

**10/17/22 Monday**

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

Virginia Police Say 'No Ongoing Threat' After Four People Found Shot to Death in House  
By - Fantine Gardinier

While there is no official definition, mass shooting incidents are broadly accepted as referring to shootings with at least three victims. By that criterion, 531 such shootings have been recorded in the United States so far this year, as of October 14.

Police in Prince William County, Virginia, responded on Monday afternoon to a reported shooting in Dale City, southwest of Washington, DC. Four people were found in different parts of the home, all with apparent gunshot wounds.

Upon arrival at a nearby hospital, all four victims were pronounced dead.

No arrests or suspects were announced, [but police said](#) "the incident appears isolated and there is no threat to the community." Still, [locals reported](#) seeing several police helicopters engaged in an apparent search of the area from above.

The victims were two men and two women, all of whom are believed to have been known to each other.

Police said they have identified a man as a person of interest and have been questioning him, but gave no information as to charges filed.

The incident comes a day after [a shooting at James Madison University](#) in Harrisonburg, Virginia, about 80 miles west of Dale City. Police arrested Tyreaf Isaiah Fleming and charged him with attempted murder, aggravated malicious wounding, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and the use of a firearm during the commission of a felony, all in connection with the [shooting of eight people](#) that morning at an indoor gathering in an apartment building. All eight victims were treated at the University of Virginia Medical Center for non-life-threatening injuries. Their ages ranged from 18 to 27.

**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.**

Watch: GOP Candidate Herschel Walker Admits Giving Ex \$700 Check, Denies Knowing it Was For Abortion  
By - Fantine Gardinier

Herschel Walker, the Republican candidate for the US Senate in Georgia, has come out strongly against abortion, throwing his support behind a federal bill that would ban abortions nationwide after the 15th week of pregnancy. However, he has now become enveloped in scandal after a woman came forward with claims that Walker bankrolled her abortion.

Speaking to [NBC's "Today Show"](#) on Monday morning, Walker admitted that he gave a \$700 check to a woman he was dating in 2009, but denied knowing it was to cover the costs of aborting her pregnancy.

"Yes, that's my check," Walker said after being shown an image of the check. Moments earlier, he was also shown a receipt from an abortion clinic dated a few days prior to the date on the check and for slightly less than the amount of the check.

However, he rejected the woman's claim, [first published last week](#) by The Daily Beast, that he had encouraged her to end the pregnancy and that he had reimbursed her for the cost of it. "It's a lie," Walker asserted on Monday. "Prove that I did that. Just to show me things like that does nothing for me."

He noted that he and the woman were a couple for a while and that he'd written her many checks, including while she was unemployed.

Walker is running on the Republican ticket to challenge US Sen. Raphael Warnock's (D-GA) Senate seat representing Georgia. He has carved out a position as a strongly anti-abortion candidate, publicly backing a proposal by US Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) last month to institute [a 15-week abortion ban nationwide](#). Former US President Donald Trump has endorsed him.

However, while [Walker debated Warnock](#) in the port city of Savannah on Friday, he declined to participate in a second debate on Sunday in Atlanta, Georgia's capital city. Warnock used the opportunity to accuse him of not "showing up" for Georgians.

"I think it's important to point out that my opponent Herschel Walker is not here, and I think that half of being a senator is showing up," [Warnock said](#) at the beginning of the debate. "That's half of life. And I have shown up for the people of Georgia time and time again."

NBC did not ask Walker about the Sunday no-show. The election is on November 8.

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

Video: Haitians Demonstrating Against Henry, US-Canadian 'Invasion' Ignored by Western Media

By - Fantine Gardinier

As the United Nations positions for yet another military intervention into Haiti, Western media has ignored the massive demonstrations in the island nation against both Acting Prime Minister Ariel Henry and the possible arrival of new foreign troops.

Thousands have demonstrated in Haitian cities for months, calling for Henry's resignation after he arbitrarily rejected the transfer of power to a provisional government and decided to stay in power after his mandate expired in February. Those demonstrations have intensified in recent days after Henry appealed to the international community to help him restore order.

"Down with Ariel! Down with Occupation!" protesters chanted outside the prime minister's residence in Port-au-Prince on October 10, [according to local media](#). "Down with Intervention! Down with the traitors! Prepare your weapons, the revolution has begun!"

According to the protesters, the new intervention is not aimed at suppressing violent criminal gangs or at alleviating other public health issues, such as a cholera outbreak, but rather to keep in power their hand-picked successor to President Jovenel Moise, who was assassinated last year.

Haitian diaspora groups have joined up with anti-war groups in the United States to protest in Washington, DC, and other cities against the sending of US or other foreign troops as well. However, despite the magnitude of these demonstrations, almost no Western media has reported on them, aside from outlets specializing in Haitian news. Instead, they have focused on the drama playing out between Henry's government, the United Nations, and a group of international diplomats colloquially known as the "Core Group," which includes the US, European Union, Brazil, and several other countries.

#### Henry Seeks UN Help

Henry's appeal for international help on October 5 comes after the country's primary fuel terminal was blockaded by gangs, creating a [severe shortage of fuel](#) and related products, such as potable water and food, and hospitals that rely on diesel generators for electricity. On October 10, Henry explicitly asked for troops to be sent to Haiti, and UN Secretary-General [Antonio Guterres echoed his calls](#) to the UN Security Council.

Over the weekend, American and Canadian armored vehicles [arrived by aircraft in Haiti](#), to be given to Henry's police forces. However, [critics have said](#) that like past weapons shipments, these will only fall into the hands of the gangs they are supposedly to be used to fight, or otherwise be used to suppress popular pro-democracy demonstrations, as happened under Moise.

Henry came to power by a complex sequence of events, which many suspect he played a part in causing to unfold. On July 5, 2021, Moise picked Henry to be the next prime minister, but just three days later, Moise was [assassinated in his home](#) by a group of gunmen that included mostly Colombian ex-soldiers, but also two Americans.

Henry attempted to form a new government amid the chaos, basing his claim to power on his informal selection by Moise days earlier. However, the man who was still prime minister at the time, Claude Joseph, also formed his own government, enjoying the backing of the military. To add to the chaos, Haiti's rump Senate [appointed a third man](#), Joseph Lambert, as prime minister.. However, on July 17, the Core Group [picked Henry as the prime minister](#) instead of Joseph.

Formerly a colony of France known as San Domingue, Haiti became independent in 1804 following a massive uprising of African slaves, who established the world's first Black republic on the model of the French Revolution. However, surrounded by colonial powers whose economies were based on the labor of enslaved Africans, Haiti became a pariah state and remained impoverished and unable to recover from the brutal colonial war that had won its freedom. In the 20th century, the United States invaded Haiti numerous times, occupying the country for many years and installing leaders whose policies suited American businesses.

**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.**

## Just, Why? Boston University Researchers Combine Omicron, Wuhan Strains to Make Deadliest COVID Ever

By - Fantine Gardinier

After having long insinuated that China was responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic due to risky experiments at a Wuhan biolab, scientists at an American lab have created a mutant strain that is by far the most infectious and deadliest ever seen.

A group of researchers working at Boston University have created a new type of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, that is far more virulent than any previous strain.

According to their research, which was published on the [biology preprint server bioRxiv on Friday](#) and has not been peer-reviewed, the scientists combined two variants by placing the spike protein used by the Omicron variant onto the virus of the original SARS-CoV-2 strain seen in Wuhan in late 2019. The spike protein is the device the virus uses to enter a cell it is attacking, and Omicron's evolved spike protein is far better at doing so than earlier variants, enabling it to evade immune defenses created in response to prior infection or vaccination. The resulting viral strain was unlike anything scientists have seen before. According to their research, while the regular Omicron strain caused "mild, non-fatal infection" in all mice it was tested on, the mutant variant "inflicts severe disease with a mortality rate of 80%," they said. In the Wuhan variant, mortality was less than 2%, [according to Johns Hopkins University](#) data, although in some environments, such as New York, where hospitals overflowed with patients in the spring of 2020, [mortality reached 10%](#).

The scientists' mutant variant was also found to be five times more infectious than Omicron, the most infectious of any SARS-CoV-2 variant and the one responsible for most infections around the globe this year.

However, the scientists caution that their hybrid variant is unlikely to be as deadly for humans as it is for mice, because of significant differences between immune responses in the two species.

### Probing Covid's Methods

The scientists said their goal was to investigate the role the spike protein plays in overall pathogenicity, or its ability to cause a disease. The research may provide new ways to design antibodies to better treat or prevent infection by the Omicron variant.

"We show that spike, the single most mutated protein in Omicron, has an incomplete role in Omicron attenuation," they said. "This suggests that mutations outside of spike are major determinants of the attenuated pathogenicity of Omicron."

Part of this owes to the fact that the Wuhan strain prefers to replicate in lung alveoli or the little sacks inside the lungs that fill with air when you inhale. However, Omicron prefers to infect the bronchioles, or branch-like pathways that connect the alveoli to the throat, replicating much more poorly in the deeper parts of the lung.

### Worries Over US Biolabs

The work was performed at BU's National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories, one of 13 biosafety level 4 labs in the US. Such labs are the only ones authorized to handle the world's most dangerous pathogens, [such as Ebola](#), Marburg, avian influenza, and extinct viruses such as [Variola \(smallpox\)](#) and rinderpest.

Such labs are commonly used to investigate ways to treat related diseases or to devise defenses against potential bioweapons. However, there have been increasing worries about the

use of such labs to create weapons themselves, or for the pathogens to be improperly handled. A group of [US biolabs discovered in eastern Ukraine](#) by Russian forces after Moscow launched its special operation in February is emblematic of such fears.

