level, he added, the United States is likely worried China could duplicate semiconductor chips with malicious modifications that could cause devices to malfunction.

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RPT - Biden May See Illegal Border Crossings Hit 7Mln by 2024 if No Action Taken - Ex-Officials

EL PASO, July 15 (Sputnik) - The number of border apprehensions under President Joe Biden's watch could reach a record seven million by the end of his first term if the administration continues to do nothing to deter the influx of illegal migrants, former US officials told Sputnik. Nearly 3 million migrants have illegally crossed the US southern border since Biden took office. The US has already recorded 1.5 million illegal border crossings since the federal government's 2022 fiscal year began eight months ago in October, including three consecutive monthly highs in March (222,339), April (235,478), and May (239,416).

The United States hit a 20-year record high of 1.7 million illegal migrants apprehended on the southern border in the 2021 fiscal year. The numbers spiked dramatically after Biden was inaugurated in January 2021, which has provided Republicans with ammunition ahead of the 2022 mid-term elections in November, and the subsequent 2024 presidential campaign.

"By the end of the Biden administration, by the time it ends in 2024, we'll be at probably pushing 7 million people, and that is just something that has never happened, not even during the Ellis Island peak of immigration in this country," former Texas Department of Public Safety intelligence analyst Todd Bensman told Sputnik. "This is the worst mass migration, border crisis in US history, by far dwarfing anything in the last 20 years."

Although climate change, poverty, and government corruption are often cited as some of the key factors driving US mass migration to the southern border, Biden's lack of action is the primary driver, Bensman added.

"As long as you have the White House perfectly okay with having millions and millions of people flooding in over the border, it's gonna happen," Bensman said. "The one factor that we have control over in the immediate near term and long term is whether we're going to let them in. So that becomes the only real root cause that matters."

A migrant's decision making is all based on whether it is worth spending up to \$10,000 to attempt to get smuggled into the United States, he added.

"If the answer is 'yes,' they're coming," Bensman said. "Climate change didn't change suddenly, and all those government officials didn't experience an outbreak of integrity all of a sudden. Homicide rates didn't just suddenly go up, in a lot of cases they went down."

Bensman pointed out that Democratic presidents like Barack Obama and Bill Clinton both made efforts to stop mass migration on the US southern border, unlike current mainstream Democrats. In June, the US Supreme Court authorized the Biden administration to end the Trump-era "Remain in Mexico" policy that required non-Mexican nationals who cross the land border into the United States to stay in Mexico during the course of their removal proceedings. In addition, the Biden administration has attempted to rescind the Title 42 policy, which serves as a tool to deter migrants at the southern border due to public health concerns from the coronavirus, but a federal court ordered the administration to keep the policy in place.

Bensman said the number of migrants the US is exempting from Title 42 is still so great that it stands as a very powerful enticement to the rest of the world.

"We're going to have this huge population that will be living here that'd be too large to round up and deport, even if there's a will, and 40 plus percent of all of those are coming from 150 different other countries besides Central America and Mexico," Bensman said.

Bensman mentioned some of the migrants coming through the US border are from countries with terrorism issues or countries in Africa where there are conflicts between warlords and tribal militias.

Moreover, Bensman said record-setting mass migration will also have immediate impacts on school districts, such as increasing tax rates and overcrowding.

"I don't see the administration taking any significant steps to shut it down or reverse the trend, which is another thing that's really unusual about this mass migration crisis. It's the first time that an American president has been ok with it, has not tried everything they have in their power to shut it down," Bensman said.

BIDEN MUST TAKE ACTION TO AVOID HUMANITARIAN DISASTER

Former US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) sector chief Victor Manjarrez told Sputnik the Biden administration needs to take action in order to avoid a disastrous event like the one that left 50 illegal migrants dead after a smuggler abandoned them inside a tractor-trailer near the Texas city of San Antonio in sweltering heat conditions.

"I hope someone from the Biden Administration starts to listen before we have something worse than the San Antonio tragedy," Manjarrez said.

Manjarrez said he has heard the southern border crisis called a humanitarian crisis, but he believes it is now a man-made disaster due to Biden's lack of action in dealing with the issue. He warned about the number of illegal migrants passing through the Big Bend sector, a very remote area with rough terrain on the Texas-Mexico border.

"There has been a reliance on the use of geography as a deterrence, [but] the flows are so heavy, that's no longer a deterrence," Manjarrez said. "We're one bad weather event away for having a disaster in Big Bend. Wait until we get like a heat wave, it'll make San Antonio look like nothing."

Manjarrez, citing his own source, said US immigration enforcement sees indications from Central America and Mexico that the crisis on the US southern border will worsen soon.

He also said the record-high number of illegal migrants arriving at the US southern border is taking a toll on Border Patrol agents. He said that in April he was in the Rio Grande Valley sector in Texas where many of the migrants are crossing into the United States illegally.

"I had the opportunity to look on the line, look at the processes, and I've never seen so many agents with like their eyeballs sunk in, you know, like when you're exhausted. They don't look well," Manjarrez said.

The former sector chief said he expects the Biden administration to see a second-consecutive record year for the number of illegal migrants apprehended on the US southern border because there is no deterrent effect.

"The tools that have been taken away from the border patrol in terms of able to deliver some kind of consequence... Right now the consequence is you come up claiming political asylum and the government doesn't have the ability to hold you, so they release you pending your case," Manjarrez said.

Regarding Texas Governor Greg Abbott's order authorizing the national guard and state law enforcement to apprehend and return illegal migrants to Mexico, Manjarrez said the move could make them vulnerable to lawsuits because they will not be able to make determinations for asylum claims.

With respect to Biden's program to fast-track migration of Ukrainian refugees arriving on the US southern border, the former CBP sector chief said he expects the situation to be exploited by other Europeans seeking to come to the United States. Ukrainian refugees have been treated better than other migrants coming into the United States, he added.

More than 33,000 Ukrainian migrants have come to the United States since March, after the start of Russia's special military operation in the country, including 21,153, in April, after a Biden order welcoming up to 100,000.

Bensman said the arrival of Ukrainian refugees on the southern border exacerbates the current problem.

"The Ukrainians certainly do not need to be coming over the border," Bensman said. "For one thing, the administration has made it legal for them to be admitted into the country... they just don't want to wait. They can get quicker access at the border, because they're just letting everybody in."

Bensman pointed out that Ukrainian refugees do not have to come to the United States because the European Union has offered Ukrainians refuge for three years with food and housing subsidies and education.

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RPT - Russia Proposes to US Trilateral Talks With Mexico on Illegal Border Crossings - Consul

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - The Russian Embassy in Washington and the Consulate General in Houston have proposed to the United States trilateral talks with Mexico about illegal crossings at the US southern border, but has not received a response, Russian Consul General in Houston Alexander Zakharov told Sputnik.

"We have suggested several times that we have consultations with ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] but they have not responded to any of our proposals," Zakharov said. "Exactly the same proposal was made by the Russian Embassy to the US Department of Homeland Security. They have not responded to anything yet. We are ready for consultations. We offered tripartite consultations - Russia, United States and Mexico - we did not receive any response."

Zakharov pointed out that the channel used to facilitate illegal border crossings exists and has flourished in recent months.

"The channel is clear: they [Russian nationals] fly to Mexico and from there - I don't know who they pay, the locals - they organize border crossings, illegal border crossings," Zakharov said. "Unfortunately, there are tragic cases, as in San Antonio. This is the whole tragedy of the situation."

Zakharov also said the diplomatic mission is receiving dozens of reports of Russians being detained at the southern US border over illegal crossing, and is trying to provide them with assistance.

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Buffalo Supermarket Where White Attacker Killed 10 Black People Reopens

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - The Tops supermarket in Buffalo, where a young white gunman targeted and killed ten African Americans two months ago, reopened with a ceremony attended by community members and local officials, including New York Attorney General Letitia James.

Earlier in the day, the Justice Department announced that a federal grand jury had indicted the gunman, Payton Gendron, on 27 counts of both gun charges and hate crimes allegedly committed during the May 14 shooting rampage in Buffalo. The Justice Department also said the charges in the indictment carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment or the death penalty.

"This is the day when we declare that hate did not win, that hate was defeated, that hate has no place in east Buffalo or Buffalo, or in the great state of New York," James said at the re-dedication ceremony on Thursday as quoted by ABC.

In a tweet later in the day, James said the ceremony honored the lives lost and resilience of the community two months after the "act of racist terror."

