

**8/10/22 Wednesday**

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

Amid Cross-Strait Crisis, Taiwan's Opposition KMT Sends 'Fact-Finding Delegation' to Mainland China

With China engaged in wide-ranging military drills around Taiwan in response to a visit to the island earlier this month by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), a group of Taiwanese politicians have traveled to the Chinese mainland to downplay the risk of serious conflict to the Taiwanese business community.

On Wednesday, Andrew Hsia, vice-chairman of the Chinese Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT), led a delegation across the Taiwan Strait to visit several mainland coastal cities where Taishang, or Taiwanese businessmen who work on the mainland, are concentrated, including in Xiamen and the Yangtze and Pearl river deltas.

"At this critical time, we need to show our concerns to our [compatriots] in mainland China and there is also a strong need for the two sides to have more communication channels," [Hsia said at Taiwan's](#) Taoyuan International Airport prior to leaving for China.

The party's official Twitter account said on Tuesday that "the Kuomintang has always safeguarded the ROC, the safety and well-being of the Taiwanese people, and promoted peaceful, stable development of cross-strait relations and regional stability," using the Taipei government's official name, the Republic of China.

"That is the very reason we send a fact-finding delegation on Aug. 10 to visit Taiwanese communities that study and live in Southern Mainland China," the KMT added. "This apolitical trip aims at learning their views and providing assistance."

The delegation is not expected to visit Beijing or meet with any major Chinese official on the trip. According to Taiwan's [Central News Agency](#) (CNA), President Tsai Ing-wen, who chairs Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), said at a party meeting that the KMT trip was disappointing to Taiwan's people and could send the wrong message to the outside world about the severity of the threat against the island posed by Beijing.

Hsia has cast Tsai's government, in power since 2016, as abandoning the Taishang, who along with their families could number more than 3 million, according to [unofficial estimates](#).

The RoC claims to be the legitimate Chinese government, [despite losing the civil war](#) and control over the mainland in 1949, when the rising communist forces established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Beijing. Since then, the vast majority of the globe's nations have switched their recognition from Taipei to Beijing, including the US in 1979. Beijing regards Taiwan as a rebellious province destined to be reunited with the mainland, like the other colonial concessions taken from China by foreign powers. [A new white paper](#) issued on Wednesday outlined its latest approach to the issue.

While the KMT founded the RoC and continued to lead it even after it became isolated on Taiwan, today it sits in opposition to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), a group that favors independence from China. The KMT, by contrast, [continues to see Taiwan](#) as part of

China and the RoC as the legitimate Chinese government, although some in the party favor reunification with the mainland.

Despite this opposition, trade has flourished between Taiwan and the mainland, which is a far larger trading partner for Taiwan than the United States, its primary political champion.

[According to CNBC](#), trade with the mainland accounted for 22% of Taiwan's imports and 42% of its exports, although that number climbs to 70% in fields like microchips.

"The concentration of tech exports in cross-strait trade, Taiwan's dominance in the foundry business and its prevalence in processing trade, suggests that any broad disruptions in cross-strait trade would be highly disruptive to global tech supply chains," a group of Goldman Sachs economists wrote in a Wednesday note [viewed by Bloomberg](#).

In retaliation [for Pelosi's visit](#), Beijing cut off some [smaller trade items](#) with Taiwan, such as fruits and other foodstuffs, that Taipei dismissed as of no major economic consequence. However, the message sent was clear: the mainland does not have to trade with Taiwan, but Taiwan has to trade with the mainland.

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

Rwandan Academics Urge Blinken to Take 'Holistic Approach' to Congo on Africa Tour

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is due to visit Rwanda on Wednesday, where Kigali's alleged backing of rebels in the DRC's North Kivu province will be high on the agenda.

Blinken is scheduled to travel to Rwanda on Wednesday and meet President Paul Kagame. He told reporters on Tuesday that accusations of Rwanda backing the M23 rebels would be a "focus of the conversation."

Previous to Rwanda, Blinken has visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where he continued to attempt to make the case that Washington would be a better partner to African nations than Russia or China, which have [expanded their cooperation](#) with nations on the continent [in recent years](#), much to Europe's chagrin.

According to Christophe Lutundula, who is both the DRC's prime minister and foreign minister, [he and Blinken exchanged ideas](#) on their "common interests," including "defense and security, focusing on security in the eastern side of the Congo, and military cooperations, finance and economy, precisely regarding the program of reform – economic reforms and foreign investment of the government, and the exploitation of natural resources industries. We also exchanged on environment, mining, and democracy."

Reiterating his words [a day prior in South Africa](#), Blinken told reporters at a Tuesday press conference in Kinshasa, DRC, that "too often African nations have been treated as instruments of other nations' progress rather than as authors of their own progress. Resources have been exploited for other countries' gains. People of the DRC know this all too well. That is not what the United States will do. We don't want a one-sided transactional relationship. Instead, we want to work with you on shared priorities in pursuit of shared goals."

Blinken also addressed what he called "credible reports that Rwanda has provided support to M23," a predominantly Tutsi group in DRC's North Kivu province. The DRC has accused

Rwanda of backing the group as a proxy force to destabilize the region. Rwanda has returned the favor, accusing the DRC of backing the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a Hutu power group with connections to those who carried out the 1994 genocide of Rwandan Tutsis and Twa. [There is evidence to support both claims](#), but both nations have denied the other's accusations.

"We call on all parties in the region to stop any support or cooperation with M23 or, for that matter, any other non-state armed group. That is essential to actually bringing peace and security to the region. And we urge the groups themselves – M23, all non-state armed groups operating in the eastern DRC – to cease violence, to demilitarize, to pursue talks, as necessary, with the government," Blinken added. The M23 has so far [rejected a peace deal](#) made by the two states in Luanda last month, saying that neither government speaks for them.

"[W]e're certainly not turning a blind eye," Blinken said of Rwanda's alleged support for the M23. "I'm going to Rwanda tomorrow, and a big focus of this trip – but not just this trip, the work that we're doing day in, day out – is to make sure the United States is doing everything it can to support the very important African-led mediation efforts, particularly processes that are being [led by Kenya](#) and Angola, to bring peace, security, and stability to the eastern Congo."