It's highly ironic that BU would be handling SARS-CoV-2 in such a way, given how Washington has tried to blame China for the COVID-19 pandemic by suggesting the virus had escaped from the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Former US President [Donald Trump accused Beijing](#) of doing so deliberately as a way to undermine the United States, which US President Joe Biden ordered the US intelligence community to produce a report on the origins of SARS-CoV-2.

After months of research, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence ([ODNI](#)) [arrived at the same conclusions](#) as the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), and vindicated China's position: the virus most likely entered humans via a natural zoonotic encounter with a host species, likely a type of bat or pangolin, was not a bioweapon, and was not being studied at the Wuhan institute prior to the outbreak.

**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.**

'It Was a Childhood Dream': Real Madrid Star Karim Benzema Wins 2022 Ballon d'Or

The 2022 rendition of the Ballon d'Or award ceremony was presented with somewhat of a makeover in vote processing. Unlike past years, the 2022 ceremony only took input from jurors from the top 100 nations in FIFA's global rankings for the men's award, and only the top 50 for the women's prizes.

French Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema clinched his very first Ballon d'Or award on Monday at the annual football awards ceremony in Paris, France.

Benzema had been favored to win the highly-coveted trophy after having scored 15 Champions League goals, including 10 during Real Madrid's knockout phase of the 2021-2022 season. The Frenchman also scored 27 goals in 31 La Liga appearances.

"This prize in front of me makes me really proud," the striker told the cheering crowd. "I never gave up, it was a childhood dream. There was a difficult period where I wasn't in the France team, but I kept working hard. I kept in my head this joy of playing football; I'm really proud of my journey here."

Benzema's win succeeds that of past titleholder Lionel Messi, who had held a total of 47 goals and 16 assists across competitions. This year's ceremony marks the first time since 2006 that neither Messi nor fellow heavyweight Cristiano Ronaldo has at least been on the podium, and the second time in which a player other than Messi or Ronaldo won the award.

Prior to the Monday win, some reports suggested Benzema faced tough competition from Polish striker Robert Lewandowski and PSG star Kylian Mbappe for the top award. Incidentally, Mbappe [appeared](#) to be heckled as he arrived at the Theatre du Chatelet venue.

The podium for the top spots in the men's division was rounded out by Senegalese Sadio Mane and Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne. In the women's division, the top award was won by Alexia Putella, who managed to retain the award after leading Barcelona to yet another title.

**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.**

'Justices Are Silent': US Supreme Court Refuses to Hear Case on American Samoans' Full Citizenship

By - Allison Dubois

Located in the South Pacific Ocean, American Samoa has been an unincorporated territory of the US since 1900, and is the only US territory where birthright citizenship isn't granted. Non-citizen US nationals are prohibited from holding federal office and voting in federal elections, which plaintiffs feel violates their Constitutional rights.

The US Supreme Court declined on Monday to take up a case calling for justices to rule on whether individuals born in American Samoa are entitled to birthright citizenship under the 14th Amendment. The denial was issued without an explanation or breakdown on the court's vote. Since 1901, the Supreme Court has rejected claims for birthright citizenship for US territories via a series of decisions known as the "insular cases." The rulings allow the US to treat people living in US territories differently than other Americans, denying them the same rights under the US Constitution.

Both the Justice Department and the American Samoan government asked the Supreme Court not to hear the case on the grounds that, should American Samoans desire to change the status quo, they should do so through political processes, not judicial ones.

Lawyers for the territory's government said in a [statement](#) that the people of American Samoa appreciate their "unique political status," which allows them to preserve "fa'a Samoa," their traditional culture.

"The American Samoan people have not yet reached consensus on whether to accept the privileges and responsibilities of birthright citizenship — but they firmly believe that any decision on birthright citizenship for American Samoa should come through the democratic process," the lawyers added.

Some American Samoans [fear](#) that if they were granted birthright citizenship, they'll lose their indigenous land rights and political systems. But others, including the three plaintiffs, who live in Utah, want to be free from the stigma that's printed on their US Passports: NOT A US CITIZEN. Neil Weare, a lawyer for lead plaintiff John Fitisemanu, underscored in a recent statement that the high court's decision to reject the case "continues to reflect that 'Equal Justice Under Law' does not mean the same thing for the 3.6 million residents of US territories as it does for everyone else."

"The Supreme Court in recent years has not hesitated to rule in ways that harm residents of US territories," he continued. "But when asked to stand up for the rights of people in the territories — even the basic right to citizenship — the justices are silent."

Fitisemanu and company initially won their first legal challenges in 2019; however, a later appeal filed by the US and the government of American Samoa saw a panel of judges rule that the "insular cases" ruling was still valid even though such cases appeared to be "racist" and "disreputable." The US Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit has stated that only Congress has the authority to grant citizenship to those born in US territories.

The court's Monday [decision](#) to not hear the case involving American Samoan citizenship comes months after civil rights groups [pressured](#) the Biden administration to disavow the "insular cases" in a move aimed at extending Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to Puerto Ricans. In April, the Supreme Court upheld Congress's ability to [deny](#) SSI benefits to residents of Puerto Rico.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the only dissenting justice from the April ruling, wrote in her dissent that the "[insular cases] were premised on beliefs both odious and wrong," and Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch, in a separate opinion, asked the court to use an appropriate ruling to reconsider the cases, noting their "shameful" flaws in legal reasoning. In some of the rulings, the court described people living in the territories as "uncivilized" and "inhabited by alien races" who might not adhere to "Anglo-Saxon principles."

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

Uber to Start Delivering Cannabis in Toronto  
By - Allison Dubois

Canada became the first G7 nation in the world to legalize cannabis in 2019, leaving each province and territory to their own regulatory systems. In Ontario, it is now legal to smoke cannabis anywhere that it's legal to smoke cigarettes. This is the first time that marijuana delivery is available on third-party food-ordering platforms.

Starting on Monday, Toronto residents of legal age can purchase weed from the Uber Eats app, according to statements made by both Uber and the online marijuana retailer Leafly, with whom the food delivery service partnered to connect customers with local dispensaries.

"We are partnering with industry leaders like Leafly to help retailers offer safe, convenient options for people in Toronto to purchase legal cannabis for delivery to their homes, which will help combat the illegal market and help reduce impaired driving," Uber Eats Canada General Manager Lola Kassim said in a statement.

When users order marijuana through retailers of their choice from the Uber Eats app, they will be vetted by staff from [CannSell](#), an Ontario-based program that identifies itself on its website as the "definitive cannabis retail education program in the Province of Ontario." Once vetted, the CannSell staff fulfills the orders, which are delivered by local retailers.

"Over the last few years, we have invested heavily in our delivery business and selection has expanded tremendously," said Kassim. "Uber Eats has grown quickly to become a versatile platform usable by diverse businesses large and small."

Both Uber Eats and Leafly have said in [statements](#) that their partnership is aimed at limiting impaired driving and combating the underground marijuana market, which has [remained strong](#) despite the drug's legalization.

"Leafly has been empowering the cannabis marketplace in Canada for more than four years and we support more than 200 cannabis retailers in the [Greater Toronto Area]," Yoko Miyashita, Leafly's CEO, said in a statement. "We are thrilled to work with Uber Eats to help licensed retailers bring safe, legal cannabis to people across the city."

The companies are hoping that the convenience of at-home delivery will sway Canadian citizens away from illegal markets, which have flourished despite legal avenues. In Ontario, which is responsible for 40% of Canada's legal market, legal trade only outpaced underground sellers in the second quarter of 2021, and the [latest reports](#) show that only 57% of cannabis users patronize legal distributors.

Uber currently has no plans to expand the service to other provinces or to the United States, citing that the legality of cannabis varies too heavily in Canada's southern neighbor.

**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.**

Former UK Military Pilots Reportedly Being 'Headhunted' by Chinese Military  
By - Allison Dubois

China's President Xi Jinping has been eyeing a "modernization" of the People's Liberation Army by 2035. On Sunday, the Chinese leader promised to "never renounce the use of force" in his quest for "peaceful" reunification with Taiwan.

Some former UK pilots are reportedly being offered up to \$270,000 to teach the Chinese military the ways Western pilots and planes operate.

The UK government was [made aware](#) of a few former military pilots being recruited to assist Chinese forces as early as 2019, but had dealt with the issue "on a case by case basis."

However, now that the pandemic travel restrictions are being lessened, it appears the occurrences have increased, leading the UK to issue an intelligence alert warning pilots against working for the Chinese military.

"They are a very attractive body of people to then pass on that knowledge," a Western official said in a statement. "It's taking Western pilots of great experience to help develop Chinese military air force tactics and capabilities."

According to a spokesperson for the UK Ministry of Defense, the UK is "taking decisive steps to stop Chinese recruitment schemes attempting to headhunt serving and former UK armed forces pilots to train People's Liberation Army personnel in the People's Republic of China."

"We've seen it ramp up significantly," an official informed journalists at a briefing. "It is an ongoing issue."

Pilots are said to be recruited by third-party liaisons with ties to a "particular" South African flying academy, officials have detailed.

The pilots, who have experience on a vast array of different aircraft with the exception of F-35s, are being recruited from all over the UK military and are not limited to just the Royal Air Force. So far, there is no evidence suggesting that any former RAF pilot has broken the Official Secrets Act, which provides for the protection of state secrets and official information related to national security.

A warning issued by the UK government has urged British pilots against disclosing sensitive information to the Chinese military and asks anyone approached to report the encounter to the Ministry of Defense so that the situation can be monitored.

**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.**

Republican Tom Tiffany Asks for Hearing On Biden's Request To Delay OPEC Cut  
By - Ian DeMartino

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is headed by Saudi Arabia and includes 12 other member countries. It holds 81.5% of the globe's proven oil reserves.

Representative Tom Tiffany (R - Wisconsin) [has called on](#) House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D - California) to open hearings into the Biden administration's calls to the Saudi Arabian government in an attempt to stop or delay their planned oil production cut.