Since the shooter walked into the supermarket with a Bushmaster high-powered weapon and fired at least 60 bullets which gunned down innocent people inside and outside the establishment, the store has undergone extensive renovations. The Jefferson Avenue store was a lifeline for the community as the only store of its kind in a food desert.

Among the activities at the somber event was a prayer service, a moment of silence, the reading of each victim's name and a firefighter ringing a silver bell after each victim's name was read.

Tops president John Persons praised the first responders and police officers who treated the injured and took the 18-year-old shooter into custody.

One of the grand jury's special findings is that the young man expressed intense hatred for Black people and murdered his victims after substantial planning and premeditation to commit an act of terrorism.

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UPDATE - Trump Says Has Made Decision on 2024 Presidential Run

(Update with change in lede, headline; details in paras 2-4)

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump said in an interview that he has made up his mind on whether to run for re-election in 2024 and the only remaining question is whether to reveal his decision before or after the midterm vote in November.

"Well, in my own mind, I've already made that decision, so nothing factors in anymore," Trump told New York magazine on Thursday. "I would say my big decision will be whether I go before or after."

Trump was referring to whether he should announce his re-election run before or after the midterm elections in November.

Trump said he feels very confident he can win the 2024 presidential election should he decide to run.

Earlier on Thursday, The Washington Post reported that Trump may announce his decision to run as soon as September, according to two of his advisers. The report also said Republicans are split on the move, with allies saying he could drive turnout while others think he could undercut the opportunity for Republicans to take over the House and Senate.

President Joe Biden's approval ratings have dropped to an all-time low amid runaway inflation, high fuel prices, exploding crime rates, liberal immigration policy and an aggressive foreign policy.

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Container Shipping Price From Asia to US Increased Tenfold During Pandemic - White House

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - The price to ship a container from Asia to the United States increased tenfold during the coronavirus pandemic in part due to the competition and performance issues in ocean shipping, White House chief economic adviser Brian Deese said. "The competition and performance issues in ocean shipping have had profound spillover to our economy coming out of a pandemic with fundamental supply and supply chain constraints," Deese said during a conversation organized by the Aspen Institute on Thursday. "We have a highly concentrated industry dominated by three alliances, and during the pandemic, the price of shipping and container from Asia to the United States rose more than tenfold."

Deese pointed out that the United States experienced significant problems with overseas shipments during the pandemic.

Shipping containers were piling up at ports due to the Biden administration's pandemic measures causing a decrease in production, lack of labor incentives and revolt among some workers against vaccine and other mandates, he said.

The lack of workers to unload the hundreds of thousands of containers also fueled the increase in prices, which further contributed to restraining the expected economic growth, according to reports.

In June, US President Joe Biden signed a bill into law that overhauls the US shipping industry and provides safeguards to prevent companies from manipulating the market.

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US House Passes FY2023 Defense Spending Bill, Authorizing Nearly \$850Bln in Funding (Adds breakdown on vote count in para 2, more details in 4-7)

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - The US House of Representatives passed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2023, authorizing approximately \$850 billion in spending.

Lawmakers on Thursday passed the legislation in a 329-101 vote, with opposition coming from 63 Republican and 39 Democratic members.

The 2023 NDAA provides roughly \$850 billion in defense spending for the US government, adding \$37 billion to President Joe Biden's initial request for about \$813 billion.

The bill faced opposition from the House Freedom Caucus because it does not address COVID-19 vaccine mandates in the military and purportedly prioritizes progressive ideology over combat readiness, according to a statement released Wednesday.

The House added amendments to the NDAA including one to allow the use of psychedelic drugs to treat service members, one to require US flags bought by the military to be made in America, and one to establish an unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP) reporting system.

Lawmakers also added amendments to restrict the transfer of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey without assurance they would not be used for overflights of Greece, and give \$100 million in assistance to Ukrainian pilots.

The Senate will need to pass their own version of the legislation and reconcile it with the House's before a finalized bill could be sent to Biden.

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US House Passes FY2023 Defense Spending Bill, Authorizing Nearly \$850Bln in Funding

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Lawmakers passed the legislation in a vote of 329-101 on Thursday.

The 2023 NDAA provides roughly \$850 billion in defense spending for the US government, adding \$37 billion to President Joe Biden's initial request for about \$813 billion.

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Trump Says He Remains Confident Can Win 2024 US President Election

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump said in an interview that he is confident he can win the 2024 presidential election if he chooses to seek re-election.

"I feel very confident that, if I decide to run, I'll win," Trump told New York Magazine on Thursday.

Trump said he already made up his mind and his only decision now is to determine whether to make his announcement before or after the midterm elections in November.

Earlier on Thursday, the Washington Post reported that Trump may announce his decision to run as soon as September, according to two of his advisers.

The report said an early announcement of Trump's possible announcement to seek re-election could help the Republican party take control of the US House of Representatives and the Senate.

President Joe Biden's approval ratings have dropped to an all-time low amid runaway inflation, high fuel prices, exploding crime rates, liberal immigration policy and an aggressive foreign policy.

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Vershinin Says Russia Increasing Food, Fertilizer Exports to Resolve Global Hunger

UNITED NATIONS, July 15 (Sputnik) - Russia has significantly increased food and fertilizer exports to resolve the global food crisis, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin said during the High-Level Political Forum at the United Nations.

"On the specific issue of food security... Russia has considerably increased its exports of food and fertilizers delivering to African countries and the Middle East and contributing to resolving the problem of hunger," Vershinin said on Thursday.

The Deputy Foreign Minister explained the current situation is a structural crisis that demands reforming the entire international economic order rather than a "band-aid approach."

Vershinin said that mistakes made by the Western countries during the coronavirus pandemic in the microeconomic food and energy policies have led to an outbreak of global instability in the raw materials markets long before Russia's special military operation was launched in Ukraine. The High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, organized by the United Nations, is focused on accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and resolving challenges or obstacles standing in the way.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, July 15 (Sputnik) -

ANTI-RUSSIA SANCTIONS

* The United States has removed sanctions on the Russia's Alfa-Bank branch in Kazakhstan, the US Treasury Department said on Thursday.

* The United States has issued a general license authorizing transactions with Russia related to fertilizers, seeds and food crops, the Treasury Department said.

* The United States is authorizing transactions with German energy conglomerate Securing Energy for Europe GmbH (SEFE) through December 16 despite Russia-related sanctions imposed on it, the Treasury Department said.

ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER RESIGNS

* Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi announced on Thursday that he would resign from his position as head of government.

* Italian President Sergio Mattarella rejected the Draghi's resignation, the presidential palace said.

US SOUTHERN BORDER

* Russian Consul General in Houston Alexander Zakharov told Sputnik that the diplomatic mission is receiving dozens of reports of Russians being detained at the southern US border over illegal crossing, and is trying to provide them with assistance.

* The Russian Embassy in Washington and the Consulate General in Houston have proposed to the United States trilateral talks with Mexico about illegal crossings at the US southern border, but has not received a response, Zakharov told Sputnik.

UK PRIME MINISTER ELECTION

* Five candidates made it to the third round of the UK Prime Minister's election - Rishi Sunak, Penny Mordaunt, Liz Truss, Kemi Badenoch and Tom Tugendhat, Conservative Party members' committee head Graham Brady said on Thursday.

UKRAINE DEVELOPMENTS

* The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is calling on the members of the international community to support Ukraine by granting it financing so the country can maintain its economy, IMF spokesperson Gerry Rice said on Thursday.

CANADA REINTRODUCES COVID-19 TESTING

* The Canadian government has re-introduced mandatory random testing (MRT) for arriving passengers who are "fully vaccinated" against the novel coronavirus as they enter the country via its four major airports, Canada's Public Health Agency said on Thursday.

* The Canadian government has authorized the use of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine in children six months to five years of age, Health Canada said on Thursday.

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US Authorizes Transactions With Russia Related to Fertilizers, Seeds, Crops

(Adds earlier comments and details from Treasury in paras 3-4, background in para 5)

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The United States has issued a general license authorizing transactions with Russia related to fertilizers, seeds and food crops, the Department of the Treasury announced on Thursday.

"For the purposes of this general license, agricultural commodities, medicine, and medical devices are defined as follows: Agricultural commodities. [They] are intended for use as: Food for humans (including raw, processed, and packaged foods; live animals; vitamins and minerals; food additives or supplements; and bottled drinking water) or animals (including animal feeds); Seeds for food crops; Fertilizers or organic fertilizers; or Reproductive materials (such as live animals, fertilized eggs, embryos, and semen) for the production of food animals," the statement said.