Ahead of his arrival, a group of Rwandan academics urged the US politician to consider the issue more widely instead of solely focusing on the M23.

"Refusing to take a holistic approach to the Congolese situation in all its complexity and with all its political, economic, and sociocultural ramifications would be counterproductive. We ask that the USA not ignore the existence of these hundreds of armed groups - in particular FDLR - that are responsible for widespread bloodshed in eastern Congo," reads the letter, which was seen by [Rwanda's New Times](#) daily.

"We strongly urge you to earnestly consider the fact that the Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese are victims of exclusion, public incitement to hatred, and massacre. Blaming Rwanda for much of the violence on Congolese soil will not bring peace nor fix the Congolese social-economic crisis that has existed since the Mobutu presidency," the academics wrote, referring to the country's 1995 entry into eastern Congo - then called Zaire - in pursuit of Hutu groups responsible for the genocide of Rwandan Tutsis a year prior. The operation set in motion the overthrow of Mobutu, the fall of Zaire and foundation of the DRC, and the catastrophic Congo Wars.

Congolese President Felix Tshisekede has also been criticized by prominent Congolese figures like [Nobel laureate Denis Mukwege](#), who said that his foreign policy "leads us objectively towards a prolongation and aggravation of instability."

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

Meaty Melee: Florida Woman Charged With Assault After Flinging Raw Steak at Partner

A woman from a Tampa suburb is facing assault charges after picking up a raw steak and throwing it at her partner during an argument. Yes that's right, it wasn't a stake.

This wasn't what Soviet statesman Maxim Litvinov meant when he said that "food is a weapon!"

Rochelle Wright, 42, of Tarpon Springs, Florida, was accused of simple domestic assault following a rare incident of steak-flinging on Sunday while she was intoxicated. According to a [criminal complaint](#) obtained by [The Smoking Gun](#), Wright's beef with Robert Schreffler, her partner of 20 years, was that "she was tired of his behavior and their arguing." "The defendant subsequently picked up the steak and threw it at the victim," the complaint notes. "The steak landed on the left arm rest of the chair and the wall directly behind the victim." According to the outlet, Wright was arrested and booked in the county jail on a misdemeanor charge, but released the following day after she had sobered up. The report didn't say what cut the steak was, or why she used a steak instead of the most obvious choice of bovine-based projectile: the chuck roast.

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

Source Tipped Off FBI to Possibility of Classified Documents at Trump Residence - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - A source familiar with the papers stored at former US President Donald Trump's Florida residence at Mar-a-Lago tipped off federal investigators to the possibility that classified documents may be stored there, The Wall Street Journal reported. FBI agents on June 3 visited Mar-a-Lago to discuss boxes of government records stored in a room in the residence's basement, several days after which they sent a note requesting a stronger lock on the storage room, the report said late on Wednesday. Weeks later, a source familiar with the documents stored at Mar-a-Lago told investigators that more classified material may be stored at the residence than that about which they knew, the report said, citing people with knowledge of the situation. The National Archives earlier in the year retrieved 15 boxes of documents from Trump, according to the report. When FBI investigators left a raid on Mar-a-Lago on Monday, agents also left with boxes, the report said. Trump has condemned the raid, arguing that the US justice system is being weaponized against him. Trump's lawyers were also not allowed to observe the search of his residence while it was undertaken, the former president said on Wednesday. The warrant for the raid that would disclose the reason behind the search has yet to be made public. However, a US federal judge on Wednesday ordered that the government file a response by August 15 to a motion by legal activism group Judicial Watch to unseal the warrant.

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

Blinken Says Raised Concerns Over Unfair Trial of 'Hotel Rwanda' Hero During Visit

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) – US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Thursday he raised concerns about the lack of fair trial guarantees for jailed politician Paul Rusesabagina during his visit to Rwanda.

"We have been clear about our concerns related to Paul Rusesabagina's trial and conviction particularly the lack of fair trial guarantees," Blinken said at a joint press conference, noting that he had discussed the matter with Rwandan President Paul Kagame earlier in the morning. "We continue to urge the government to address concerns about the legal protections afforded to him in this case and establish safeguards to prevent similar outcomes in the future."

Blinken added that he spoke with Rusesabagina's family a few days ago and would maintain contact with them. The 67-year-old political dissident is serving a 25-year sentence for terrorism offenses.

In response, Kagame said that Rusesabagina was a Rwandan citizen as far as the Rwandan government was concerned and had been lawfully convicted of serious crimes according to both Rwandan and international law. "Rwanda will continue to abide by decisions made by our judiciary," he said, adding that other states should respect his country's sovereignty and laws. Rusesabagina, who has been a staunch critic of the current Rwandan government, is said to have offered shelter to 1,200 Rwandans at Kigali's Mille Collines hotel in 1994 amid the genocide that left an estimated 800,000 people dead.

The event was adapted into a 2004 film that went on to receive nominations for three Academy Awards. US President George W. Bush awarded Rusesabagina the Presidential Medal for Freedom in 2005.

Rusesabagina, a Belgian citizen and a US permanent resident, had been living in exile since 1996. During a visit to Dubai in 2020, he was flown back to Rwanda. In 2021, he was sentenced to 25 years in prison over his links to a violent Rwandese militant group.

Rwandan prosecutors argued that Rusesabagina went on to lead an opposition coalition in exile in 2009, whose armed wing, the National Liberation Front, carried out attacks on civilians in 2018 and 2019, killing nine people, including two teenagers of 13 and 17. Rusesabagina made public calls in support of the group and reportedly admitted sending it money.

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

**Nuclear Arms Use in Ukraine Would Be Unacceptable, Cause 'Severe Consequences' - STRATCOM**

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - Any use of nuclear weapons in the Ukraine conflict would be unacceptable and lead to severe consequences, US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) chief Adm. Charles Richard said on Thursday.

"Make no mistake today, we're ready. And as our president said, any use of nuclear weapons in this conflict at any scale, would be completely unacceptable to us, as well as the rest of the world and would entail severe consequences," Richard said. "And every day at STRATCOM, our forces in the field remain ready to do whatever the president orders us to do, while continuously reassessing the situation and adjusting as necessary."