Last week, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced that OPEC+ will be cutting oil production by two million barrels a day. The move angered the Biden administration which said it was a sign that Saudi Arabia was siding with Russia and that the cut to OPEC+ production would limit the effectiveness of western sanctions.

The cut is also sure to raise gas prices in the United States. That is a problem for the Biden administration and Democrats as they fight to keep control of Congress entering November's midterm elections.

The Saudi government released a statement saying that the United States requested that OPEC+ delay its production cut until the next OPEC+ meeting in early December.

"The government of the kingdom clarified through its continuous consultation with the US administration that all economic analysis indicates that postponing the OPEC+ decision by a month, according to what has been suggested, would have had negative economic consequences," the statement released by Saudi Arabia said on Thursday.

Saudi Arabia leads the OPEC+ conglomerate, which has a massive influence on energy prices worldwide.

That statement led Tiffany to write a letter to Pelosi on Friday, requesting that she open investigations into the conversations between the Biden administration and the Saudi government. Tiffany is concerned that the request may have been politically motivated, aimed at delaying any increase in gas prices until after the midterm elections.

National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby contends that the move was not a domestic political move and was focused on punishing Russia with western sanctions.

"In recent weeks, the Saudis conveyed to us — privately and publicly — their intention to reduce oil production, which they knew would increase Russian revenues and blunt the effectiveness of sanctions. That is the wrong direction. We presented Saudi Arabia with analysis to show that there was no market basis to cut production targets, and that they could easily wait for the next OPEC meeting to see how things developed. Other OPEC nations communicated to us privately that they also disagreed with the Saudi decision, but felt coerced to support Saudi's direction," Kirby said in a statement.

The statement did not specify which OPEC+ nations Kirby was referring to.

Republicans were not satisfied with the explanation and Tiffany's letter suggested it may have been done to gain an "in-kind contribution" essentially a quid pro quo.

“This is a very serious allegation,” Tiffany’s letter read. “One that, if true, may very well constitute an illegal solicitation of a foreign in-kind contribution by the White House on behalf of Democrats’ midterm campaign efforts.”

The letter asks for transcripts of any calls that took place between Biden administration officials and representatives from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regarding oil production.

“It is the House’s responsibility to exercise its oversight responsibilities and get to the bottom of these troubling reports as soon as possible,” the letter closes.

Tiffany’s communication director Caroline Briscoe [clarified](#) to the New York Post that the Representative is not saying that the request was quid pro quo “yet” but wants to “investigate to determine if it was one.”

The letter is backdropped by the Biden administration responding to the planned OPEC+ production cut by saying [there would be](#) “consequences” for Saudi Arabia’s decision.

As of Saturday night, Pelosi has not responded to Tiffany’s letter.

**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.**

Radiation from World War II Weapons Found in St. Louis Elementary School

By - Ian DeMartino

During World War II, the US Government ran a secretive program known as the Manhattan Project to develop nuclear weapons. St. Louis was an integral part of the program, processing the majority of the Uranium. The radioactive material was improperly stored and leaked into Coldwater Creek.

An elementary school in suburban St. Louis has significant [radioactive contamination](#) from waste originating from World War II-era nuclear weapons.

Jana Elementary School, part of the Hazelwood School District in Florissant, Missouri sits near the floodplains of Coldwater Creek, which was contaminated by the Army when radioactive waste from the production of nuclear weapons was dumped near the St. Louis Lambert International Airport, which also sits near Coldwater Creek.

The US Army Corps of Engineers [have been cleaning](#) the area of nuclear waste for more than 20 years. A previous report by the Corps found contamination in the area but at much lower levels and did not look in and around the school. This new report, done by the Boston Chemical Data Corporation, found radiation levels “far in excess” of what they expected. The report [specifically mentioned](#) the Kindergarten play area, basketball court, cafeteria, boiler room, and school library as having high levels of lead 210, polonium, radium, and other toxins.

Boston Chemical did not reveal who financed the study.

“I was heartbroken. It sounds so cliché, but it takes your breath from you,” Ashley Bernaugh, president of the Jana PTA said. “We should be thinking about fundraisers and bake sales, but instead, we’re worrying about bomb waste.”

The contamination is expected to dominate the Hazelwood School District board meeting on Tuesday.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, internal radiation contamination, like when radioactive particles are breathed in or swallowed, can stay in the body and is absorbed by organs. Radiation exposure is known to cause most types of cancer, including leukemia and various skin and bone cancers.

The report notes that “a significant remedial program will be required to bring conditions at the school in line with expectations.” The previous Corps study [also found](#) “low-dose” contamination in the soil of residential homes near Coldwater Creek.

“The time has passed. It’s long passed. This has been here since the 1940s,” Bernaugh 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.**

Bernie Sanders Says the Fed is Hurting More than Helping  
By - Ian DeMartino

The Federal Reserve has been trying to tame inflation by raising interest rates. They have raised rates five times so far in 2022. Another hike is expected by the end of the year. Despite these attempts, inflation has remained stubbornly high.

Vermont Independent Senator Bernie Sanders says that the Federal Reserve’s attempts to rein in inflation are hurting the economy more than they are helping.

“I think they’re hurting the situation,” Sanders said on NBC’s Meet the Press. “I think it is wrong to be saying the way we deal with inflation is by lowering wages and increasing unemployment. That is not what we should be doing.”

Sanders [also noted](#) that he would not increase interest rates further.

In May, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell blamed inflation on high wages and laid out a plan to bring wages down to lower inflation.

“[With increased rates] we could see [job] vacancies come down, and as a result—and they could come down fairly significantly and I think put supply and demand at least closer together than they are, and that that would give us a chance to have lower—to get inflation—to get wages down and then get inflation down without having to slow the economy and have a recession and have unemployment rise materially,” Powell [told reporters](#) after a Federal Reserve monetary policy meeting.

Sanders also said that he doesn’t believe the American Rescue Plan is a major contributing factor to inflation. He notes that inflation is high around the world, even in countries without similar stimulus packages. The American Rescue Plan has been blamed for high inflation by the [Republican party](#).

Sanders also does not think wages, which have been outpaced by inflation, are the main driver of increased prices. “Inflation globally is caused by the pandemic and the break in supply chains,” The Vermont Senator said while also blaming the situation in Ukraine and “incredible corporate greed.”

A paper published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston in May said that [corporate monopolies](#) are “an amplifying factor” for inflation. The study, which also noted that the US economy is at least 50% more concentrated than it was in 2005, said that monopolies allow

corporations to pass on higher costs to the consumer rather than being forced to reduce profits to remain competitive.

In August, Bloomberg reported that corporate [profit margins are higher](#) than they have been since 1950, showing that companies have been able to pass on increased costs, and then some, to their customers.

**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 Congress Must Boost Spending to Prepare for Future Biological Threats - Senior Official

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - The US Congress must increase spending on efforts to prepare for future incidents with biological agents in order to mitigate the financial burden in an event of potential crisis, a senior administration official told reporters.

"There are 26 viral families that affect humans and many others that affect humans, plants and animal health, and for many of these threats we lack adequate vaccines, therapeutics and general preparedness," the official said during a conference call. "We're essentially asking Congress to spend billions now to save trillions tomorrow from future pandemics and we think that case has already been made in the past."

President Joe Biden has signed a memorandum to enhance the US federal government's response to future biological threats. Biden has also said he will roll out a new US National Biodefense Strategy that centers on enhancing efforts to detect, prevent, prepare, respond and recover from biological threats.

Biden is asking US lawmakers to approve a request of \$88.2 billion in his budget for fiscal year 2023 in order to adequately prepare for potential future biological attacks.

The federal government has spent some \$4 trillion to date on its response to the novel coronavirus, according to government data.

**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 Issues New Plan to Boost US Resiliency to Biological Threats - Official

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden is taking action to advance efforts to enhance the United States' ability to withstand future biological threats, a senior administration official told reporters.

"The President will sign National Security Memorandum 15 on Countering Biological Threats, enhancing pandemic preparedness and achieving global health security, and also release the new National Biodefense Strategy and Implementation Plan on countering biological threats and enhancing pandemic preparedness and achieving global health security," the senior official said during a conference call.

Biden's memorandum will assert a strong policy coordination structure for biodefense across US federal agencies with oversight from the national security adviser, the senior official said.

The memorandum directs US federal agencies to prioritize biodefense and implementation of the national bio-defense strategy in their annual budgets, and it also directs the US intelligence community to continuously track the evolving biological threat landscape, the official said.

The new Nation Biodefense Strategy is focused on enhancing US efforts to detect, prevent, prepare, respond and recover from biological threats.

The risk of another pandemic similar to the novel coronavirus or worse is a real threat that could potentially occur within the next 25 years, the official said.

The new strategy could take between five to ten years to implement, especially efforts to advance technology for new early warning capabilities of pathogens, and expediting the process to develop tests, treatments and vaccines for new pathogens.

US President Joe Biden, in his budget for fiscal year 2023, is asking US lawmakers to approve his request of \$88.2 billion to prepare for future biological threats, which will be critical to supporting the new strategy, the official said.

The United States has spent some \$4 trillion to date on the federal response to the novel coronavirus, according to US government data.

**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.**

Russian-Belarus Moves Have Not Changed US Perspective of Battlefield in Ukraine - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - The US Defense Department is monitoring Russia's military activity in Belarus and currently does not see any actions that would require a change to Washington's view of Ukraine's battlefield strategy, a senior US military official said during a press briefing.

"In regards to Belarus, it's something we're certainly keeping an eye on," the official said on Monday. "At this time, we don't have any indications that would cause us to change our perspectives on the battlefield as it stands right now."