The new guidance comes amid mounting concerns about US sanctions impeding the sale of Russian food and fertilizer. Assistant Treasury Secretary for Business Affairs Ramin Toloui in a June 22 call with reporters admitted that US officials were worried about "over compliance" with its sanctions, and emphasized that Washington does not want its measures to create impediments for countries purchasing Russian food and fertilizer.

"The United States has not imposed sanctions on the exportation of agricultural commodities from, to, or involving Russia, so providing insurance or reinsurance related to the transportation or shipping of these products is not prohibited," the Treasury said in its new guidance.

World leaders and international organizations have been sounding the alarm over an imminent and large-scale food crisis due to the situation Ukraine, supply chain disruptions and derailed

crop production in one of the largest grain producers in the world. Russia and Ukraine account for an estimated 30% of global exports of wheat, 20% of maize, and 76% of sunflower.

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Buffalo Shooting Suspect Indicted on 27-Count Hate Crimes, Firearms Charges- Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - Payton Gendron, the shooter who killed 13 people in Buffalo, New York, has been indicted by a federal grand jury on 27 firearms and hate crime charges, the US Justice Department said on Thursday.

"Today, a grand jury has indicted Payton Gendron with hate crime and firearms offenses following the horrific attack on the Black community of Buffalo that killed ten people and injured three others on May 14, 2022," the Justice Department said in a press release.

Gendron is accused of shooting 13 people, ages 20 to 86, at a Tops supermarket store in Buffalo on May 14. Eleven of the victims were Black and two were White, according to the Buffalo Police Department.

The indictment charged Gendron with ten counts of hate crimes resulting in deaths; three counts of hate crimes involving an attempt to kill three injured individuals; one hate crime count alleging Gendron attempted to kill additional Black people in and around the grocery store; Gendron was also indicted with 13 additional charges "of using, carrying, or discharging a firearm in relation to the hate crimes, and seeks forfeiture of items, including the weapon used in the shooting," the release said.

One of the grand jury's special findings in that Gendron murdered his victims after substantial planning and premeditation to commit an act of terrorism, the release added

If convicted, Gendron will serve a maximum sentence of life in prison or face the death penalty.

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Oil Prices Down in Volatile Trade as Bets Swings Over Fed's Upcoming Interest Rate Hike

NEW YORK, July 14 (Sputnik) - Crude oil prices ended lower on Thursday after moving more than \$7 per barrel between the highs and lows of the day amid swinging bets over the kind of rate hike the US central bank will decide in late July in its bid to curb runaway inflation.

New York-traded West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude settled down 52 cents, or 0.5%, at \$95.78 per barrel. WTI's session low was \$90.58 versus its high of \$97. The US crude gauge has lost 10% of its value since the start of July.

WTI charts showed it may be vulnerable to a plunge toward \$83, after coming within less than a dollar of breaking the key \$90 support.

London-traded Brent crude, meanwhile, closed down 47 cents, or 0.5%, at \$99.10 a barrel. The global crude benchmark registered an intraday low of \$95.42 versus a peak of \$101.21. For July so far, Brent has lost 9%.

WTI and Brent are still up about 28% for the year although they have technically been in "bear markets" since the start of July after losing more than 20% from their March peaks of around \$130 for the US gauge and almost \$140 for the global benchmark.

Crude prices rebounded from Thursday's lows after Federal Reserve Governor Chris Waller said the US central bank cannot overdo interest rate hikes despite shocking price pressures in the United States. Waller said he would support a 75-basis point hike at the Federal Reserve's upcoming July 27 meeting over market bets for a 100-basis point increase.

The remarks from one of the Federal Reserve's more hawkish members calmed investors who have been anxious about rates since the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the year to June came in on Wednesday at a new four-decade high of 9.1%.

The CPI data was followed up on Thursday with the Producer Price Index' 11.3% rise during the year to June - the biggest such increase since an all-time 11.2% jump seen during the 12 months to March 2022.

St. Louis Federal Reserve President James Bullard, also known to favor aggressive rate hikes, soothed investors as well by opting for a 75-bps hike at the upcoming July 27th decision on rates.

The Federal Reserve has been trying to manage price growth without implementing excessive interest rate hikes. But its task is becoming harder with each inflation increase.

Many economists say the central bank kept rates "too low for too long" and could push the United States into a recession in its fight to quickly bring inflation under control.

The Federal Reserve left interest rates at between zero and 0.25% range for two years during the coronavirus pandemic and only raised them this year in March.

US gross domestic product already declined 1.6% in the first quarter. A negative second quarter GDP is all that is needed to technically send the economy into a recession.

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White House Condemns Texas Lawsuit Over Federal Guidance Allowing Emergency Abortions

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said on Thursday that the Texas Attorney General's lawsuit challenging the Biden administration's guidance allowing emergency abortions is an example of extreme and radical Republican officials.

"This is yet another example of an extreme and radical Republican elected official," Jean-Pierre said in a statement. "It is unthinkable that this public official would sue to block women from receiving life-saving care in emergency rooms, a right protected under US law."

Earlier on Thursday, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton filed a lawsuit against the Biden administration over its guidance released this week that assured doctors they are protected by federal law if they have to perform an abortion to save a pregnant patient's life.

Paxton said in the lawsuit that the federal guidance would transform every emergency room in the United States into a walk-in abortion clinic.

On June 24, the US Supreme Court overturned its Roe v. Wade decision and allowing states to decide whether to allow or to regulate abortions.

At the end of last month, a CBS/YouGov poll revealed that 41% of Americans approve of the Supreme Court overturning the decision, while 59% disapprove of it. Republicans showed a lot more support for the Supreme Court's decision, with 78% expressing approval vs. 17% of Democrats who said they approved.

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US Making 'Lot of Progress' in Pushing for Russian Oil Price Cap – White House

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) – The United States is making “a lot of progress” toward setting a maximum price for Russian oil, White House chief economic adviser Brian Deese said on Thursday.

“We’re making a lot of progress as [US Treasury] Secretary [Janet Yellen] is in Asia right now as we speak, and one of the central things that she is engaging with allies and partners in the region on is how to effectively execute and get down to the details,” Deese said during an event organized by the Aspen Institute.

Before US President Joe Biden went to Germany to attend the Group of Seven summit in June, the White House was skeptical about the prospects of reaching agreement on capping the sale price of Russian oil among G7 leaders, but the meeting proved otherwise, Deese added.

On Wednesday, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said that the proposed plan on a price cap on Russian oil will take time because of the sheer number of elements that have to be worked through, but the United States has already been engaging with a number of key oil consuming countries, including China and India.

During the G7 meeting in Germany on June 28-30, the leaders of the seven most economically advanced countries issued a communique saying that the oil price cap scheme could be implemented through the options such as allowing Russian seaborne crude oil and petroleum products to be shipped worldwide only if they are purchased at or below an agreed price threshold.

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Canada to Provide Latin American Bloc \$3.4Mln for Climate Measurement - Environment Agency

OTTAWA, July 14 (Sputnik) - The Canadian government will allocate C\$4.5 million (\$3.4 million) to assist Pacific Alliance member countries Mexico, Peru, Chile and Colombia in developing

better climate measurement and reporting systems, the federal environment agency said in a statement on Thursday.

"Today, the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change [Canada], met with Mexico's Environment and Natural Resources Secretary, Maria Luisa Albores Gonzalez, and announced \$4.5 million, over four years, to support Pacific Alliance countries - Mexico, Peru, Chile and Colombia - in strengthening their national climate measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems," the statement said.

The decision was made during the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation's 29th annual Council Session meeting in Merida, Mexico, attended by the environment ministers of Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Environment and Climate Change Canada expects the funding to the Pacific Alliance will help ensure the four countries develop their MRV systems and help them track their emissions to adapt their climate initiatives.

"Our commitment in the Pacific Alliance will provide new tools and help national and local governments build capacity to establish effective and efficient climate measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems to set mitigation priorities and attract the financing needed to implement their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)," Guilbeault said in the statement. The Pacific Alliance MRV program, the release added, will be implemented by the nonprofit Gold Standard Foundation, who will assist in measuring progress toward the Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.

In 2021, the Canadian government said it was pledging twice its current financial support to climate change initiatives agreed to in the Paris Agreement. \$4 billion were to be invested over a period of five years in different areas including renewable energy, new technologies and initiatives for smart agriculture and food systems, among others, according to the release.