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

**Biden's Africa Official Says US Worked Hard to Exempt Russian Food Products From Sanctions**

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) – The United States made every effort to exempt exports of Russian fertilizers and food products from sanctions in order to support African countries, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Molly Phee said on Thursday.

"We worked very hard to exempt all Russian food products from sanctions because we knew they are important to many consumers around the world including those in Africa," Phee told reporters during virtual press briefing.

She also reaffirmed the US intention to deprive Russia of any big revenues from oil sales.

During her recent trip to Africa, US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield warned against buying Russian oil amid the Ukraine conflict. However, all countries are free to make their own policy foreign decisions, she added.

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

**Guterres Urges Deal on Safe Perimeter of Demilitarization at Zaporizhzhia NPP**

UNITED NATIONS, August 11 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday called for agreement on a safe perimeter of demilitarization to ensure the safety of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

"I urge the parties to withdraw any military personnel and equipment from the plant and refrain from any further deployment of forces or equipment to the site. The facility must not be used as part of any military operation. Instead, urgent agreement is needed at a technical level on a safe perimeter of demilitarization to ensure the safety of the area," he said.

The UN continues to support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its efforts to ensure the operations of the power plant, Guterres added.

"We must be clear that any potential damage to Zaporizhzhia or any other nuclear facilities in Ukraine, or anywhere else, could lead to catastrophic consequences not only for the immediate vicinity, but for the region and beyond. This is wholly unacceptable," he warned.

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

**RPT - US Must End Sanctions on Cuba That Impeded Aid Amid Matanzas Fire - Activist**

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - The United States should end its sanctions against Cuba and send the island nation much needed humanitarian aid, which could prevent Havana from

turning to Russia, China, and Iran, University of Houston Professor of African-American History Gerald Horne, who is among a group of activists that called on the Biden administration to end the restrictions, told Sputnik.

Nearly 30 signatories from the Let Cuba Live organization in a letter on Tuesday called on US President Joe Biden to end the sanctions against Cuba that were reimposed by the previous Trump administration and have created major suffering.

The international group of prominent politicians, intellectuals, and activists said the sanctions impeded urgently needed aid from reaching Cuba as a fire raged for days after an oil storage facility in Matanzas, 65 miles east of Havana, was hit by lighting.

"The United States has [its] hands full with China, Russia, Iran, etc," Horne said. "Strategically, it should improve ties to Cuba to prevent these three powers from forming a base 90 miles away."

Other signatories to the letter included former UK Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, prominent US linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky, veteran US human rights crusader and professor Cornell West, and interdisciplinary scholar Jennifer Ponce de Leon.

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

RPT - US Must End Sanctions on Cuba That Impeded Aid Amid Matanzas Fire - Activist

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - The United States should end its sanctions against Cuba and send the island nation much needed humanitarian aid, which could prevent Havana from turning to Russia, China, and Iran, University of Houston Professor of African-American History Gerald Horne, who is among a group of activists that called on the Biden administration to end the restrictions, told Sputnik.

Nearly 30 signatories from the Let Cuba Live organization in a letter on Tuesday called on US President Joe Biden to end the sanctions against Cuba that were reimposed by the previous Trump administration and have created major suffering.

The international group of prominent politicians, intellectuals, and activists said the sanctions impeded urgently needed aid from reaching Cuba as a fire raged for days after an oil storage facility in Matanzas, 65 miles east of Havana, was hit by lighting.

"The United States has [its] hands full with China, Russia, Iran, etc," Horne said. "Strategically, it should improve ties to Cuba to prevent these three powers from forming a base 90 miles away."

Other signatories to the letter included former UK Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, prominent US linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky, veteran US human rights crusader and professor Cornell West, and interdisciplinary scholar Jennifer Ponce de Leon.

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

US Must End Sanctions on Cuba That Impeded Aid Amid Matanzas Fire - Activist

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - The United States should end its sanctions against Cuba and send the island nation much needed humanitarian aid, which could prevent Havana from turning to Russia, China, and Iran, University of Houston Professor of African-American History Gerald Horne, who is among a group of activists that called on the Biden administration to end the restrictions, told Sputnik.

Nearly 30 signatories from the Let Cuba Live organization in a letter on Tuesday called on US President Joe Biden to end the sanctions against Cuba that were reimposed by the previous Trump administration and have created major suffering.

The international group of prominent politicians, intellectuals, and activists said the sanctions impeded urgently needed aid from reaching Cuba as a fire raged for days after an oil storage facility in Matanzas, 65 miles east of Havana, was hit by lightning.

"The United States has [its] hands full with China, Russia, Iran, etc," Horne said. "Strategically, it should improve ties to Cuba to prevent these three powers from forming a base 90 miles away." Other signatories to the letter included former UK Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, prominent US linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky, veteran US human rights crusader and professor Cornell West, and interdisciplinary scholar Jennifer Ponce de Leon.

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

#### Judo Icon, Mixed Martial Arts Pioneer Gene LeBell Passes Away - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - Combat sports icon Gene LeBell passed away at the age of 89, prompting the martial arts community to honor his storied contributions to the development of fighting as a sport in the 20th century, USA Today Sports reported.

LeBell is credited by many with popularizing the Japanese martial art of judo in the United States, the report said. He won two national judo championships in 1954-55 before pursuing a wrestling career.

The martial arts icon participated in what is widely considered one of the first mixed-style fights in US history against boxer Milo Savage in 1963, the report said. LeBell won the bout by rear naked choke, sparking interest in grappling across the country.

In 1976, LeBell served as referee in the famous fight between Muhammed Ali and Antonio Inoki, which is also seen as a precursor to modern mixed martial arts (MMA).

LeBell trained with famous combat sports figures, including Muhammad Ali, Bruce Lee and Chuck Norris, the report said. Notably, he also trained former Ultimate Fighting Championship female star Ronda Rousey, who won an Olympic medal and UFC championship during her career, the report also said.

He worked on more than 1,000 productions as a stuntman or actor and served as an MMA judge until 2018 in addition to coaching fighters, the report added.