In regards to the movement of particular Russian aircraft or systems within Russia, the official said the United States has not seen anything that would cause it to change its overall strategic posture or its posture in Europe.

Minsk and Moscow agreed on deploying a joint military group "in connection with the aggravation of the situation on the western borders of the Union State."

A senior official of the Belarusian Defense Ministry said on Sunday that some 9,000 Russian soldiers are expected to arrive in Belarus as part of the joint regional military group.

The first trains with Russian soldiers arrived in Belarus on Saturday. On Sunday, the Belarusian Defense Ministry said that the air force part of the joint regional military group also began to arrive in Belarus from Russia.

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

Ukraine Aid May Be Jeopardized if Republicans Control Congress After Midterms - Lawmaker

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - US efforts to provide military assistance to Ukraine could be put in jeopardy if Republicans take control of Congress after the midterm elections in November, US Senate Armed Services Chairman Jack Reed said during a think-tank event. "If the Republicans are able to take over, [they] have a much more sort of extreme group of people, then their demands might be unacceptable in any way, shape, or form," Reed said on Monday. "So we could be in a situation where our domestic turmoil and our domestic arguments are such that the collateral damage, as I said before, is to our support for Ukraine." At the moment, Republicans and Democrats in Congress have been unified in providing support to Ukraine amid Russia's special military operation, Reed said. Senate Republicans will have an opportunity to take control of the House and Senate in the US midterm elections on November 8. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 35 of the 100 seats in the Senate will be contested. Democrats currently control both chambers of Congress.

**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 - Pentagon Confirms Considering Paying for Starlink Services in Ukraine - Spokesperson

(Updates with more details in para 4)

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - The US Defense Department is considering paying for SpaceX's Starlink services in Ukraine, a Pentagon spokesperson told Sputnik on Monday. "We're looking at all sorts of different options, that's one thing to consider," the spokesperson said when asked if the US Defense Department is considering paying for the Starlink services in Ukraine. US media reported earlier that the funds for the Starlink services would come through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which has been used to supply weapons and other equipment to the country. A senior military official told reporters on Monday that the Defense Department has not paid SpaceX any funds in support of Starlink services in Ukraine at this time. SpaceX CEO Elon Musk recently requested the Defense Department to help pay for the Starlink satellite internet service, which is currently provided to Ukraine at a loss to his company. However, Musk then clarified that SpaceX will continue to provide the Starlink service for free despite the fact that other defense service contractors are receiving US government funding to provide military equipment to Ukraine. Earlier in the day, Musk said via Twitter that SpaceX has already withdrawn its request to the Defense Department for funding.

Musk added that 25,300 Starlink terminals have been sent to Ukraine, but, to date, only 10,630 are paying for service.

**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 - Blinken Says Believed US Would Have Afghan Embassy Presence Well Into 2022  
(Adds details from officials on pandemic in paras 6-8, edits throughout)

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken believed that the United States would maintain a diplomatic presence in Kabul through 2021 and into 2022 prior to the Biden administration's withdrawal from Afghanistan, the chief diplomat said in an upcoming documentary.

"I believed strongly that we were going to have a robust embassy presence in Kabul certainly through the year [2021], well into the next year," Blinken said in the documentary, according to a Politico report on Monday. "Everything that we planned and did was based on that assumption." The Biden administration learned from Afghanistan and became hyper-vigilant about Russia's actions concerning Ukraine as a result, documentary director John Maggio reportedly said. The HBO documentary "Year One: A Political Odyssey" is set to premier on Wednesday, with the film's central takeaway being that although the Biden administration may have acted with good intentions, its own hubris set it back, the report said.

The documentary features interviews with health and national security officials from across the Biden administration, including former White House COVID-19 chief Jeff Zients, former Press Secretary Jen Psaki and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, according to the report.

Maggio described the general nature of the administration as "urbane" and "worldly," but questioned whether such an approach was ideal.

The documentary covers areas such as the administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a major issue in its early days.

Confidence was high after meeting Biden's goal of delivering 100 million vaccine shots in 100 days in just 58 days, the report said, citing an interview with Zients. However, the administration did not have a sense of the impact that new variants such as Delta and Omicron would play in prolonging the pandemic, Psaki reportedly said.

The president and vice president's offices declined the documentary crew's requests to interview their principals, the report 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.**

Blinken Says Believed US Would Have Afghan Embassy Presence Well Into 2022

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken believed that the United States would maintain a diplomatic presence in Kabul through 2021 and into 2022 prior

to the Biden administration's withdrawal from Afghanistan, the chief diplomat said in an upcoming documentary.

"I believed strongly that we were going to have a robust embassy presence in Kabul certainly through the year [2021], well into the next year," Blinken said in the documentary, according to a Politico report on Monday. "Everything that we planned and did was based on that assumption." The HBO documentary "Year One: A Political Odyssey" is set to premier on Wednesday, with the film's central takeaway being that although the Biden administration may have acted with good intentions, its own hubris set it back, the report said.

The documentary features interviews with health and national security officials from across the Biden administration, including former White House COVID-19 chief Jeff Zients, former Press Secretary Jen Psaki and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, according to the report.

The Biden administration learned from Afghanistan and became hyper-vigilant about Russia's actions concerning Ukraine as a result, documentary director John Maggio reportedly said.

The president and vice president's offices declined the documentary crew's requests to interview their principals, the report 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.**

UPDATE - Jurors in Russian Citizen Danchenko's Case of Lying to FBI Retire to Deliberate on Verdict

(Updates with more details in para 7)

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia, October 18 (Sputnik) - The jurors in the case of Russian national Igor Danchenko, who has been charged with lying to the FBI during the Trump-Russia collusion probe, retired to deliberate on the verdict, a Sputnik correspondent reported from the court. At about 1:00 p.m. (17:00 GMT), the prosecution and defense in the Danchenko case finished presenting their closing statements and the 12 jurors retired to their room to consider the evidence and reach a verdict, the correspondent reported on Monday.

In their closing argument, the prosecution pointed to the fact that Danchenko worked for an extended period of time with British spy Christopher Steele on his dossier against then-US presidential candidate Donald Trump.

Special counsel John Durham, who represents the prosecution, also drew the jury's attention to the fact that there was no evidence in the case to indicate Danchenko had told Steele the information on Trump he was passing was gossip or speculation.

The defense indicated in their closing remarks that the evidence present in the case is not sufficient to pass a guilty verdict against Danchenko.

According to the defense, Danchenko was Steele's main source of information and risked his life while acting in the interests of US national security, which, in their opinion, proves his disinterest in lying to FBI agents.

At approximately 5:30 p.m. (21:30 GMT), district judge Anthony Trenga announced that the jury had not reached a verdict and the court would adjourn until Tuesday morning, when the jury will meet again to continue deliberating on the verdict.

On Friday, a US federal judge dropped one of five counts against Danchenko, who in November pleaded not guilty to five counts of making false statements to the FBI about the alleged collusion between former US President Donald Trump and the Kremlin during the 2016 US presidential election.

The prosecution insists that Danchenko lied to the FBI about the sources of information given to Steele concerning alleged contacts between the Trump campaign and Russian officials, including information that the Kremlin may have facilitated Trump's election. The indictment states that Danchenko did not receive such information from anyone and fabricated it.

Danchenko provided the information to Steele, who used it to prepare the Trump dossier, which served as a guide for US authorities to investigate the alleged ties between the Trump campaign and Russia. A subsequent Special Counsel investigation proved no collusion between Trump and Russia.

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

Trump Speaks With Kanye West, Duo Plans to Have Dinner Amid Anti-Semitism Claims - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump spoke with artist Kanye West, also known as Ye, and made plans to have dinner with the rapper in the future amid criticism of both figures for remarks considered anti-Semitic, Politico said in a report. Trump and Ye spoke over the phone on Monday following the latter's decision to purchase social media platform Parler, the report said, citing a person familiar with the call. The decision came after other platforms including Twitter and Instagram banned Ye for violating policies on anti-Semitic language.

Ye has been criticized for claims made in recent interviews, including that Jewish people hold disproportionate power in the media and music industries and that black people are the real Jewish people - remarks considered anti-Semitic, according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

"Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, has recently used his media presence and social influence to espouse antisemitic tropes about Jewish intimidation, power and control," ADL said in a blog post on Ye's remarks. "After Ye's most recent remarks, prominent conspiracy theorists, extremist groups and antisemitic influencers were quick to leverage his words to both express support and promote their own beliefs."

Trump was likewise criticized in recent days for claiming that the American Jewish community was not grateful for his support of Israel as president. Trump's remarks are "insulting and disgusting," ADL chief Jonathan Greenblatt said in a statement.

The confirmed dinner between Trump and Ye has yet to be formally scheduled, the report said. The two previously met during Trump's presidency to talk about criminal justice reform. Ye ran against Trump in the 2020 US presidential election, garnering over 70,000 votes. Ye has also stated his intention to run again in 2024.

Parler, the social media company set to be acquired by Ye, is currently run by George Farmer, husband of commentator Candace Owens, the report also said. Last week, Ye and Owens, both of whom are black, received criticism for wearing "White Lives Matter" shirts to the Paris Fashion Week.

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

US to Closely Watch Russia's 'Grom' Nuclear Drill, Expects Routine Activity - White House

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - The United States will closely monitor Russia's strategic nuclear exercise "Grom" and sees no indication that it will be more than a routine drill, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said in an interview.

"We're gonna watch it closely, but right now no indication that it'll be anything other than routine," Kirby told CNN on Monday.

The Grom military exercise, which tests Russia's nuclear-capable systems, has been long planned and the expectation is it will be conducted along the same normal routine bounds as in the past, Kirby said.

Kirby added that the United States is carrying out similar routine, pre-planned military drills as well.