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Ivana Trump Dies at Age 73 - Statement

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - Businesswoman Ivana Trump, ex-wife to former US President Donald Trump and mother to Trump children Eric, Ivanka and Donald Jr., has died at the age of 73, according to a statement.

"I am very saddened to inform all of those that loved her, of which there are many, that Ivana Trump has passed away at her home in New York City," Donald Trump said via social media.

"She was a wonderful, beautiful, and amazing woman, who led a great and inspirational life." Ivana Trump, born in Czechoslovakia, was working as a model when she met Donald in 1976. The two married one year later in 1977. The couple's relationship received worldwide publicity up and through their divorce in 1992.

Ivana also worked in major roles at the Trump Organization, including executive vice president for interior design, in addition to independent business ventures in fashion and beauty products.

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NAV CANADA Says Civil Air Navigation Systems Back Online After Telecom Outage

OTTAWA, July 14 (Sputnik) – After disruptions caused earlier on Thursday by an outage at telecommunications provider Zayo, the Canadian civil Air Navigation System (ANS) is again normally operating, NAV CANADA said.

"Following an outage from Zayo, one of NAV CANADA's telecommunications service providers, our operations are returning to normal. Passengers are advised to check with their airlines for specific details regarding flight delays and cancellations," NAV CANADA wrote on social media. Earlier in the day, NAV CANADA, which owns and operates the ANS system, said its operations were being affected by an outage at communications provider Zayo. It recommended passengers check with their airlines for updates regarding their flight statuses, as arrival and departures are being delayed for safety reasons.

This is the second major communications outage in the country in less than a week. On July 8, Rogers a telecommunications giant with over 10 million wireless subscribers and 2 million internet customers, reported a massive outage that affected the entire Canadian network and brought the systems of police, banks and businesses offline.

Founded in 2007, Zayo has since become a major provider of communication infrastructure in North America and Western Europe.

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Watchdog Group Sues US Government for Info Related to Alleged Bypass of Bank Regulator

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The watchdog group Functional Government Initiative (FGI) is suing the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) for not producing records related to their alleged bypass of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) independent banking regulation agency, according to court documents filed Thursday.

FGI filed a lawsuit in the US District Court for the District of Columbia in an attempt to compel CFPB to produce documents related to alleged attempts by CFPB head Rohit Chopra to circumvent former FDIC Chair Jelena McWilliams in launching public comment on bank merger reforms.

Chopra, who is entitled a seat on the FDIC board as CFPB director, tried to launch joint public comment in December 2021 without consulting with McWilliams, bypassing "long-established processes" in an attempt to seize control of the independent regulator, according to a Wall Street Journal op-ed written by McWilliams.

FGI in January submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for information related to interactions between Chopra and McWilliams, which CFPB has yet to provide despite promising to deliver documents by June 2, according to the court filings.

"Absent the filing of this lawsuit, CFPB apparently will not comply with its obligations under FOIA," the court filings said.

FGI requested the court order CFPB to produce the requested records and enjoin them from continuing to withhold non-exempt records, the court filings added.

Chopra's actions threaten turning the FDIC into a partisan institution and harming the objectivity of other independent federal agencies, FGI spokesman Pete McGinnis reportedly told the Daily Caller News Foundation. Circumventing the FDIC broke nearly 90 years of tradition and historic norms dictating the agency's function, McGinnis said.

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RPT - Canada, 22 First Nation Communities Sign Historic \$833Mln Education Deal – Statement (Repeats to fix conversion in lede)

OTTAWA, July 14 (Sputnik) - The Canadian government has signed a historic C\$1.1 billion (\$833 million) agreement on education with 22 First Nation Communities in the province of Quebec, Indigenous Services Canada said on Thursday.

"This agreement between the FNEC [First Nations Education Council], its 22 member communities and Indigenous Services Canada will provide an envelope of approximately \$1.1 billion over five years for communities to implement education programs that will support the academic success of First Nations students," the news release said.

Grand Chiefs and Chiefs of First Nations Education Council signed the historic agreement with the minister of indigenous services, Patty Hajdu, on Mohawk Territory.

The decision is regarded by many as an important step toward reconciliation and Indigenous People control over their own education, as the release said around 5,800 students will benefit from the financing in 22 different communities around the province.

Agreed after over 10 years of negotiations between the federal government and the community chiefs, the agreement is meant to ensure proper formation for autochthonous children from kindergarten to Grade 12.

To do so, the students will be presented with a course curriculum representative of their culture and traditions. Investments in appropriate school transportation and classroom technologies, and the employment of over 600 teachers are also part of the agreement, the release added.

"It is because of the determination of the First Nations Education Council and the 22 communities involved that this agreement could happen, and it will keep children connected to their language and culture through their schooling. This is what reconciliation looks like when we work together in partnership," Hajdu said.

The deal is valid until March 31, 2027, after which an automatic renewal and evaluation of the program will happen, with possible adjustments.

On May 4, 2021, the 22 First Nation Communities and FNEC signed a memorandum of understanding regarding negotiations leading to this agreement.

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Canada, 22 First Nation Communities Sign Historic \$833Mln Education Deal – Statement

OTTAWA, July 14 (Sputnik) - The Canadian government has signed a historic C\$1.1 billion (\$839 million) agreement on education with 22 First Nation Communities in the province of Quebec, Indigenous Services Canada said on Thursday.

"This agreement between the FNEC [First Nations Education Council], its 22 member communities and Indigenous Services Canada will provide an envelope of approximately \$1.1 billion over five years for communities to implement education programs that will support the academic success of First Nations students," the news release said.

Grand Chiefs and Chiefs of First Nations Education Council signed the historic agreement with the minister of indigenous services, Patty Hajdu, on Mohawk Territory.

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US House Passes NDAA Amendment Restricting F-16 Sales to Turkey

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The US House of Representatives on Thursday passed an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) restricting the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkey.

Lawmakers passed the amendment, backed by Rep. Frank Pallone, in a vote of 244-179. The amendment requires the US president to certify that F-16 transfers to Turkey are in the national interest and would not be used for unauthorized territorial overflights of Greece.

The House is expected to vote on and pass their initial version of the NDAA later on Thursday after an extensive amendment process, including the addition of one to allow the use of psychedelic drugs to treat service members, one to require US flags bought by the military to be made in America, and one to establish an unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP) reporting system.

The Senate will need to pass their own version of the legislation and reconcile it with the House's before a finalized bill could be sent to Biden.

The NDAA could authorize approximately \$850 billion in US defense spending, an increase from the previous fiscal year, if passed.

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ANALYSIS - Inflation May Sap Demand for High-End Microchips, But Mature Node Crunch to Persist

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - Inflation fueling a reduction in orders for higher end smartphones may ease the supply-demand crunch for advanced semiconductors, but mature node chip constraints exacerbated by the Ukraine crisis will likely continue unabated for a few more years, analysts told sputnik.

On Wednesday, Labor Department data revealed that US inflation has reached a 41-year high of 9.1%, which Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo told CNN could be countered in some industries by boosting semiconductor capacity as called for in a \$52 billion funding bill that has stalled in Congress.

A global semiconductor shortage that cost the US economy \$240 billion last year has hit especially hard companies in the automotive, consumer electronics, power generation, and technology sectors. These industries braced for more problems after Moscow in May announced export restrictions on inert gases used in the production of semiconductor chips. Russia has started to limit exports of neon, argon, and helium gases to certain countries in retaliation to sanctions. In addition, some factories used to purify these gases in Ukraine were destroyed in the ongoing conflict.

Before the Ukraine conflict began in February, Russia and Ukraine together produced about 30 percent of the neon gas needed by the US computer chip industry, CNN reported last month, citing data from the Bain strategy consulting firm. The report also said the restrictions could drive up chip prices and cripple major US industries like auto manufacturing.

"Concerns of inflation and uncertainties have perhaps reduced the orders for higher end smartphones," veteran semiconductor analyst Arun Mampazhy told Sputnik. "This might ease the crunch for chips made using advanced technology node, but I feel that the crunch for mature node chips may continue for a few more years."

Mature node chips are made using older and lower-cost manufacturing processes compared to advanced node semiconductors, which are produced with leading-edge technology.

Overall, the microchip expert said he agrees with forecasts that the world-wide shortages of semiconductors will continue until 2024, driven by factors such as tool supply delays.

With respect to Russia's export restrictions, Mampazhy said chipmakers could find alternate, temporary supply options such as air separator units (ASU) present in industries like steel, which end up producing inert gases as a byproduct.