LeBell's death caused athletes, including Rousey, to pay tribute to the combat sports pioneer, whose toughness and mentorship were frequently noted, according to the report.

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

US Court Orders Justice Dept. to Respond to Request to Unseal Trump Warrant by Monday

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - US federal magistrate judge Bruce Reinhart said the Justice Department by August 15 must respond to a motion to unseal the warrant used to search former President Donald Trump's home in Palm Beach, Florida.

On Monday, FBI agents raided Trump's Mary-a-Lago residence as part of a probe that involves a search for classified materials he allegedly took with him upon leaving the White House. Many Republicans demanded the details of the warrant be made public and have even threatened to launch a probe into the Attorney General's office and department's handling of the matter.

"On or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern time [9:00 p.m. GMT] on August 15, 2022, the Government shall file a Response to the Motion to Unseal," a copy of the order posted by Judicial Watch, the group that filed the lawsuit, said on Wednesday.

The judge also said the response may be filed ex parte and under seal to avoid disclosing matters already under seal. In that event, the government must file a redacted response in the public record, he added.

On Tuesday, Judicial Watch said they asked the court to unseal the warrant, itself signed off by Reinhart, after the raid, which the organization called an "unprecedented abuse of power," by the Biden administration.

Trump said the search was a coordinated attack by Democrats and local officials who do not want him to run for president in 2024. The former president in a post on Truth Social on Wednesday said the FBI would not let his lawyers observe the search.

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

UPDATE - US Charges Member of Iran's IRGC With Alleged Plot to Murder Ex-Advisor Bolton (Updates with more details in paras 8-10)

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - The United States has charged a member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) for allegedly plotting to murder former US National Security Advisor John Bolton, the Justice Department said in a release.

"An Iranian national and member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was charged by complaint, unsealed today in the District of Columbia, with use of interstate commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire and with providing and attempting to provide material support to a transnational murder plot," the Justice Department said in the release on Wednesday.

Iranian national Shahram Poursafi, also known as Mehdi Rezayi, is alleged to have attempted to pay individuals in the United States \$300,000 to murder Bolton in Washington or the state of Maryland, the release said.

The United States believes that the killing of Bolton was intended as retaliation for the January 2020 assassination of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - Qods Force (IRGC-QF) commander Qasem Soleimani. Poursafi was working on behalf of IRGC-QF, the release said.

Soleimani was killed by a US drone strike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020. Tehran imposed sanctions against a number of US citizens over their involvement in the Soleimani's assassination.

If found guilty, Poursafi faces up to 25 years in prison and a fine of up to \$500,000 for the use of interstate commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire and for providing and attempting to provide material support to a transnational murder plot, the release said.

The defendant remains at large abroad, the release added.

The United States is not doing enough to address the threat Iran poses to former US officials and deter from undertaking plots against them, Bolton said on Wednesday, according to an Iran International Television report.

The assassination threats show that Iran is clearly an enemy of the US and has no intention to comply with commitments it makes, Bolton added.

Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was also informed by the Justice Department that he was a target of the Iranian government, Axios reported on Wednesday. The bounty for Pompeo's assassination was purportedly set at \$1 million, the report said.

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

Three Nigerians Extradited to US From UK Over Business Email Fraud Schemes - Justice Dept. WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - Three Nigerian men were extradited to the United States from the United Kingdom and charged for email fraud schemes that targeted businesses and universities, the Justice Department said in a press release.

"Three Nigerian citizens were extradited from the United Kingdom (UK) and arrived in the United States in relation to their alleged participation in multimillion-dollar cyber-enabled business email compromise (BEC) fraud schemes in the Western District of North Carolina, Southern District of Texas and Eastern District of Virginia," the release said on Wednesday. "The scams allegedly perpetrated by the defendants and their co-conspirators targeted unsuspecting victims including universities in North Carolina, Texas and Virginia, and attempted to cause more than \$5 million in losses."

Oludayo Adeagbo, 43, Donald Echeazu, 40, and Olabanji Egbinola, 42 were arrested by UK authorities in April of 2020. A UK High Court last month rejected appeals filed by all three defendants. US indictments were unsealed this week charging the trio with wire fraud and money laundering conspiracy along with aggravated identity theft.

According to the Justice Department, the schemes included impersonating businesses like construction companies in an attempt to persuade targets into sending money related to multimillion-dollar development projects.

The wire fraud conspiracy charge and the money laundering conspiracy charge each carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. Aggravated identity theft means a mandatory two-year prison sentence that runs consecutively to any other term imposed, the release said.

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

#### One Injured in Fire in US State of Illinois After Warehouse Explosion - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) - One individual was injured during a fire at a warehouse in Madison, Illinois that was preceded by an explosion, local news outlet WGN9 reported. One warehouse employee was injured in the fire, which destroyed at least two buildings, the report said on Wednesday. Workers were inside the building when an explosion occurred, although the cause of the fire remains unclear, according to the report. Agencies from eight counties across Illinois and Missouri responded to assist with the situation, the report added.

The warehouse belongs to metalronics recycler Interco and stores lithium batteries and hazardous materials, the report also said. The fire resulted in a large amount of smoke being released into the surrounding area, prompting emergency management officials to urge people nearby to close their windows and turn off air conditioning units, the report said.

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

#### US Stocks Jump as Consumer Prices Suggests Inflation May Be Peaking

NEW YORK, August 10 (Sputnik) - Wall Street jumped broadly on Wednesday, with industrial to Big Tech stocks rallying on softer-than-expected US consumer prices that suggested the Federal Reserve might become less aggressive with interest rate hikes to curb inflation. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, which comprises stocks of 30 large US corporations, closed up 1.6%.

The S&P 500 index, which represents the top 500 US stocks, finished up 2.1%.

The Nasdaq Composite Index, which comprises marquee names in technology such as Amazon, Apple, Netflix and Google, settled up 2.9%.

Stocks rallied after the US Labor Department reported that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 8.5% during the year to July versus a 9.1% annual expansion in June that marked the biggest inflation spike in 41 years.

Economists polled by US media had expected an annual growth of 8.7% for July's CPI. For the month, they forecast a 1.3% expansion while the Labor Department reported zero growth.