Russia will conduct the Grom exercise just as NATO holds its own "Steadfast Noon" strategic nuclear drills. While the location where the Grom will take place is currently unknown, NATO's Steadfast Noon exercise is set to take place some 600 miles away from Russia, according to US officials.

US officials have also said that Steadfast Noon, also an annual exercise, is not linked to tensions with Russia or other real-world events.

**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.**

Exxon Exits Russia After Putin Ends Firm's Interests in Sakhalin-1 Oil Project - Statement

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - US oil company ExxonMobil has officially left Russia months after Moscow terminated its interests in the country, which included the Sakhalin-1 project, company spokesperson Meghan Macdonald told Sputnik.

"I can confirm that we have safely exited Russia following the expropriation," Macdonald said on Monday. "With two decrees, the Russian government has unilaterally terminated our interests in Sakhalin-1 and the project has been transferred to a Russian operator."

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on August 5 that specifically bans the sale of foreign shares in strategic Russian companies, primarily in the energy sector, unless authorized by the Russian government.

Exxon owned 30% of shares in the Sakhalin-1 oil and gas project. In March, the company announced its intention to withdraw from the project and declared force majeure in April, significantly reducing oil and gas production in the project.

On August 3, ExxonMobil announced that it was planning to transfer its operating activities on the project to another, undisclosed legal entity. Other Sakhalin-1 project's shareholders are Japan's Sodeco with 30%, India's ONGC with 20%, and Russia's Rosneft with 20%.

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

#### World Bank Puts All Belarus IBRD Loans Into Non-Performing Status - Statement

WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) - The World Bank said that it has placed all of Belarus' loans from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) into non-performing status.

"Effective today, the World Bank has placed all International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) loans to, or guaranteed by, the Republic of Belarus into non-performing status," the World Bank said in the release on Monday.

The World Bank took the action after Belarus' loan payment was overdue by more than six months, the release said.

As of October 14, overdue payments by Belarus to the IBRD amounted to \$68.43 million and the principal amount outstanding on IBRD loans is \$967 million, the release added.

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

#### Russia Does Not Support US Draft Resolution to Impose Sanctions on Haiti - Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, October 18 (Sputnik) - Russia cannot support a quick adoption of the US draft resolution to impose sanctions against Haiti, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanskiy said.

"We cannot support the attempt to quickly push through a resolution of the Council on the sanctions, either," Polyanskiy told the UN Security Council on Monday.

Polyanskiy explained that the UN Security Council members are conditioned to agree on sanctions only after considering their future effectiveness and the humanitarian consequences they may have on a nation.

On Monday, the United States and Mexico have introduced two UN Security Council draft resolutions on Haiti, one of which concerns the application of sanctions allegedly on criminal actors in the island nation who block delivery of humanitarian aid.

Polyanskiy said Russia typically objects to resolutions containing sanctions against other nations, citing the worsening humanitarian situation as a result of the restrictive measures.

The second draft resolution would authorize a non-UN International Security Assistance Mission to help to improve the security situation and enable the flow of humanitarian aid. As of now, it is unclear whether a vote will take place on either draft resolution.

**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 STORY OF THE DAY  
WASHINGTON, October 18 (Sputnik) -

#### ARMS CONTROL TALKS

- \* Russia remains open to strategic arms control dialogue despite the United States devaluing such efforts, Russian Deputy Representative on Disarmament at the UN First Committee Konstantin Vorontsov said on Monday.
- \* The United States is ready to quickly start negotiations on a new arms control framework to replace the New Strategic Arms Control Treaty (New START) when it expires in 2026, Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Arms Control Mallory Stewart said.

#### AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT IN YEYSK

- \* The Russian Defense Ministry said on Monday that a Su-34 aircraft crashed in the southern city of Yeysk during a training flight earlier in the day and the pilots have safely ejected from the aircraft.
- \* The number of people killed after the jet crashed in Yeysk has increased to three, Anna Minkova, the deputy governor of the Krasnodar region, said.
- \* Six people are missing following a fire at an apartment building in Yeysk, the department of the Ministry of Emergency Situations in Krasnodar Territory said.

#### GLOBAL ENERGY MARKETS

- \* Gas futures in Europe are declining by more than 9% on Monday, falling below \$1,300 per thousand cubic meters for the first time since June 20, according to data from the London-based ICE exchange.
- \* EU spending on gas imports nearly quadrupled year-on-year to 75 billion euros (\$73.6 billion) in the second quarter of 2022, with nearly third of that sum, or 23 billion euros, were spent on gas from Russia, the European Commission said on Monday in its quarterly gas report.
- \* Gazprom's gas exports to non-CIS countries decreased by 41.4% year-on-year to 89.3 billion cubic meters in the period from January 1 to October 15, the company said.

#### GRAIN EXPORTS TALKS

- \* Russian Deputy Defense Minister Col. Gen. Alexander Fomin discussed the "food deal" with UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths at talks in Moscow, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Monday.
- \* Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin and representatives of the United Nations discussed the implementation of the UN-brokered grain deal, the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

\* The secretary-general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has held positive and constructive discussions on grain and fertilizer exports with Russian officials in Moscow, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said.

#### SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA

\* Canada has expanded its economic sanctions on Russia by targeting 34 people and Russian television network TV Zvezda for their involvement in what Ottawa says is spreading "propaganda," Global Affairs said in a press release on Monday.

\* The United States and the United Kingdom agreed to deepen cooperation on implementing sanctions against Russia and other countries, director of the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Andrea Gacki and the head of the UK Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) Giles Thomson said.

\* The EU foreign ministers have discussed reports on the alleged supply of Iranian drones to Russia at a meeting in Luxembourg and will continue to collect evidence, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

#### UKRAINE DEVELOPMENTS

\* Russia rules out the possibility of demilitarization of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and surrounding areas as the facility needs protection, Deputy Representative on Disarmament at the UN First Committee Konstantin Vorontsov said on Monday.

\* Russia has returned from Ukraine 110 individuals, including 72 sailors, after a prisoners' exchange, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

\* The Russian Armed Forces carried out regular strikes with precision-guided weapons at military command and control facilities and the military command and energy system of Ukraine, the Russian Defense Ministry 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 Tables 2 United Nations Draft Resolutions to Help Haiti - Ambassador to UN

UNITED NATIONS, October 17 (Sputnik) - The United States mission to the United Nations has tabled two resolutions on Haiti in an effort to help the situation there, US Ambassador to the world body Linda Thomas-Greenfield said on Monday.

"We need to mobilize the resources and power of this Council and the broader United Nations. That is why the United States and Mexico have worked closely to draft two new resolutions," Thomas-Greenfield told the UN Security Council.

The United States hopes the UN Security Council will unanimously support the resolutions, Thomas-Greenfield added.

The first resolution would impose financial sanctions on criminal actors and would target individuals responsible for gang violence, arms trafficking and blocking the delivery of humanitarian aid.

The second draft resolution would authorize a non-UN International Security Assistance Mission to help improve the security situation and enable the flow of humanitarian aid. The resolution is said to reflect a recommendation by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to the UN Security Council.

As present, it is unclear whether a vote will take place on either resolution.

Earlier on Monday, Guterres called for undertaking "armed action" to help the Haitian authorities establish a humanitarian corridor amid reports of violence, hunger and lack of water and fuel in the island nation.

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

Pentagon Confirms Considering Paying for Starlink Services in Ukraine - Spokesperson  
(Updates with more details in paras 5, 6)

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The US Defense Department is considering paying for SpaceX's Starlink services in Ukraine, a Pentagon spokesperson told Sputnik on Monday. "We're looking at all sorts of different options, that's one thing to consider," the spokesperson said when asked if the US Defense Department is considering paying for Starlink services in Ukraine.

US media reported earlier that the funds for the Starlink services would come through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which has been used to supply weapons and other equipment for the country.

Musk recently requested the Defense Department to help pay for the Starlink satellite internet service, which is currently provided to Ukraine at a loss to his company, SpaceX.

However, Musk then clarified SpaceX will continue to provide the Starlink service for free despite the fact that other US defense service contractors receiving government funding to provide military equipment to Ukraine.

Earlier on Monday, Musk said via Twitter that SpaceX has already withdrawn its request to the Defense Department for funding.

Musk added that 25,300 Starlink terminals have been sent to Ukraine, but, to date, only 10,630 are paying for service.

**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 Announces US Government Website to Request Student Debt Relief

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden said on Monday that his administration is launching an official government website through which individuals could request student debt relief.

"Less than eight weeks ago, I announced my administration's plan to forgive up to \$10,000 in federal student loan debt and up to \$20,000 if you received a Pell grant for folks earning less

than \$125,000 a year," Biden said. "At the end of my remarks, I'm going to officially launch this new application site at StudentAid.gov."

The US president said applicants would provide personal and contact information on the website without the need to upload any documents.

The process to apply for student debt relief would take less than five minutes, Biden also said. Biden noted that Beta tests of the site over the weekend managed to handle more than eight million applications without a glitch.

The White House will continue to make sure the system works smoothly, Biden said.

Republican and other opponents of student debt forgiveness have been attempting to block the move in court, Biden added.

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

Pentagon Confirms Considering Paying for Starlink Services in Ukraine - Spokesperson

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The US Defense Department is considering paying for SpaceX's Starlink services in Ukraine, a Pentagon spokesperson told Sputnik on Monday.

"We're looking at all sorts of different options, that's one thing to consider," the spokesperson said when asked if the Pentagon is considering paying for Starlink services in Ukraine.

Media reported earlier that the funds for the services would come through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which has been used to supply weapons and other equipment for the country.

Musk recently requested the Pentagon help pay for the Starlink satellite internet service being provided to Ukraine at a loss to his company, SpaceX. However, SpaceX will continue to provide the service for free despite other US defense service contractors receiving government funding to provide military equipment to Ukraine, Musk 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.**

Disruption of Taiwan's Semiconductor Production Would Lead to Economic Crisis - Blinken

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - A disruption to Taiwan's semiconductor production would lead to a global economic crisis, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday.