Texas A&M University Electrical and Computer Engineering Associate Department head Stavros Kalafatis, a former senior director with Intel, last November projected that the semiconductor chip industry may not get back to more normal operating procedures until the middle or end of 2022 after spending hundreds of billions on increasing capacity to meet the demand.

The prediction came, however, before Russia's move to restrict shipment of noble gases, which Kalafatis told Sputnik will "definitely" have an impact on semiconductor supply chains.

CHINA GRABBING MARKET SHARE AMID CRISIS

Earlier this week, Intel CEO Pat Gelsinger, while urging Congress to pass the semiconductor funding legislation, noted that in 1990 about 40% of the semiconductor industry was located in the US alongside a similar share in Europe. However, today, he added, 80% is based in Asia and only 12% in the US and 8 percent in Europe.

However, Mampazhy pointed out that in 2021 US companies dominated the top of the \$614 billion global semiconductor market, excluding pure play foundries. In fact, he noted, seven of the top 10 on the list were headquartered in the United States - including three integrated device manufacturers (IDMs) and four fabless or design-only firms, with none based in China.

On the other hand, the \$108 billion foundry or contract chip manufacturing market, he continued, has some Chinese firms in the top 10 showing the highest growth despite lacking the most advanced technology.

"In other words, they are showing big growth even by offering mature node tech," Mampazhy said.

Hence, he added, the United States may be concerned that if China can increasingly capture chip fabrication market share with mature node technology, it may catch up in advanced node tech as well, which the US has been trying to prevent or slow down by not letting the Chinese get extreme ultraviolet lithography (EUV) tools.

According to Dutch-based ASML, the sole supplier of the systems, EUV lithography tools are used to pattern the finest details on the most advanced microchips that are able to provide more processing brainpower with less energy. It is the most expensive step in making advanced microchips used in products like smartphones, smart cars, homes, and other products, analysts told CNBC. So costly, in fact, that most chipmakers cannot even afford them, the report added. Mampazhy said the United States is also concerned about China taking control of Taiwan, which has so many key companies in the industry such as TSMC - the world's largest semiconductor foundry - United Microelectronics, Powerchip, and Vanguard, in addition to fabless suppliers like MediaTek.

And, at the strategic level, he added, the United States is likely worried China could duplicate semiconductor chips with malicious modifications that could cause devices to malfunction.

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US Removes Sanctions on Alfa-Bank's Branch in Kazakhstan - Treasury

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The United States has removed sanctions on the branch of Russia's Alfa-Bank in Kazakhstan, the Department of the Treasury announced on Thursday. "The following name has been removed from OFAC's list of Specially Designated Nationals: JSC SB ALFA BANK (a.k.a. SUBSIDIARY BANK ALFA-BANK JSC), Masanchy Street 57a, Almaty 050012, Kazakhstan; SWIFT/BIC ALFAKZKA; Website www.alfabank.kz; Organization Established Date 1994 [RUSSIA-EO14024] (Linked To: JOINT STOCK COMPANY ALFA-BANK)," the statement said.

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US Authorizes Transactions With Russia Related to Fertilizers, Seeds, Crops

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The United States has issued a general license authorizing transactions with Russia related to fertilizers, seeds and food crops, the Department of the Treasury announced on Thursday.

"For the purposes of this general license, agricultural commodities, medicine, and medical devices are defined as follows: Agricultural commodities. [They] are intended for use as: Food for humans (including raw, processed, and packaged foods; live animals; vitamins and minerals; food additives or supplements; and bottled drinking water) or animals (including animal feeds); Seeds for food crops; Fertilizers or organic fertilizers; or Reproductive materials (such as live animals, fertilized eggs, embryos, and semen) for the production of food animals," the statement said.

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US Authorizes All Transactions Involving SEFE Securing Energy for Europe GmbH - Treasury

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The United States is authorizing transactions with German energy conglomerate SEFE Securing Energy for Europe GmbH through December 16, 2022 despite sanctions imposed in response to Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, the Treasury Department said on Thursday.

"Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this general license, all transactions involving SEFE Securing Energy for Europe GmbH (formerly known as Gazprom Germania GmbH), or any entity in which SEFE Securing Energy for Europe GmbH owns, directly or indirectly, a 50

percent or greater interest, that are prohibited ... are authorized through 12:01 a.m. eastern standard time, December 16, 2022," Treasury Department said in a general license. The license does not authorize transactions otherwise prohibited by the Russian Harmful Foreign Activities Sanctions Regulations, the Treasury Department added.

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UN Secretary-General 'Appalled' by Vinnytsia Missile Strike - Spokesperson

UNITED NATIONS, July 14 (Sputnik) - The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is appalled by today's strike against the city of Vinnytsia, United Nations spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Thursday.

"The Secretary-General is appalled by today's missile attack against the city of Vinnytsia in central Ukraine that reportedly killed at least 22 people, including three children, and wounded more than 100 others," Dujarric said in a statement.

Guterres condemns any attacks against civilians or civilian infrastructure and reiterates his call for accountability for such violations, the statement said.

The Ukrainian authorities have blamed Moscow for the attack, saying the Russian military deliberately attacked civilians.

Russian media published photographs of the House of Officers that was hit by the missile, saying it was a military target where Ukrainian officers were trained.

Earlier on Thursday, Russian diplomat at the United Nations, Evgeny Varganov, said Russia only strikes military targets in Ukraine and confirmed the strike in Vinnytsia was against the House of Officers, where the Ukrainian military trained its officers.

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Palestinians Urge Abbas Not to Meet With Biden Due to Biased US Policy - Ex-Official

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The vast majority of Palestinians oppose their current leader Mahmoud Abbas planned meeting with US President Joe Biden because of the United States' biased policy toward them, Palestinian National Initiative Secretary-General Mustafa Barghouti told Sputnik on Thursday.

"We understand that it is useless to meet with Mr. Biden," Barghouti, who also served as Information Minister in the Unity Government, said. "What we need is self-reliance, unity and unity around joint strategy for Palestinian struggle and to achieve our freedom."

Barghouti said Palestinians consider it insulting for Biden to allot them 40 minutes of his time to address their plight while allotting three days to the Israelis.

"It is absolutely insulting to Palestinians to try to marginalize our issue in this manner," Barghouti said. "Mr. Biden loves Israel. His whole policy is dictated by Israel so let him meet the Israelis.

Why should we meet with him so that he would use that as a cover for his efforts to liquidate our rights."

Biden is visiting the Middle East for the first time in the role as US president. The trip covers Israel, including the West Bank, and Saudi Arabia and will last through July 16. The US president is scheduled to meet Israel Prime Minister Yair Lapid, United Arab Emirates President Mohammed bin Zayed and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas.

Barghouti said the Palestinians are perceiving complete and total US bias toward Israel, and saw in the US statement an attempt to deny the Palestinian people their rights to self-determination and freedom.

"What we saw is an effort by the US President and Israel to prevent us from having the right to resist for our rights and our freedom," he said. "What we saw is an effort to liquidate the Palestinian issue and to have normalization with the Arab countries at the expense of the Palestinian people. They are trying to marginalize Palestine and we will not allow that."

On Wednesday, the Palestinian movement Hamas said that it considers the Biden's visit to Israel to be a sign of the United States' support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Hamas said Biden's visit also serves as an endorsement for Israel in what it calls an aggression against our Palestinian people and land, and a denial of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights to freedom and independence.

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Pelosi Says Democrats Intend to Retain Control of US Congress in November Elections

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The Democratic Party intends to retain control of the US House of Representatives and Senate in the upcoming midterm elections in November, Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Thursday.

"Democrats have absolutely no intention of losing the House in November and the Senate too," Pelosi said during a press briefing. "We are mobilized, we are fortified, we have great candidates."

Pelosi explained her confidence by pointing out that the United States and its democracy are at risk and the Democrats in such an environment are campaigning on kitchen table issues that affect working families.

However, a Rasmussen Reports poll released on Friday indicates that Republican candidates hold an eight-point lead over their Democratic rivals. When asked which party's candidate they would vote for if elections were held now, 48% of likely US voters replied in favor of Republicans and 40% in favor of Democrats.

Support for Democratic Party candidates is highest among government employees and people with annual incomes of more than \$200,000. Republicans poll best with private sector workers and those with annual income between \$30,000-\$50,000, according to the poll.

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Fed's Waller Does Not Want to 'Overdo' Rates, But Leaves Door Open for 100bps Hike

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The Federal Reserve does not want to overdo rate hikes despite shocking US price pressures, the central bank's governor Chris Waller said Wednesday, calming investors fearing a record interest rate increase for July but still leaving the door open for a 100 basis-point hike for July.