"This was a welcomed inflation report as every metric came in below consensus estimates," Ed Moya, analyst at online trading platform OANDA, said.

Money market traders immediately priced in a higher probability for a 50-basis point, or half percentage point, hike at the Federal Reserve's next rate revision meeting on Sept. 21. Prior to this, bets had been heavy for a 75-basis point, or three quarter percentage point, increase.

The July CPI number was the first appreciable retreat in inflation although the drop itself was just about 0.6% on the year.

After four rate increases since March that brought interest rates from nearly zero to as high as 2.5%, the Fed had been bewildered for months to witness inflation barely budging from four-decade highs. The US central bank's target for inflation is a 2% per year, or four-and-a-half times less than the June CPI high of 9.1%.

The CPI report will be one of the many data points that will be perused by the Fed over the next six to seven weeks as it determines how to proceed with an economy that has slipped into the technical definition of a recession from two straight quarters of negative gross domestic product growth.

The CPI report aside, the Producer Price Index figures for July will be released on Thursday, along with the weekly report on initial jobless claims, while the University of Michigan consumer sentiment index will be published on Friday. These smaller data points could also help navigate the Fed in its decision-making on interest rates.

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

#### SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, August 11 (Sputnik) -

#### TAIWAN TENSIONS

\* US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Wednesday that she does not care about the sanctions China had imposed on her and her family over her recent visit to Taiwan.

\* Pelosi said the trip to Taiwan was intended to demonstrate a strong relationship based on the status quo, which, she added, the United States supports.

#### US WARNS IRAN OVER PLOT TO KILL BOLTON

\* The United States has charged Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps member Shahram Poursafi for advancing an alleged plot to murder former US National Security Advisor John Bolton, the US Justice Department said on Wednesday.

\* The United States is warning Iran of "severe consequences" if any US citizen is attacked, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said.

#### UKRAINE-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

\* Switzerland and Ukraine agreed that the former will represent Kiev's interests in the Russian Federation and the two countries are waiting for Russia to give its consent, the Swiss Foreign Ministry told RIA Novosti on Wednesday.

\* Ammonia leak occurred at a Donetsk brewery in the Kalininsky district as a result of shelling by Ukrainian troops, the headquarters of the territorial defense of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) said.

\* The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed on Wednesday that IAEA's chief Rafael Grossi would address the UN Security Council on August 11 in connection with the situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

\* The Joint Coordination Center (JCC) has so far authorized 12 vessels to carry grain exports from Ukrainian ports and not found any illicit cargo in the shipments, interim United Nations Coordinator at the JCC for the Black Sea Initiative Frederick Kenney said.

#### ENERGY

\* The energy saving measures developed by the Spanish government to reduce consumption amid the energy crisis came into force on Wednesday, causing widespread public criticism.

\* Slovakia started receiving oil via the Druzhba pipeline on Wednesday, oil refinery Slovnaft's spokesman Anton Molnar told Sputnik.

\* Oil will be delivered to Hungary through the southern string of the Druzhba pipeline on Wednesday night, a spokesman for the Slovak oil refiner Slovnaft told Sputnik.

\* Stockpiles of US crude increased about 5 million barrels per week over the past two weeks as export demand fell, data from the Energy Information Administration showed.

#### PUTIN-GOITA TALKS

\* Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke by telephone with Malian Transitional President Assimi Goita, who expressed gratitude for Russia's support of Mali, the Kremlin said on Wednesday.

\* Putin discussed with Goita the possibility of supplying Russian food, fertilizers and fuel to Mali, the Kremlin said.

\* Putin told Goita that he hopes the 2023 Russia-Africa summit will help strengthen ties between Russia and African nations, the Kremlin said.

\* Goita informed Putin about the efforts undertaken to stabilize the situation in Mali and fight against terrorism, the Kremlin said.

#### TRUMP INVESTIGATION

\* Former US President Donald Trump on Wednesday arrived at the New York Attorney General's office in Manhattan to be questioned under oath as part of a civil investigation into his family's business practices, US media reported.

\* Trump said he declined to answer questions in the investigation into his business practices, adding that he did nothing wrong and that is why neither federal nor state or local governments have found anything on him after five years of searching.

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

**Trial Begins in Kobe Bryant Family's Suit Over Leak of Helicopter Crash Photos - Reports**

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The trial in the lawsuit launched by Vanessa Bryant, wife of the late basketball star Kobe Bryant, over the sharing of photos showing the scene of the

helicopter crash that killed her husband and 13-year old daughter began in a US district court, CNN reported on Wednesday.

Six women and four men were selected to serve on the jury for the trial launched by Bryant against the Los Angeles County sheriff and fire departments, the reports said. Bryant is suing the first responders after photos of her husband's corpse were circulated following the fatal helicopter crash on January 26, 2020.

Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gianna and seven others were on their way to a girls basketball tournament but died in the crash after their helicopter flew into a hill in Los Angeles during poor weather conditions.

Vanessa Bryant's lawsuit accuses the county fire and sheriff department officials of sharing photos of the helicopter crash scene in settings unrelated to the investigation, such as a bar, the report said. Bryant seeks damages over alleged emotional distress, negligence, privacy and civil rights violations, the report also said.

Los Angeles County says the emotional damages claimed by Bryant were caused by the helicopter crash that killed her husband and daughter, not the photos, the report added.

LA County Sheriff Alex Villanueva in 2020 said all of the photos have since been deleted and eight sheriff's deputies were facing administrative action, according to the report.

Kobe Bryant, who retired in 2016, won five National Basketball Association (NBA) championships during his career with the Los Angeles Lakers.

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

US Sentences Uzbek National to 11 Years for Material Support to IS, Al Nusra

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) – Uzbek national Dilshod Khusanov has been sentenced to 11 years in prison for having attempted to materially support Islamic State and Al Nusra terrorist groups (both banned in Russia), the US Department of Justice said on Wednesday. "Earlier today, in federal court in Brooklyn, Dilshod Khusanov, a citizen of Uzbekistan and a resident of Chicago, Illinois, was sentenced by United States District Judge William F. Kuntz II to 11 years' imprisonment for attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and Al-Nusra Front (ANF)," DOJ said in a statement.