"If Taiwanese production were disrupted as a result of a crisis, you would have an economic crisis around the world," Blinken said during remarks at the Hoover Institution in Stanford, California.

Blinken emphasized that the United States and countries around the world have a profound stake in preserving peace and stability in Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait.

The United States hopes that China does not try to force things in Taiwan through coercion, Blinken said.

US officials have previously warned that the situation concerning Taiwan, the sole source of advanced semiconductor microchips, represents a risk to US national security. Earlier this year, US President Joe Biden signed an executive order to implement the \$280 billion CHIPS and Science Act of 2022. The measure includes more than \$52 billion in subsidies for US semiconductor manufacturers in an effort to counter China's growing technological clout.

**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.**

Arctic Council Can Maintain Up To 75% of Projects Without Russia – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) – The Arctic Council is able to maintain most of its projects without Russia's participation, US State Department Counselor Derek Chollet said on Monday.

"Anywhere from 60 to 75% of the Arctic Council's projects, and this includes areas like education, fisheries, can occur without Russia being involved," Chollet told reporters.

On March 3, shortly after Russia's special military operation began in Ukraine, the US and its allies paused their participation in Arctic Council sessions. Later, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the United States announced their intent to resume work in the Arctic Council on a limited basis and within the framework of projects that do not involve Russia. Chollet said that cooperation with Russia in the region is possible only on a very limited basis. "Russia's recent actions have put new pressures on a region long-characterized by cooperation. Just in the last several years Russia has been investing billions of dollars in militarizing the Arctic, it is building and modernizing bases, expanding its ice-breaker fleet, testing dangerous novel weapon systems in the region," he said.

The official also accused Russia of undermining the principle of freedom of navigation in the region.

The White House said last week that it plans to deepen its cooperation with Arctic allies and partners and maintain regional institutions such as the Arctic Council despite the challenges posed by Russia's military operation in Ukraine.

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

Pentagon Considering Paying for Starlink Communications in Ukraine - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The Pentagon is considering covering the cost of the Starlink satellite network in Ukraine after Elon Musk said the company could no longer continue funding the communications services in the country, Politico reported on Monday, citing two US officials involved in the negotiations.

The funds for the services would come through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which has been used to supply weapons and other equipment for the country, 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.**

Russian Sodium Nitrate Imports 'Threaten' US Industry - US International Trade Commission

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The United States has determined that sodium nitrate imports from Russia harm US industry and will move to impose anti-dumping duties on the Russian product, the US International Trade Commission said in a statement on Monday. "The United States International Trade Commission (USITC) today determined that a US industry is materially injured or threatened with material injury by reason of imports of sodium nitrite from Russia that the US Department of Commerce (Commerce) has determined are sold in the United States at less than fair value," the statement said. "As a result of the Commission's affirmative determination, Commerce will issue antidumping duty orders on imports of this product from Russia."

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

Canada Targets 34 Persons, TV Station in New Raft of Russia Sanctions - Global Affairs

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - Canada has expanded its economic sanctions on Russia by targeting 34 people and Russian television network TV Zvezda for their involvement in what Ottawa says is spreading "propaganda," Global Affairs said in a press release on Monday.

"Canada is imposing sanctions on 34 individuals and 1 entity that are complicit in the dissemination of Russian disinformation and propaganda," the release said.

The list includes Russia's chief Ukraine negotiator Vladimir Medinsky; actors Sergei Bezrukov, Vladimir Mashkov and Dmitry Pevtsov; TV anchors Maria Sittel and Dmitry Guberniev; political experts Vladimir Kornilov and Sergei Mikheev; war correspondent Alexander Kots; Russian journalist Tina Kandelaki and her children; Rosneft spokesman Mikhail Leontiev; as well as other TV and media personalities.

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

White House Says Biden Does Not Regret Calling UK Tax Cut Plan 'Mistake'

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden does not regret referring to a tax-cut policy proposed by UK Prime Minister Liz Truss as a "mistake" over the weekend, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Monday.

Biden told reporters on Saturday that he disagreed with Truss's policy and considered it a mistake, but that it is up to the United Kingdom to make their own economic judgements.

"No," Jean-Pierre said during a press briefing, when asked if Biden has any regrets about calling the proposed tax cuts a mistake.

Last week, Truss promised to reduce public debt amid a flurry of criticism over the government's new plan to support the economy, which includes large-scale tax cuts. After the plan's announcement, the yield on five-year UK government bonds rose to its highest level since 2008, at 4.6%, which meant a decrease in demand for debt securities. Consequently, sterling fell to an all-time low of \$1.054 per pound.

On Friday, Kwasi Kwarteng resigned as the UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer after reports leaked that he had been fired by Truss over a controversial tax-cut plan for big corporations, which triggered a negative reaction from both markets and the general public.

New UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt on Monday canceled almost all measures of Kwarteng's plan.

**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.**

State Dept. Says US Confident Pakistan Can Secure Nukes Following Biden Remarks

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The United States is confident in Pakistan's ability to secure its nuclear weapons, US State Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel said on Monday.

President Joe Biden said last week that Pakistan is one of the most "dangerous" countries in the world because it has nuclear weapons without any cohesion.

"The United States is confident of Pakistan's commitment and its ability to secure its nuclear assets," Patel said during a press briefing.

The United States has always viewed secure and prosperous Pakistan as critical to US interests in the region, Patel said, adding that Washington values its long standing cooperation with Pakistan.

A US official told CNN that Biden's remarks frustrated American diplomats in South Asia. The comments also caused the Pakistani government to summon US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome.

On Saturday, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said via Twitter that Pakistan is a responsible nuclear country and takes international measures with the utmost seriousness to secure its nuclear assets.

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

UN Chief Calls for Immediate End to Hostilities in Ethiopia

UNITED NATIONS, October 17 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday called for an immediate end to hostilities in Ethiopia.

"Hostilities in the Tigray region of Ethiopia must end now – including the immediate withdrawal and disengagement of Eritrean armed forces from Ethiopia," Guterres told reporters at the United Nations.

The UN chief stressed there is no military solution to the conflict. Indiscriminate attacks, including in residential areas, continue killing more innocent people every day, damaging critical infrastructure and limiting access to vital services, he continued. In addition, the fighting has led hundreds of thousands to flee their homes.

Ethiopia has been engulfed in a violent internal conflict since November 2020, when the central government accused the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) of attacking its military base and launched an anti-terrorist operation in the region. In June 2021, TPLF rebels seized the city of Mekelle and the government declared an unconditional ceasefire. However, the rebels launched a new offensive soon after and took control of the southern part of Tigray and the neighboring Amhara region. The ongoing conflict has claimed tens of thousands of lives, displaced millions of people, and caused a dire humanitarian crisis across the country.

In March 2022, Ethiopian authorities announced an indefinite humanitarian truce for the delivery of humanitarian aid to Tigray. In June, the Ethiopian prime minister said that a committee has been created to hold negotiations with the TPLF.

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

Biden to Welcome Israeli President Herzog to White House on October 26 - White House

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden will welcome Israeli counterpart Isaac Herzog to the White House later this month as part of his visit to the country for meetings with top officials, Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Monday.

"President Biden looks forward to welcoming President Herzog of Israel to the White House on October 26, a visit that underscores the enduring partnership and friendship between the United States and Israel," Jean-Pierre said during a press briefing.

Biden and Herzog will consult on key issues, including regional and global challenges of mutual concern, Jean-Pierre said.

Herzog will be in Washington October 25-26 for meetings with a range of interagency officials, Jean-Pierre 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.**

Jurors in Russian Citizen Danchenko's Case of Lying to FBI Retire to Deliberate on Verdict

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia, October 17 (Sputnik) - The jurors in the case of Russian national Igor Danchenko, who was charged with lying to the FBI during the Trump-Russia collusion probe, retired to deliberate on the verdict, a Sputnik correspondent reported on Monday.

At about 1:00 p.m. (17:00 GMT), the prosecution and defense in the Danchenko case finished presenting their closing statements and the 12 jurors retired to their room to consider the evidence and reach a verdict.

In their closing argument, the prosecution pointed to the fact that Danchenko worked for an extended period of time with British spy Christopher Steele on his dossier against then-US presidential candidate Donald Trump.

Special counsel John Durham, who represents the prosecution, also drew the jury's attention to the fact that there was no evidence in the case to indicate Danchenko had told Steele the information on Trump he was passing was gossip or speculation.

The defense indicated in their closing remarks that the evidence present in the case is not sufficient to pass a guilty verdict against Danchenko.

According to the defense, Danchenko was Steele's main source of information and risked his life while acting in the interests of US national security, which, in their opinion, proves his disinterest in lying to FBI agents.

On Friday, a US federal judge dropped one of five counts against Danchenko, who in November pleaded not guilty to five counts of making false statements to the FBI about the alleged collusion between former US President Donald Trump and the Kremlin during the 2016 US presidential election.

The prosecution insists that Danchenko lied to the FBI about the sources of information given to Steele concerning alleged contacts between the Trump campaign and Russian officials, including information that the Kremlin may have facilitated Trump's election. The indictment states that Danchenko did not receive such information from anyone and fabricated it.

Danchenko provided the information to Steele, who used it to prepare the Trump dossier, which served as a guide for US authorities to investigate the alleged ties between the Trump campaign and Russia. A subsequent Special Counsel investigation proved no collusion between Trump and Russia.

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

State Dept. Declines to Comment on Reports US Asked Saudis to Delay OPEC Decision

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - State Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel on Monday declined to comment on reports that the Biden administration asked Saudi Arabia to delay OPEC's oil production cuts by one month.