"You don't want to overdo rate increases," Waller said after a speech on the economy he delivered at an event in the US state of Idaho.

The central bank governor said he preferred a 75 basis-point hike at the Federal Reserve's upcoming July 27 rate revision meeting, versus growing market bets for a record 100-basis point hike.

"The market may have overestimated a 100-basis point hike in July," Waller said. "For me, a 75-basis point increase at this meeting puts us to neutral. However, if incoming data over the next two weeks shows that demand remains strong, I would incline toward a bigger rate hike."

"Neutral" is the central bank's lingo for getting inflation back to its target of 2% a year.

Investors have been gearing for a 100-basis point, or full percentage point, hike after the Labor Department reported on Wednesday that US consumer prices grew by 9.1% in the year to June, their most since November 1981.

On Thursday, the department followed up with another high inflation data, saying producer prices rose 11.3% in the year to June, the largest increase since a record 11.6% jump registered during the 12 months to March 2022.

The Federal Reserve has been trying to manage price growth without implementing excessive rate hikes. But its task is becoming harder with each galloping print on inflation.

Many economists say the central bank kept rates "too low for too long" and could push the United States into a recession in its fight to quickly bring inflation under control.

The Federal Reserve left interest rates at between zero and 0.25% for two years during the pandemic and only raised them this year in March this year. It began with a hike of 25 basis points, or quarter-percentage point, then raised it by 50 basis points, or a half percentage point, in May. In June, it imposed an increase of 75 basis points, or three quarters of a percentage point — its highest in 28 years — bringing current rates to between 1.5% and 1.75%.

Waller admitted that from a risk management standpoint, "we didn't handle things correctly at the Fed" and that the central bank "bet the farm on the transitory inflation narrative." That narrative was expounded a year ago when the annual growth in consumer prices was at around 5%.

"Yesterday's inflation figure came as no surprise," he added, referring to the annual growth of 9.1% for June. "It is possible that we will have a growth-recession, in which growth falls below the longer-run normal but does not fall below zero."

US gross domestic product already declined 1.6% in the first quarter. A negative second quarter GDP is all that is decided to technically send the economy into a recession.

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UN Stands Against Any Undemocratic Transfer of Power - Spokesperson

UNITED NATIONS, July 14 (Sputnik) - The United Nations stands against any undemocratic seizure of power such as conducted by coups d'etat, UN deputy spokesperson Farhan Aziz Haq told reporters on Thursday.

"Obviously, as a general rule, of course, we stand against any undemocratic transfer of power in countries," Haq said when asked to comment on the former US National Security Advisor John Bolton's public admission that he participated in planning several coups.

On Tuesday, Bolton said during an interview with CNN that he had helped plan several coups, which he characterized as being difficult to organize. Bolton's admission came as he was asked whether former President Donald Trump's was conducting a coup on January 6, 2021. Bolton said Trump's involvement in the protest at the US Capital was not a coup.

Haq acknowledged that Bolton's comments included an admission he participated in several coups.

The UN deputy spokesperson was asked to comment on Bolton's statement given that the latter also served as US Ambassador to the United Nations from 2005 - 2006.

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Canada Authorizes Moderna Vaccine for Children 6 Months to 5 Years – Health Authority

OTTAWA, July 14 (Sputnik) – The Canadian government has given green light to the use of Moderna COVID-19 vaccines in children between 6 months and 5 years of age, Health Canada said on Thursday.

"Today, Health Canada authorized the use of the Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine in children 6 months to 5 years of age. This is the first COVID-19 vaccine authorized in Canada for use in this age group and marks a milestone in Canada's response to COVID-19. As a result of this authorization, approximately 1.7 million children are now eligible for vaccination against COVID-19," the statement said.

After a "thorough" independent investigation by scientists, the health authority decided that health benefits of Moderna vaccines were greater than the possible hazards caused by them, thus authorizing two preliminary doses of 25 micrograms, to be administered at a four-week interval, the statement said.

In a bid for transparency with the Canadian public, Health Canada has also imposed on the pharmaceutical company, "terms and conditions" in which they must provide frequent updates on the vaccine's safety and efficacy, and disclosing any potential harm to this age group, the statement added.

On April 29, Health Canada received a formal application from Moderna to expand the admissible public, as people from 6-18 years had previously been authorized to receive the vaccine.

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Civil Air Navigation Systems Offline as NAV CANADA Reports Outage in Country's West

OTTAWA, July 14 (Sputnik) – The Canadian civil Air Navigation System (ANS) is experiencing disruptions in western parts of the country as Zayo, a telecommunications provider to NAV CANADA, reported an outage on Thursday.

"One of NAV CANADA's telecommunications service providers, Zayo, is currently experiencing an outage, which is impacting our Company's operations in parts of Western Canada," NAV CANADA said.

The company, which operates and owns the ANS, recommended passengers check with their airlines for updates regarding their flight statuses, as arrival and departures are being delayed for safety reasons.

NAV CANADA said it's following the situation very closely, asking Zayo to work diligently to restore their affected services.

Founded in 2007, Zayo has become a major provider of communication infrastructure in North America and Western Europe.

On Friday, Rogers, a telecommunications giant with over 10 million wireless subscribers and 2 million internet customers, reported a massive outage that affected the entire Canadian network and brought the systems of police, banks and businesses offline.

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UPDATE - Americans' Confidence in US Public Schools Falls to 28% Amid Political Divide - Poll (Updates with more details in para 8)

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - Americans' confidence in the US public education system remains low amid an increasing divide between how Republicans and Democrats view public schools, a new Gallup poll revealed on Thursday.

Slightly over one-quarter of Americans, or 28%, claim to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the public education system, a release on the poll said.

The figure is down from 32% last year and from 41% in 2020, during which there was a surge in support for schools in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the release said.

The 28% figure is only two points above the all-time low of 26% in 2014, the release said.

The percentage of Republicans having a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in public schools fell from 34% in 2020 to 20% in 2021 and 14% today, the release said.

"Since 2020, independents' confidence has declined nine percentage points to 29% and Democrats' has remained fairly high - currently 43%, versus 48% in 2020," the release added. The gap between Republican and Democratic confidence in public education has averaged seven points since Gallup began studying institutional confidence in 1973, compared to a current gap of 29 points, according to the release.

The political divide has reflected the growing differences between Republicans and Democrats on whether and the extent to which sex education should be taught, especially to the youngest pupils, as well as elements of the so-called Critical Race Theory, among other controversial subjects.

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Americans' Confidence in US Public Schools Falls to 28% Amid Political Divide - Poll

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - Americans' confidence in the US public education system remains low amid an increasing divide between how Republicans and Democrats view public schools, according to a Gallup poll released Thursday.

"Slightly over one-quarter of Americans, or 28%, claim to have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the public education system," a release on the poll said.

The figure is down from 32% last year and from 41% in 2020, during which there was a surge in support for schools in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the report said.

The 28% figure is only two points above the all-time low of 26% in 2014, the release said.

The percentage of Republicans having a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in public schools fell from 34% in 2020 to 20% in 2021 and 14% today, the release also said.

"Since 2020, independents' confidence has declined nine percentage points to 29% and Democrats' has remained fairly high - currently 43%, versus 48% in 2020," the release added. The gap between Republican and Democratic confidence in public education has averaged seven points since Gallup began studying institutional confidence in 1973, compared to a current gap of 29 points, according to the release.

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RECAST - Netherlands Considers Equipping F-35 Fleet With Long-Range Missiles - Defense Minister

(Recasts headline)

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The Netherlands is planning to install long-range missiles on its newly ordered F-35 fighter jets amid security concerns in Europe, Minister of Defense Kajsa Ollongren said on Thursday.

"[W]e have ordered extra F-35 jets and we are looking into long-range missiles for them, to equip them, which is also a big step for us," Ollongren said during a conversation organized by the Atlantic Council.

The share of defense spending in Netherlands' budget will increase by 40% in 2024 and will be 2% of GDP, a target that was agreed to during the 2014 NATO summit in Wales, Ollongren added.

The Defense Minister also said he considers the alleged threat from Russia and its special military operation in Ukraine to be the main reason for the sharp increase in the Netherlands' defense spending.

On June 1, Ollongren introduced a Defense White Paper dubbed "A Stronger Netherlands, A Safer Europe: Investing in a Robust NATO and EU." The document contains the government's plans to increase the annual defense spending by \$5 billion.