Khusanov was a part of a network offering financial support to individuals wanting to travel to Syria and fight for IS and other terror groups, the statement added.

"Khusanov encouraged individuals to travel to Syria to wage violent jihad, or holy war," the statement continued, adding that between 2014-2015, the Uzbek national helped many individuals including Akmal Zakirov, Abdurasul Juraboev, Akhor Saidkhametov and others, to travel to the war-torn country.

Khusanov, who pleaded guilty to the charges in October 2021, will be deported to Uzbekistan to serve his sentence, the statement added.

Saidakhmetov and Juraboev were previously sentenced to 15 years in prison, while Zakirov to seven and a half.

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

#### Iranian Plot to Murder Bolton Also Included Killing Ex-Secretary of State Pompeo - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - An alleged Iranian plot to kill former US National Security Advisor John Bolton also includes plans to kill former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Axios reported on Wednesday, citing a source.

Earlier in the day, the Justice Department announced charges against Shahram Poursafi, a.k.a. Mehdi Rezayi, of Tehran. The Justice Department alleges that Poursafi, while working on behalf of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - Qods Force (IRGC-QF), attempted to pay individuals in the United States \$300,000 to murder Bolton.

The US government has said it believes the attempt to kill Bolton was supposed to be in retaliation for the January 2020 assassination of IRGC-QF commander Qasem Soleimani. A complaint with charges against Poursafi details a "second job," which, according to the source, refers to Pompeo as a "former high-ranking United States government official from the Trump administration."

While the bounty for the elimination of Bolton was \$300,000, the murder of Pompeo was allegedly priced at \$1 million, the report said.

At the same time, Poursafi said that "targeting that official was dangerous because there were a lot of people around him/her, but that his/her time would come," according to the report. Soleimani was killed by a US drone strike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020. Tehran imposed sanctions against a number of US citizens over their involvement in the assassination.

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

#### Guterres Congratulates Kenyans on Peaceful Voting in General Election

UNITED NATIONS, August 10 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres congratulates Kenyans on peaceful voting in the country's general election, spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Wednesday.

Kenyans went to the polls on Tuesday to elect the next president, members of the National Assembly and Senate, as well as governors and members of 47 county assemblies. The presidential race is on between outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta's preferred successor Raila Odinga and sitting Deputy President William Ruto.

"The Secretary-General congratulates the people of Kenya for the peaceful voting during the General Elections on 9 August 2022. He notes the important work done by the Kenyan authorities and electoral management bodies, the active engagement of numerous national stakeholders and the unwavering commitment of the voters to duly exercise their constitutional right to vote," the statement said.

Guterres hopes that the Kenyan people will continue to demonstrate calmness as they await the announcement of the results, according to Dujarric.

"The Secretary-General reiterates the availability of the United Nations to continue to support the efforts of the Kenyan authorities and people in the advancement of the democratic process in Kenya," he concluded.

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

US Has No Restrictions on Issuing Visas to Russians – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) – The United States has not introduced any restrictions on issuing visas to Russians, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services Julie Stufft said on Wednesday.

"There is no restriction on the Russian travelers. Russian travelers can actually go to any embassy in the world where they are able to apply," Stufft told reporters when asked about Ukraine's proposal to stop issue visas to Russians worldwide.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba asked EU and G7 countries on Wednesday to stop issuing visas to Russians after Germany admitted that a similar measure was being discussed within the European Union as part of a new sanctions package.

"Russian citizens can schedule an appointment for any visa type anywhere in the world, and are doing so regularly," Stufft explained.

The European Commission said last week that the 26-nation borderless Schengen area cannot completely stop issuing visas to Russian citizens. It added that EU member states could decide for themselves whether to consider each application for a short-term tourist visa on an individual basis.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Tuesday that freedom of movement was essential to exercising human rights and enshrined in international law. The foreign ministry said that Russia should be prepared for any eventuality and warned the EU that any hostile action would not be left without a proportional reaction.

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

US Tracks 2 Russian Surveillance Aircraft Near Alaska in 2 Days - NORAD

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The United States over the past two days has tracked two separate Russian surveillance aircraft flying within the Alaskan air defense identification zone (ADIZ), North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) said in a statement.

"On two separate occasions, over the past 2 days, the Alaskan NORAD Region detected, tracked and identified Russian surveillance aircraft entering and operating within the Alaskan ADIZ," NORAD said on Tuesday.

The Russian aircraft did not enter US or Canadian sovereign airspace, NORAD added. The aerial interactions come amid escalated tensions between Russia and NATO countries such as the US and Canada due to the special military operation in Ukraine. Canada in June announced a 40 billion Canadian dollar (\$30.8 billion) investment in NORAD modernization over the next two decades.

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

#### Joint Coordination Center Sees No Violations in Grain Shipments From Ukraine - Official

UNITED NATIONS, August 10 (Sputnik) - The Joint Coordination Center (JCC) has not found any illicit cargo in the shipments of food from Ukrainian ports, interim United Nations Coordinator at the JCC for the Black Sea Initiative Frederick Kenney said on Wednesday. "We have not found anything that would violate the terms of the initiative," Kenney said during a briefing on the progress of the Black Sea Initiative. "All the parties are really focused on implementing this initiative properly."

Twelve vessels have so far been authorized to transport grain out of Ukraine and JCC experts are expecting an uptick in interest from ship owners to participate in the export of grain. On July 22, the United Nations- and Turkey-brokered the Black Sea Initiative to ensure the export of grain and fertilizer was signed by Ukraine and Russia. Under the agreement, the grain would safely be transported from the ports of Odesa, Chornomorsk and Yuzhny via the Black Sea and proceed toward the Bosphorus Strait along an established safe corridor. The parties also established the JCC in Istanbul on July 27 that is comprised of representatives from Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and the United Nations. The JCC monitors the implementation of the Black Sea Initiative to establish a humanitarian maritime corridor and carries out inspections of the cargo vessels to determine that they do not contain unauthorized goods or personnel.