"As it relates to ... a specific request for any kind of delay, I don't have anything to offer on that," Patel said during a press briefing.

The Saudi government confirmed last week that the United States asked it to delay OPEC's decision on oil output cuts by a month, which is notably after US midterm elections.

Earlier this month, the Saudi-led OPEC+ group announced it would slash oil production by 2 million barrels of crude oil a day due to declining demand caused by a slowing global economy. The United States in response to the decision said it would review its bilateral relationship with Saudi Arabia, but Riyadh underscored it did not aim to harm the United States with its decision, adding that it was solely based on economic forecasts.

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

US to Continue to Surge Military Aid, Air Defense Systems to Ukraine - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The United States will continue to surge military assistance, including air defense systems, to Ukraine, State Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel said on Monday.

"We're going to continue to surge unprecedented security assistance to Ukraine, including air defense," Patel said during a press briefing.

The United States is also working with allies to transfer air defense systems and other security assets for Ukraine to use, Patel said.

Last week, Spain announced it will provide four HAWK launchers to strengthen Ukraine's air defense and Germany recently delivered the first of four IRIS-T air-defense systems committed to Ukraine and intends to deliver more MARS rocket systems and howitzers, according to the US Defense Department.

The United States has provided Ukraine with about \$17.6 billion in military assistance since the start of Russia's special military operation on February 24.

Last week, Russia carried out strikes using precision-guided weapons against Ukrainian infrastructure that has been used for military purposes in response to the crimes committed by Kiev against the Russian civilian infrastructure, President Vladimir Putin told Russia's Security Council.

Ukraine reported strikes and explosions in Kiev and its vicinity, as well as in the Kharkiv, Odessa, Dnipro, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi, Konotop, Rivne and Poltava regions. According to the Ukrainian government, attacks were also carried out against energy facilities in Zaporizhzhia, Vinnytsia, Sumy and Zhytomyr.

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

## UN Chief Calls for 'Armed Action' in Haiti to Establish Humanitarian Corridor

UNITED NATIONS, October 17 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday issued a call for "armed action" in Haiti and opening a humanitarian corridor to assist the people of the island nation.

"We need armed action to release the port and to allow a full humanitarian corridor to be established," Guterres said during a press briefing.

Last week, senior UN official said Haiti is experiencing hunger because a coalition of gangs have blockaded a major fuel terminal in Port-au-Prince, preventing the distribution of diesel and gasoline to protest a plan to cut fuel subsidies.

Guterres said the proposed action must be done based on strict humanitarian criteria, independent of the political dimensions of the problem facing the country and one that needs to be solved by the Haitians themselves.

Mexico and the United States have introduced to the other members of the UN Security Council a draft resolution to establish a sanctions regime against Haiti. However, several countries have expressed disagreements with the text and it is unclear when voting may take place. Russia has said it is concerned about the potential sanction regime's impacts on civilians.

The UN Security Council is scheduled to hold a special meeting on Haiti on Monday afternoon.

**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 Seeking to Upgrade B-52 Bomber Amid Strategic Competition With China, Russia - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The United States is seeking to upgrade its fleet of B-52 strategic bombers to keep them operational amid increasing geo-strategic competition with China and Russia, the Wall Street Journal reported on Monday.

The Defense Department is looking to refresh long-running programs like the B-52 bomber while newer systems are implemented, the report said.

Revamping the B-52 could cost approximately \$11.8 billion, the report also said, citing Defense Department budget documents.

The US bomber fleet is currently stretched by existing operational requirements, such as deterring nuclear threats, the report said.

New engines and other technical upgrades are needed to extend the shelf-life of the 1950s-era bombers to enable them to operate in the Pacific region, where the United States is seeking to counter Chinese military expansion, the report added.

Newer bombers such as the B-21 Raider are not expected to enter service prior to 2030, 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 Recession 'Effectively Certain' Over Next Year - Bloomberg Projections

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - A recession in the United States is effectively certain over the next year under projections by the Bloomberg economics team, the news service said in a report on Monday.

The recession probability models by Bloomberg economists Anna Wong and Eliza Winger tell of a higher chance of a downturn across all timeframes, with the 12-month probability by October 2023 hitting 100%, up from a previous 65%, the report said.

The recession probability deals a blow to President Joe Biden's economic messaging ahead of the November midterm elections.

"The forecast will be unwelcome news for Biden, who has repeatedly said the US will avoid a recession and that any downturn would be 'very slight,' as he seeks to reassure Americans the economy is on solid footing under his administration," the report said.

The president's economic agenda is being unraveled by tightening financial conditions from a Federal Reserve bent on defeating the worst US inflation in 40 years with interest rate hikes also at their most aggressive in four decades.

Since March, the Fed has raised interest rates by 300 basis points from an original base of just 25. The US central bank intends to add another 125 basis points to rates before the end of the year, with economists expecting further hikes in 2023.

Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, stood at 8.2% for the year to September, not too far from the 40-year peak of 9.1% during the 12 months to June. The Fed's target for inflation is 2% per year and has said it will not back off on the interest rate hikes until it reaches its target.

**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 Waives Sanctions on Afghan Transactions Via Transkapitalbank Until January 18 -Treasury

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The United States is waiving sanctions on Afghan financial transactions through Russia's Transkapitalbank until January 18, the US Treasury Department said on Monday.

"Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this general license, all transactions involving Public Joint Stock Company Transkapitalbank (TKB), or any entity in which TKB owns, directly or indirectly, a 50 percent or greater interest, that are ultimately destined for or originating from Afghanistan and prohibited by Executive Order (EO) 14024 are authorized through 12:01 a.m. eastern standard time, January 18, 2023," the Treasury Department said in a notice.

US financial institutions are authorized to operate transactions on behalf of TKB that are going to or originating from Afghanistan, the notice said.

The United States had sanctioned Transkapitalbank in April over Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, the notice added.

The United States and its allies in the so-called collective West have imposed comprehensive sanctions on Russia since the start of Moscow's special military operation in Ukraine. On February 24, Russia began the special operation in response to requests from the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics to help defend them from intensifying attacks by Ukrainian troops.

**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.**

UNCTAD Chief, Russian Officials Hold 'Constructive' Talks on Grain Deal in Moscow - UN

UNITED NATIONS, October 17 (Sputnik) - The secretary-general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has held positive and constructive discussions on grain and fertilizer exports with Russian officials in Moscow, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Monday.

"Ms. Grynspan had positive and constructive discussions with Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Belousov on facilitating the unimpeded export of Russian grain and fertilizer exports to global markets, relaying the commitment to continued progress with all parties involved on that front in order to address growing global food insecurity," Dujarric told a briefing.

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

US Sanctions Financial Facilitators of Al-Shabab Terror Group - Treasury Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The United States is sanctioning financial facilitators of the Somalia-based al-Shabab terror group (tied to al-Qaeda, banned in Russia), the US Department of the Treasury said in a statement on Monday.

"Today, the US Department of the Treasury designated a network of al-Shabab financial facilitators who hold leadership roles within al-Shabab and act as key interlocutors between the group and local companies in Somalia. This network has engaged in weapons procurement, financial facilitation, and recruitment activities for al-Shabab," the statement said.

The Treasury Department noted that the financial facilitators have also had direct contact with other previously designated al-Shabab representatives.

In addition, the US State Department has designated five al-Shabab leaders for their roles within the terror group, the statement said.

The Treasury Department is focused on disrupting al-Shabab's networks operating in Eastern Africa and will continue to take action against the illicit activities of the terror group and other al-Qaeda affiliates, the statement added.

Al-Shabab pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2009 and became an affiliate in 2012, now generating around \$100 million per year for the terrorist network, according to the statement.

**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.**

#### Nearly Three-Quarters of Americans Say US Headed in Wrong Direction - Poll

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - Nearly three-quarters of likely voters in the United States say the country is headed in the wrong direction, a new Rasmussen Reports poll revealed on Monday.

The figure is down three percentage points from a similar survey conducted last week, the poll said.

Only 27% of respondents said they think the United States is headed in the right direction, the poll added.

The poll comes several weeks before the US midterm elections, during which Democrats will attempt to keep control of Congress for the next two years of President Joe Biden's term.

However, Republicans have gained advantage in recent weeks, with 49% of prospective voters intending to vote Republican - 4 percentage points more than those who intend to vote Democrat, according to a New York Times/Siena College poll released on Monday.

Republicans now hold a 10-percentage-point lead among independent voters, a shift from Democrats' three-point lead in September, the poll found.

The poll surveyed 2,500 likely voters from across the United States October 9-13.

**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, UK to Deepen Cooperation on Russia, Other Sanctions - Statement

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) – The United States and the United Kingdom agreed to deepen cooperation on implementing sanctions against Russia and other countries, director of the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Andrea Gacki and the head of the UK Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) Giles Thomson said on Monday.

"We have decided to deepen OFSI-OFAC cooperation further, to enhance both our own capabilities and the support we provide to those at the forefront of effective sanctions implementation. Doing so will further build on the aims of the Department of the Treasury's 2021 Sanctions Review, and support OFSI's move to a larger and more proactive organization," Gacki and Thompson said in a joint statement.

The two countries have imposed "unprecedented costs" on Russia due to the Ukraine conflict, which have had a significant impact on the Russian economy, the statement read.

"Financial sanctions will continue to be a vital tool in supporting the United States' and United Kingdom's respective foreign policy and national security aims. They also help to protect the integrity of our financial systems as part of wider efforts to tackle corruption, kleptocracy, and other forms of economic crime," it added.

Gacki and Thompson also promised to continue partnership by updating sanctions-related products.

"Over time, we expect to realize the benefits of our collaboration not only in relation to the sanctions imposed in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but also across other common sanctions regimes. The United Kingdom and the United States have enjoyed a special relationship for many decades, and our collaboration with respect to economic sanctions is no exception," they said.