The Netherlands' new defense plan also includes the purchase of six F-35 aircraft, bringing the total number of such jets to 52, according to reports.

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Netherlands Consider Equipping F-35 Fleet With Long-Range Missiles - Defense Minister
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Despite Broad Support for Climate Efforts, Americans Far Apart Over Direction – Poll

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) – Even though a significant majority of Americans express widespread support for some policy prescriptions advanced by the Biden administration to address climate change, there is an almost equal split about whether its overall approach to climate policies is taking the nation in the right or wrong direction, a Pew Research Center survey said Thursday.

"More than a year into Joe Biden's presidency, the public is divided over the administration's approach to climate change: 49% of U.S. adults say the Biden administration's policies on climate change are taking the country in the right direction, while 47% say these climate policies are taking the country in the wrong direction," Pew said.

Besides being evenly split about the administration's handling and approach to climate change, support or opposition falls along deeply partisan lines.

"A majority of Republicans and independents who lean to the GOP (82%) say Biden's climate policies are taking the country in the wrong direction. Among Democrats and Democratic leaners, most say Biden is moving the country in the right direction on climate policy (79%)," the survey said.

Meanwhile, there continues to be broad public support for a range of measures designed to reduce the effects of climate change with a majority of Americans holding the belief that the federal government is doing too little to address several key areas of environmental protection, such as air and water quality, and to reduce the effects of climate change. Sixty-three percent of Americans believe the federal government is doing too little to protect water quality of rivers, lakes and streams, with 31% saying the federal government is doing about the right amount to address key facets of environmental protection such as air and water quality and 5% thinking the federal government is doing too much.

Even while acknowledging the increased frequency and wider devastation of hurricanes, wildfires, drought and other natural disasters nationally, a little more than half of Americans think stricter environmental laws are worth the cost – but a growing share sees a troubling economic downside. Forty-five percent of those polled believe that stricter environmental laws and regulations will cause too high a toll in lost jobs and damage to the economy.

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Russian Diplomat Responds to Ukraine Accusations About Vinnytsia Strike at UN Forum

UNITED NATIONS, July 14 (Sputnik) - The recent strike by Russian forces on a target in the city of Vinnytsia was directed against Ukrainian military officers, Russian diplomat from the country's mission at the United Nations, Evgeny Varganov, said during a UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on Thursday.

The comment came after Ukrainian representatives accused Russia of waging a war in Ukraine and allegedly indiscriminately targets civilians, including in Vinnytsia.

"The Russian Federation only strikes military objects in Ukraine and the strike in Vinnytsia was against the House of Officers where the armed forces of Ukraine were being trained," Varganov said during the forum.

Varganov pointed out that the Ukrainian forces have indiscriminately shelled civilians in the Donbas region in the past eight years, killing some 14,000 people.

On February 24, Russia launched a special military operation in Ukraine after the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics requested help to defend them from intensifying attacks by Ukrainian troops.

Russia has said the special operation aims to demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine and it solely targets the country's military infrastructure.

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US Producer Prices Climb Further in June, Adding to Red-Hot Inflation

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - US producer prices rose 1.1% in June, the Labor Department said Thursday as it reported another high inflation data that added to the Federal Reserve's challenge of curbing price growth without implementing excessive rate hikes.

"The Producer Price Index for final demand increased 1.1 percent in June," the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a unit of the Labor Department, said. Economists polled by US media forecast a 0.9% growth in the so-called PPI for June, the same as in May.

The annual PPI number reported by the Labor Department was more unsettling to the market. Producer prices rose 11.3% in the year June, the largest increase since a record 11.6% jump registered during the 12 months to March 2022, the department said.

"The market is having major worries about inflation and higher rates today and this won't help," economist Adam Button said in a post on the ForexLive forum.

The PPI data came on the heels of the more important Consumer Price Index (CPI) report on Wednesday that showed a 9.1% rise in the year to June versus the annual 8.6% growth during the year to May.

The Federal Reserve has been trying to manage price growth without implementing excessive rate hikes. But its task is becoming harder with each galloping print on inflation.

Many economists say the Federal Reserve kept rates "too low for too long" and could push the United States into a recession in its fight to bring inflation under control quickly.

The Fed left interest rates at between zero and 0.25% for two years during the pandemic and only raised them this year in March this year. It began with a hike of 25 basis points, or quarter-percentage point, then raised it by 50 basis points, or a half percentage point, in May. In June, it imposed an increase of 75 basis points, or three quarters of a percentage point — its highest in 28 years — bringing current rates to between 1.5% and 1.75%.

US gross domestic product, or GDP, already declined 1.6% in the first quarter. A negative second quarter GDP is all that is decided to send the economy into a recession.

Following the release of Wednesday's CPI data, market expectations for July's rate hike stand at 100 basis points, or full percentage point. If implemented, it would be a record rate hike for the Federal Reserve and one that is certain to further complicate its task of not landing the economy in a recession.

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Russian Consulate in Houston Says Dozens of Russians Being Detained at Southern US Border

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - Russian Consul General in Houston Alexander Zakharov told Sputnik that the diplomatic mission is receiving dozens of reports of Russians being detained at the southern US border over illegal crossing, and is trying to provide them with assistance.

"We are receiving dozens of reports about the detentions of our citizens who are trying to enter the United States through the Mexican border. Four or five arrest reports a day, mostly in Arizona, less in Texas," Zakharov said. "In almost all cases, we are trying to figure out how and what. But it's an illegal border crossing ... These are our citizens. It is clear that they violated the law, but these are our citizens and their rights must be fully respected. Their fate is not indifferent to us."

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Russia Proposes to US Trilateral Talks With Mexico on Illegal Border Crossings - Consul

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The Russian Embassy in Washington and the Consulate General in Houston have proposed to the United States trilateral talks with Mexico about illegal crossings at the US southern border, but has not received a response, Russian Consul General in Houston Alexander Zakharov told Sputnik.

"We have suggested several times that we have consultations with ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] but they have not responded to any of our proposals," Zakharov said. "Exactly the same proposal was made by the Russian Embassy to the US Department of Homeland Security. They have not responded to anything yet. We are ready for consultations. We offered tripartite consultations - Russia, United States and Mexico - we did not receive any response."

Zakharov pointed out that the channel used to facilitate illegal border crossings exists and has flourished in recent months.

"The channel is clear: they [Russian nationals] fly to Mexico and from there - I don't know who they pay, the locals - they organize border crossings, illegal border crossings," Zakharov said. "Unfortunately, there are tragic cases, as in San Antonio. This is the whole tragedy of the situation."

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IMF Urges States to Support Ukraine Economy by Granting Financing - Spokesperson

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is calling on the members of the international community to support Ukraine by granting it financing so the country can maintain its economy, IMF spokesperson Gerry Rice said on Thursday.

"What we see as the priority in terms of financing for Ukraine is grant financing in the immediate and the short term," Rice said during a press briefing. "That is the best form of assistance that can be provided by the international community in light of the war situation and the nature of the shock."

The financial support would allow the Ukrainian government to remain operational without incurring further debt, Rice added.

In April, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said the IMF and Ukraine had discussed a follow-up aid package to support the country's economy after the current crisis ends.

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Biden on Israel Trip Pledges to Use All Means to Deny Iran Nuclear Weapons

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid signed on Thursday a Jerusalem US-Israel Strategic Partnership Joint Declaration saying that they pledge to deny Iran nuclear arms.

The declaration was sealed during Biden's trip to Israel.

"The United States stresses that integral to this pledge is the commitment never to allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon, and that it is prepared to use all elements of its national power to ensure that outcome. The United States further affirms the commitment to work together with other partners to confront Iran's aggression and destabilizing activities, whether advanced directly or through proxies and terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad," it read.

In 2015, Iran signed a nuclear deal, known officially as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with the P5+1 group, which includes the United States, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany and the European Union. It required Tehran to scale back its nuclear program and drastically reduce its uranium reserves in exchange for sanctions relief, including the lifting of an arms embargo five years after the deal was made.

In 2018, then US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA and reimposed sanctions on Iran, to which the latter responded by gradually abandoning its nuclear commitments.

After Biden took office, the US entered talks to revive the deal.

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Canada Re-Establishes Random COVID-19 Testing for Arriving Passengers - Health Authority

OTTAWA, July 14 (Sputnik) - The Canadian government has re-introduced mandatory random testing (MRT) for arriving passengers who are "fully vaccinated" against the novel coronavirus as they enter the country via its four major airports, Canada's Public Health Agency said on Thursday.