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

#### JCC Authorized 12 Ships to Depart Ukraine, Expects Uptick in Applications - Official

UNITED NATIONS, August 10 (Sputnik) - The Joint Coordination Center (JCC) has so far authorized 12 vessels to depart Ukrainian ports and is expecting an uptick in interest from ship owners, interim Coordinator for the United Nations at the JCC for the Black Sea Initiative Frederick Kenney said on Wednesday.

"We have so far authorized 12 vessels to depart the Ukrainian ports, carrying over 370,000 metric tons of grain and other foodstuffs. Those vessels had been stranded in the three ports covered by the initiative when the war started," Kenney said during a United Nations briefing on the progress of exporting grain and fertilizer from the region.

Kenney said there has been a tremendous interest in doing this transit from ship owners and the JCC team is expecting to see a big uptick in applications.

The average time needed for one inspection is two to four hours, and the inspections are not conducted over the night due to safety reasons, he noted.

Kenney also praised all actors who enabled the Black Sea Initiative to succeed and said he was impressed with the level of cooperation.

On July 22, the United Nations- and Turkey-brokered Black Sea Initiative on grain and fertilizer exports was signed by Ukraine and Russia. Under the agreement, grain and fertilizer would be exported from the Ukrainian Black Sea ports Odesa, Chornomorsk and Yuzhny and cargo carriers will be guided by Ukrainian vessels into international waters to avoid mined areas. The vessels would then proceed toward the Bosphorus Strait along an established corridor.

The parties also established the JCC in Istanbul on July 27 that comprises representatives of Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and the United Nations. The JSS monitors the implementation of the Black Sea Initiative and carries out inspections of the cargo vessels to determine that they do not contain unauthorized goods or personnel.

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

**Pelosi on China Imposing Sanctions Against Her: 'Who Cares'**

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Wednesday that she does not care about the sanctions China had imposed against her and her family over her recent visit to Taiwan.

China's Foreign Ministry said on Friday that Beijing will impose sanctions on Pelosi and her close relatives in connection with what they termed was a provocative visit to Taiwan. Pelosi dealt a serious blow to the One-China principle, jeopardizing peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, the Foreign Ministry said.

"Who cares," Pelosi said during a press briefing.

Pelosi led a delegation of US lawmakers that visited Taiwan on August 2-3 as part of a trip in the Indo-Pacific region. The lawmakers' stop in Taiwan was met with strong condemnation by Beijing, which considers the move a violation of China's national and territorial sovereignty. The Biden administration defended the trip, arguing that it did not stray from historic norms in relations among the United States, China and Taiwan.

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

**US Warns Iran of 'Severe Consequences' After Plot to Murder Bolton Uncovered - White House**

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The United States is warning Iran of "severe consequences" if any US citizen is attacked after an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

member was charged in an alleged plot to kill former National Security Advisor John Bolton, current National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said on Wednesday.

"Today the Department of Justice unsealed charges against an individual affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The charging document outlines allegations regarding Iran's continued attempts to carry out an assassination against former National Security Advisor John Bolton on American soil," Sullivan said in a statement. "Should Iran attack any of our citizens, to include those who continue to serve the United States or those who formerly served, Iran will face severe consequences."

Earlier on Wednesday, the Justice Department announced charges against Shahram Poursafi, a.k.a. Mehdi Rezayi, of Tehran. The Justice Department alleges that Poursafi, while working on behalf of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - Qods Force (IRGC-QF), attempted to pay individuals in the United States \$300,000 to murder Bolton.

The US government has said it believes the attempt to kill of Bolton was supposed to be a retaliation for the January 2020 assassination of IRGC-QF commander Qasem Soleimani.

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

**Biden Says Time to Pass US Inflation Reduction Act as Consumer Prices Retreat**

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - Inflation in the United States is showing signs of slowing and it is time to maximize the benefit by passing a law to further curb price growth, President Joe Biden said on Wednesday after a government report showed consumer prices retreating from four-decade highs.

"There are hints that inflation may be slowing," Biden told a nationally televised speech after the US Labor Department reported that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 8.5% during the year to July versus a 9.1% annual expansion in June that marked the most in 41 years. "We need to pass the Inflation Reduction Act right away. That's the most consequential thing that Congress can do to keep our progress on inflation in getting better [than] getting worse."

The inflation reduction bill is the most significant climate investment in US history that sets conditions for expansion of oil and gas drilling on federal lands and waters. It includes a new minimum tax designed to ensure that large corporations pay at least 15% of their profits to the federal government, and grants corporations tax subsidies to reduce their commitments.

On Sunday, the US Senate passed the \$430 billion bill on climate, health care and tax overhaul and the House of Representatives is expected to approve it on Friday, before it is sent to Biden to sign it.

Biden said Americans were still hurting from high prices although he noted that "we had zero inflation last month," referring to the month-on-month CPI reading for July that came in zero.

"When you couple that zero inflation with last week's booming jobs report of 528,000 jobs created for last month and the 3.5% unemployment, that underscores the kind of economy we've been building," Biden added.

Despite the retreat in inflationary pressure, Biden said the US economy continues to be challenged by the conflict in Ukraine and the burden that places on global supply chains, intensified by China's on and off coronavirus-related lockdowns.

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

#### **Pelosi Says Trip to Taiwan Meant to Show Strong Status Quo Relationship**

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Wednesday her recent trip to Taiwan was intended to demonstrate a strong relationship based the status quo. "In terms of Taiwan, our purpose in going to Taiwan was to say that we have a strong relationship built on the status quo, which we support," Pelosi said during a press conference on her trip.

Pelosi and other lawmakers visited the island on August 2-3 as part of a broader trip throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The officials' stop in Taiwan was met with condemnation by Beijing, who considered the move a violation of their national and territorial sovereignty.

The Biden administration defended the trip, arguing that it did not stray from historic norms of the relationship between the US, China and Taiwan.

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

#### **US Weekly Crude Stockpiles Jump Some 5Mln Barrels Back-to-Back - Energy Agency EIA**

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - Stockpiles of US crude increased about 5 million barrels per week over the past two weeks as export demand fell, data from the Energy Information Administration (EIA) showed on Wednesday.

Inventories of gasoline also tumbled by almost 5 million barrels last week as shipments of that fuel rose to its highest levels in nearly four years, the EIA said in its Weekly Petroleum Status Report.