Western countries have increased sanctions pressure on Russia since the start of the special military operation in Ukraine on February 24. Disruption to supply chains has led to higher fuel and food prices across the world, driving inflation to record levels and causing the cost of living to soar.

**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 Surpasses Trump in Number of Days Working From Home - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden has spent more than a quarter of his time in office working from his homes in the US state of Delaware, surpassing the number of days his predecessor Donald Trump worked from home, CNN reported on Monday.

Since assuming office in January 2021, Biden has visited Delaware 55 times and spent 174 days in his home in Wilmington or in his property at Rehoboth Beach, the report said.

Half way in his presidency, Trump had spent about 135 days at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida or his home at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, the report said.

Biden has worked from home by utilizing a remote White House apparatus that travels with him to facilitate the round-the-clock enterprise, including all needed state-of-the-art support capabilities, resources and technology, the report added.

In addition, Biden has made 19 visits and spent 64 days at the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, compared to Trump having spent 23 days there during his tenure, 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.**

#### Hunter Biden Real Estate Company Paid \$40Mln by Widow of Former Moscow Mayor - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - A real estate company linked to First Family member Hunter Biden received a \$40 million investment from Yelena Baturina, the billionaire widow of former Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov, DailyMail reported on Monday.

Rosemont Realty, a company tied to Biden-founded investment fund Rosemont Seneca Partners, received a \$40 million investment from Baturina as part of a larger \$69.7 million plan

by the company to invest in office space in seven US cities, the report said, citing newly obtained documents and emails.

The \$40 million investment was made through INTECO Management AG, a Swiss company owned by Baturina, according to a Russian-language document showing Rosemont Realty's investors.

Biden served on Rosemont Realty's advisory board for four years before leaving in 2014. Later that year, Biden began working on the board of Ukrainian energy company Burisma Holdings. Baturina's investment was a payment to enter the US market, her brother, Viktor Baturin, reportedly said. Baturina, once the richest woman in Russia, has a net worth of approximately \$1.4 billion, according to Forbes.

The financial relationship between Biden and Baturina has previously been called into question by US lawmakers, including by the House Oversight Committee. Republican members of the panel wrote a letter to the White House in March requesting information on Hunter Biden's business deals, including \$3.5 million in payments by Baturina to Rosemont Seneca Thornton LLC for consulting services.

Hunter Biden attorney George Mesires denied claims made in a 2020 Senate report that Biden co-founded or had any interest in Rosemont Seneca Thornton. The Senate report cited a 2019 Financial Times story labeling Biden a co-founder of the company.

Representatives for Biden and Baturina did not respond to requests for comments, the report added.

Biden's business ties to China, Russia and Ukraine have been the center of political controversy since the release of information from one of his laptops prior to the 2020 US presidential election.

Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of tech company Meta (banned in Russia), revealed in August that the story's distribution was decreased on social media after the FBI warned of a possible propaganda story ahead of its publication.

Several US intelligence officials, including former CIA Directors Mike Hayden, Leon Panetta and John Brennan signed a letter expressing suspicions that emails recovered from Hunter Biden's laptop were part of a Russian disinformation operation.

The emails were confirmed as legitimate by the New York Times in March 2022.

**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.**

Canada to Continue Holding Iran Accountable for Human Rights Violations - Trudeau

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) – Canada will continue taking measures to hold Iran accountable for human rights violations following the death of a young woman in the custody of the morality police.

"We will continue to look for all measures that are strong and appropriate to hold this murderous regime to account. We stand with the women of Iran - from schoolgirls to grandmothers - as they protest this murderous regime," Trudeau told reporters, when asked to comment on the crackdown on mass protests in the country over the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini.

Canada has one of the strongest sanctions regimes against Iran in the world, Trudeau added. He also called on Tehran to change its approach.

On September 13, Amini was detained by Iran's morality police in Tehran for wearing an "improper" hijab, an offense punishable by prison. The woman was sent to a detention center for an explanatory conversation. According to Iranian authorities, she had a heart attack there, after which she was immediately taken to a nearby hospital. On September 16, the young woman died.

Her death sparked mass protests, with some suggesting that law enforcement officers hit Amini in the head. Examination of the woman's body revealed no signs of violence, Iranian lawmaker Mohammad Saleh said.

Tehran has said that the mass protests were orchestrated by foreign powers and summoned ambassadors of the United Kingdom, Norway, and the chargé d'affaires of France. The European diplomats were given a note of protest in connection with anti-Iranian media reports and calls for overthrowing the Iranian government.

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

US to Sanction 'Anybody' Helping Iran Sell Military Equipment to Russia - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The United States plans to take further punitive actions toward Iran and any other entity helping Iran sell military equipment to Russia, Politico reported on Monday, citing an unnamed Biden administration official.

The US government will "absolutely sanction anybody" who is assisting Iran help Russia to kill Ukrainians, the report quoted the official as saying.

The penalties are likely to come in the form of economic sanctions and export controls, the report said.

Penalties will also be imposed on third parties that facilitate Iran's support for Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, the report added.

Iran has reportedly sold drones to Russia and plans to provide Moscow with surface-to-surface missiles, 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.**

Newspaper Readers in US Know Geography Better Than TV Viewers - Polls

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - Americans who receive news mostly from newspapers have better knowledge of world geography than those who prefer to watch television, a new Morning Consult poll revealed on Monday.

"On average, 40% of respondents who regularly read The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post or foreign-based print outlets such as the Financial Times, The

Guardian or The Economist were able to find Germany, Iran or Ukraine on a map, compared with 33% of respondents who regularly tune into broadcast news outlets such as ABC, CBS, NBC or PBS, or cable networks CNN, Fox News or MSNBC," a release on the poll said. Forty-two percent of The New York Times readers were able to locate foreign countries on the map, followed by 41% readers of The Washington Post. At the same time, 31% of Fox News viewers were able to locate foreign countries on the map, the release said. In general, less than one-third of respondents were able to identify Germany, Ukraine or Iran on blank maps of Eurasia, the release said.

"Newspaper readers were, on average, 14 percentage points more likely than all adults surveyed to identify China's involvement with the persecution of the Uyghurs, and 16 points more likely to recognize that it's Russia and Ukraine who are fighting over the Donbas and Crimea," the release said.

Regardless of their media preferences, the poll results showed that many Americans showed awareness of particular relationships between the United States and specific countries. Approximately 75% of respondents recognized Canada and the United Kingdom as being United States' allies, while about 50% said that Russia and North Korea are enemies, the release said.

"Neither media diet nor educational attainment made a major difference when survey respondents were asked about complex alliances with countries such as Pakistan and Egypt - or ties that receive less attention, like those with Brazil," the release added.

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

Russia Open to Arms Control Dialogue Despite US Devaluing Such Efforts - Diplomat

UNITED NATIONS, October 17 (Sputnik) - Russia remains open to strategic arms control dialogue despite the United States devaluing such efforts, Russian Deputy Representative on Disarmament at the UN First Committee, Konstantin Vorontsov, said on Monday.

"Upon the initiative of Russia in February of last year, the New START Treaty was extended by five years in July 2021. There were agreements between the presidents of Russia and the US ... However, the United States devalued these efforts [aimed] at dialogue. As a matter of principle, we remain open to working to ease tensions, prevent an arms race and minimize strategic risks," Vorontsov told a meeting of the UN's First Committee.

**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.**

Musk Says Russia Would Rather Use Nukes Than Lose Crimea

WASHINGTON, October 17 (Sputnik) - The Kremlin would likely use nuclear weapons to prevent losing the Crimean peninsula, which is viewed as a core part of the Russian nation

much like Hawaii is to the United States, billionaire tech entrepreneur Elon Musk said on Monday.

"If Russia is faced with the choice of losing Crimea or using battlefield nukes, they will choose the latter," Musk said via social media. "Whether one likes it or not, Crimea is absolutely seen as a core part of Russia ... From their standpoint losing Crimea is like USA losing Hawaii and Pearl Harbor."

Crimea serves a critical national security importance to Russia, housing their southern naval base, Musk said.

Such a scenario could lead to retaliatory nuclear strikes by NATO, which could result in a Third World War and the end of civilization, Musk also said.

Those who do not believe in the possibility of a Third World War emerging from the conflict are "utterly dangerous fools," Musk added.

Earlier this month, Musk was criticized by Western and Ukrainian officials for publishing a Twitter poll on a hypothetical peace deal between Moscow and Kiev. The proposal would guarantee Russian control of Crimea but re-do referenda with UN monitoring in other territories seeking to join Russia.

Musk also recently requested the Pentagon help pay for the Starlink satellite internet service being provided to Ukraine at a loss to his company, SpaceX. However, SpaceX will continue to provide the service for free despite other defense service contractors receiving government funding, Musk 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.**

France, Mexico Request UNSC Meeting on Ukraine on Friday - Source

UNITED NATIONS, October 17 (Sputnik) - France and Mexico have requested a UN Security Council convene on Friday to discuss the situation in Ukraine, a source in the Security Council told Sputnik.

The meeting will come a week after an Emergency Special Session of the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution put forth by the collective West to condemn Russia for the accession referenda in four former Ukrainian regions.

**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 Ready to Quickly Start Talks With Russia on Treaty to Replace New START - Diplomat

UNITED NATIONS, October 17 (Sputnik) - The United States is ready to quickly start negotiations on a new arms control framework to replace the New START Treaty when it expires in 2026, Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Arms Control Mallory Stewart said on Monday.

"The United States is ready to expeditiously negotiate a new arms control framework to replace New START when it expires in 2026," Stewart said during a meeting of the UN's First Committee on disarmament.

"The United States is committed to the full effective implementation of New START, including the resumption of on-site inspections which were paused in March 2020, due to the COVID pandemic," she added.