"Mandatory random testing will resume as of July 19, 2022, for travelers who qualify as fully vaccinated, arriving in Canada by air to the four major Canadian airports, Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal and Toronto," the Public Health Agency said.

The Canadian government considers individuals to be "fully vaccinated" if they have received the minimum number of vaccine doses approved by the country's health authority, at least 14 days prior to arrival.

The testing will be done outside of the airports in a facility of the passengers' choice, such as a pharmacy, and will be administered by medical personnel or will be a self-swab test.

The Canadian government has said the testing will help monitor the entry of new coronavirus variants in the country and continually update the evolving epidemiological situation.

Travelers will be notified about their selection shortly after the completion of their customs declaration, by email, with detailed information on the procedures to follow, Public Health Canada said.

Every individual traveling to Canada must fill and submit the electronic form available in the ArriveCan application at least 72-hours prior to flying or embarking on a cruise ship, Public Health Canada added.

On June 11, the Canadian government announced a pause in the mandatory random testing for travelers arriving to the country by air, but maintained the measure in place for land crossings.

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IMF to Provide World Economic Outlook Update on July 26 - Spokesperson

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will provide its updated World Economic Outlook (WEO) report on July 26, IMF spokesperson Gerry Rice said on Thursday.

"The update on our WEO will be on July 26," Rice said during a virtual press briefing.

The annual IMF and World Bank meetings will take place on October 10-16 in Washington, DC, for the first time in-person since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, Rice added.

Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said earlier this week that the IMF plans to further downgrade its global growth projection in the WEO report.

Georgieva also said inflation has become a persistent global problem and the major central banks have to announce additional monetary tightening measures to address the increase in prices.

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Biden Says Russia Must Suffer 'Strategic Failure' in Ukraine

WASHINGTON, July 14 (Sputnik) - The United States will continue to provide support to Ukraine to ensure Russia suffers a failure in the conflict, President Joe Biden said on Thursday.

"[Vladimir] Putin's war must be a strategic failure, the united states will continue to support Ukraine and Ukrainian people," he said while speaking at a press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid.

Since Russia launched its special military operation in Ukraine on February 24, the Biden administration has provided over \$6 billion in security aid to Kiev, including lethal weapons.

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Biden May See Illegal Border Crossings Hit 7Mln by 2024 if No Action Taken - Ex-Officials

EL PASO, July 14 (Sputnik) - The number of border apprehensions under President Joe Biden's watch could reach a record seven million by the end of his first term if the administration continues to do nothing to deter the influx of illegal migrants, former US officials told Sputnik. Nearly 3 million migrants have illegally crossed the US southern border since Biden took office. The US has already recorded 1.5 million illegal border crossings since the federal government's 2022 fiscal year began eight months ago in October, including three consecutive monthly highs in March (222,339), April (235,478), and May (239,416).

The United States hit a 20-year record high of 1.7 million illegal migrants apprehended on the southern border in the 2021 fiscal year. The numbers spiked dramatically after Biden was inaugurated in January 2021, which has provided Republicans with ammunition ahead of the 2022 mid-term elections in November, and the subsequent 2024 presidential campaign.

"By the end of the Biden administration, by the time it ends in 2024, we'll be at probably pushing 7 million people, and that is just something that has never happened, not even during the Ellis Island peak of immigration in this country," former Texas Department of Public Safety intelligence analyst Todd Bensman told Sputnik. "This is the worst mass migration, border crisis in US history, by far dwarfing anything in the last 20 years."

Although climate change, poverty, and government corruption are often cited as some of the key factors driving US mass migration to the southern border, Biden's lack of action is the primary driver, Bensman added.

"As long as you have the White House perfectly okay with having millions and millions of people flooding in over the border, it's gonna happen," Bensman said. "The one factor that we have control over in the immediate near term and long term is whether we're going to let them in. So that becomes the only real root cause that matters."

A migrant's decision making is all based on whether it is worth spending up to \$10,000 to attempt to get smuggled into the United States, he added.

"If the answer is 'yes,' they're coming," Bensman said. "Climate change didn't change suddenly, and all those government officials didn't experience an outbreak of integrity all of a sudden. Homicide rates didn't just suddenly go up, in a lot of cases they went down."

Bensman pointed out that Democratic presidents like Barack Obama and Bill Clinton both made efforts to stop mass migration on the US southern border, unlike current mainstream Democrats. In June, the US Supreme Court authorized the Biden administration to end the Trump-era "Remain in Mexico" policy that required non-Mexican nationals who cross the land border into the United States to stay in Mexico during the course of their removal proceedings. In addition, the Biden administration has attempted to rescind the Title 42 policy, which serves as a tool to deter migrants at the southern border due to public health concerns from the coronavirus, but a federal court ordered the administration to keep the policy in place.

Bensman said the number of migrants the US is exempting from Title 42 is still so great that it stands as a very powerful enticement to the rest of the world.

"We're going to have this huge population that will be living here that'd be too large to round up and deport, even if there's a will, and 40 plus percent of all of those are coming from 150 different other countries besides Central America and Mexico," Bensman said.

Bensman mentioned some of the migrants coming through the US border are from countries with terrorism issues or countries in Africa where there are conflicts between warlords and tribal militias.

Moreover, Bensman said record-setting mass migration will also have immediate impacts on school districts, such as increasing tax rates and overcrowding.

"I don't see the administration taking any significant steps to shut it down or reverse the trend, which is another thing that's really unusual about this mass migration crisis. It's the first time that an American president has been ok with it, has not tried everything they have in their power to shut it down," Bensman said.

BIDEN MUST TAKE ACTION TO AVOID HUMANITARIAN DISASTER

Former US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) sector chief Victor Manjarrez told Sputnik the Biden administration needs to take action in order to avoid a disastrous event like the one that left 50 illegal migrants dead after a smuggler abandoned them inside a tractor-trailer near the Texas city of San Antonio in sweltering heat conditions.

"I hope someone from the Biden Administration starts to listen before we have something worse than the San Antonio tragedy," Manjarrez said.

Manjarrez said he has heard the southern border crisis called a humanitarian crisis, but he believes it is now a man-made disaster due to Biden's lack of action in dealing with the issue. He warned about the number of illegal migrants passing through the Big Bend sector, a very remote area with rough terrain on the Texas-Mexico border.

"There has been a reliance on the use of geography as a deterrence, [but] the flows are so heavy, that's no longer a deterrence," Manjarrez said. "We're one bad weather event away for having a disaster in Big Bend. Wait until we get like a heat wave, it'll make San Antonio look like nothing."

Manjarrez, citing his own source, said US immigration enforcement sees indications from Central America and Mexico that the crisis on the US southern border will worsen soon.

He also said the record-high number of illegal migrants arriving at the US southern border is taking a toll on Border Patrol agents. He said that in April he was in the Rio Grande Valley sector in Texas where many of the migrants are crossing into the United States illegally.

"I had the opportunity to look on the line, look at the processes, and I've never seen so many agents with like their eyeballs sunk in, you know, like when you're exhausted. They don't look well," Manjarrez said.

The former sector chief said he expects the Biden administration to see a second-consecutive record year for the number of illegal migrants apprehended on the US southern border because there is no deterrent effect.

"The tools that have been taken away from the border patrol in terms of able to deliver some kind of consequence... Right now the consequence is you come up claiming political asylum and the government doesn't have the ability to hold you, so they release you pending your case," Manjarrez said.

Regarding Texas Governor Greg Abbott's order authorizing the national guard and state law enforcement to apprehend and return illegal migrants to Mexico, Manjarrez said the move could make them vulnerable to lawsuits because they will not be able to make determinations for asylum claims.

With respect to Biden's program to fast-track migration of Ukrainian refugees arriving on the US southern border, the former CBP sector chief said he expects the situation to be exploited by other Europeans seeking to come to the United States. Ukrainian refugees have been treated better than other migrants coming into the United States, he added.

More than 33,000 Ukrainian migrants have come to the United States since March, after the start of Russia's special military operation in the country, including 21,153, in April, after a Biden order welcoming up to 100,000.

Bensman said the arrival of Ukrainian refugees on the southern border exacerbates the current problem.

"The Ukrainians certainly do not need to be coming over the border," Bensman said. "For one thing, the administration has made it legal for them to be admitted into the country... they just don't want to wait. They can get quicker access at the border, because they're just letting everybody in."

Bensman pointed out that Ukrainian refugees do not have to come to the United States because the European Union has offered Ukrainians refuge for three years with food and housing subsidies and education.