Crude oil inventories jumped by 5.458 million barrels during the week ended August 5 against a build of 73,000 barrels forecast by analysts polled by US media.

In the previous week to July 29, crude stockpiles had also risen nearly 5 million barrels, or by 4.467 million to be precise.

The latest surge in crude stockpiles came as exports of crude fell almost 40% last week to 2.11 million barrels from a previous 3.51 million.

Production of crude also ticked higher, to an estimated 12.2 million barrels per day from 12.1 million.

In the case of gasoline, the top automobile fuel in America, inventories declined by 4.978 million barrels last week, against expectations for a drop of 633,000 barrels. In the previous week, gasoline balances rose by 163,000 barrels.

The drop in gasoline stockpiles came as the United States exported 1.13 million barrels of the fuel last week, the most in a week since December 2018.

Domestic demand for gasoline was also strong as per seasonal trends. Last week's demand was 9.123 million barrels, just slightly lower than year-ago levels of 9.43 million.

US consumption of gasoline dipped last month as pump prices hit record highs of \$5 per gallon, prompting Americans to conserve on fuel. Prices have fallen since to just above \$4 per gallon, encouraging demand again.

The EIA also reported an outflow of 5.3 million barrels from the US emergency oil reserve last week, bringing the balance in the so-called Strategic Petroleum Reserve to 464.6 million barrels - the lowest since April 1985.

The Biden administration has been leaning heavily on the reserve to add to crude supplies in the market amid the squeeze in global oil availability from the sanctions placed on Russia over the Ukraine conflict.

The administration is expected to continue withdrawing between 750,000 and 1 million barrels from the reserve daily until October to create more supply for refiners to turn into gasoline and bring down pump prices of that fuel.

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

FBI Chief, US Attorney General Face Increased Number of Death Threats Online - Reports

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The number of death threats directed against FBI Director Christopher Wray and US Attorney General Merrick Garland has markedly increased in the wake of the raid they conducted at former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida, Fox News reported on Wednesday.

While the FBI and Justice Department security procedures to safeguard the two officials have not been made public, both Garland and Wray are traveling with armed security and discussions are underway whether to increase their security teams, the report said.

Earlier on Wednesday, Trump arrived at the office of New York Attorney General in Manhattan to be questioned under oath as part of a civil investigation into his family's business practices.

Trump said that he declined to answer questions in the New York Attorney General's probe, but added that he has done nothing wrong and that is why neither federal nor state or local governments have found anything on him after five years of investigating him and his family.

On Monday, FBI agents raided Trump's residence in Florida as part of a probe that reportedly involves a search for classified materials he allegedly took with him upon leaving the White House.

The following day, a US federal court in Washington ruled that Congress can immediately obtain Trump's tax returns, despite his efforts to resist handing over the documents.

Trump has said the establishment's activities against him are a continuation of the political "witch hunt" during the time he was president and seek to prevent him from running again in the race for US president in 2024.

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

US Charges Member of Iran's IRGC With Alleged Plot to Murder Ex-Advisor Bolton

(Adds details in paras 5-6, background in para 7)

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) – The United States has charged a member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) with an alleged plot to murder former US national security advisor John Bolton, the Justice Department said on Wednesday.

"An Iranian national and member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was charged by complaint, unsealed today in the District of Columbia, with use of interstate commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire and with providing and attempting to provide material support to a transnational murder plot," the Justice Department said in a press release.

It is alleged that Shahram Poursafi, aka Mehdi Rezayi, of Tehran, while working on behalf of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps – Qods Force (IRGC-QF), attempted to pay individuals in the United States \$300,000 to murder Bolton in Washington or the state of Maryland, the release said.

The United States believes that the killing of Bolton was supposed to be a retaliation for the January 2020 assassination of IRGC-QF commander Qasem Soleimani.

If found guilty, Poursafi faces up to 25 years in prison and a fine up to \$500,000 for the use of interstate commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire and for providing and attempting to provide material support to a transnational murder plot, according to the press release.

The defendant remains at large abroad, the release added.

Soleimani was killed by a US drone strike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020. Tehran imposed sanctions against a number of US citizens over their involvement in the assassination.

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

US, Central-South Asian Partners Begin Military Drills Hosted by Tajikistan - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The United States alongside six Central and South Asian countries began ten-day joint military exercises dubbed Regional Cooperation 22 hosted by Tajikistan, the US Embassy in Dushanbe said in a statement on Wednesday.

The exercise, known as Regional Cooperation 22, will run from August 10-20 and focus on enhancing multinational stability and counterterrorism operations, the statement said.

Participants of the drills include the United States, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Mongolia, the statement said.

"As the largest US military-to-military exercise involving Central and South Asian nations, Regional Cooperation 22 is an unparalleled opportunity to strengthen relationships with our partners in that region," US Ambassador to Tajikistan John Pommersheim said in the statement.

The ambassador said the exercise will serve as a forum to address regional issues such as information exchange, security cooperation and peaceful resolution of challenges. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Regional Cooperation exercise was conducted annually since 2004 in one of the participant countries, the statement said. However, the United States last year hosted the exercise at Fort Harrison in the US state of Montana.

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

US Kills 4 Al-Shabab Terrorists in Somalia - Africa Command

WASHINGTON, August 10 (Sputnik) - The US military conducted three airstrikes in Somalia killing four members of the al-Shabab terror group (banned in Russia), the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) said on Wednesday.

"The command's initial assessment is that the strikes killed four al-Shabab terrorists and that no civilians were injured or killed. US forces are authorized to conduct strikes in defense of designated partner forces," AFRICOM said in a statement.

The airstrikes were launched on August 9 in coordination Somalia's federal government and targeted the terrorists in the vicinity of Beledweyne, the statement said.

Somalia collapsed as a unified nation in 1991 with the downfall of the Siad Barre's dictatorship. The international community recognized the federal government as the only legitimate authority, which controls the capital Mogadishu and several areas of Somalia.

The al-Shabab terror group is waging an armed struggle against the federal government and controls large areas of Somalia's southern and central parts.

In May, the United States decided to renew strikes against the terror group in order to combat the growing threat that is poses to US partner forces.