

10/31/22 Monday

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US Has Spent \$9 Billion on African Gas Projects it Then Condemns For Polluting - Report
By - Fantine Gardinier

Although the United States is the world's largest per capita polluter on the planet, it has also postured itself as the leader of the global transition to a society powered by renewable and pollution-free energy sources. Its policies tell a different story.

Since signing the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 to reduce carbon emissions, the US government has invested more than \$9 billion into carbon-emitting oil and gas projects in Africa that the Paris agreement was intended to bring to an end, according to a tally by a British media outlet.

When it comes to the US government's Export-Import Bank, in that same time period the US has spent 51 times as much money on fossil fuel projects in Africa as it has on renewable energy projects there. That includes coal mining in South Africa, oil drilling in Nigeria, and gas extraction in Mozambique.

Kate DeAngelis, international finance program manager at Friends of the Earth, said that at first, she was "thrilled" with the Biden administration's [December 2021 promise](#) that it would end investments in carbon-intensive fossil fuel-based energy projects and sponsor a new generation of renewable energy sources.

"[B]ut over the last two years it's been a slow walk back to the point where you couldn't tell the difference between Biden and Trump on overseas fossil fuel finance," she said.

"It's been frustrating and tiresome to see so many opportunities lost to transition away from fossil fuels," DeAngelis added. "It's just business as usual. We are seeing some of the most vulnerable communities in Africa be negatively impacted and they don't have a voice."

The issue is not necessarily the dramatic exacerbation of climate change thanks to the projects: although the continent is home to 15% of humanity, it is [responsible for just 3.8%](#) of global carbon emissions. Rather, it is that while pushing such projects ahead, the US is also condemning African nations for those very same projects and demanding they transition to renewable energy sources. By contrast, 20 nations are responsible for 80% of the world's carbon emissions - and not one of them is African.

That has led some of the world's poorest nations, many of which are African and nearly all of which are former European colonies, to begin demanding that the world's most pollutive countries [help them finance a green](#) energy transition [as well as compensate them](#) for the climate change-related damages they have suffered in storms, floods, and other disasters.

"But others, despite what the science is saying, hold back, saying, pointing the finger elsewhere, 'You guys create it, you guys have to cure it,'" John Kerry, the Biden administration's climate envoy, [told a group of 45](#) of the world's poorest nations at a climate summit in Dakar, Senegal, in September.

“Well guess what, folks? Mother Nature does not measure where the emissions come from. They don’t have a label of one country or another on them,” Kerry said. “They are from all of the choices we make about how we move our vehicles, how we heat our homes, how we light our businesses.”

Western governments and [media have also attacked China](#) for continuing to invest in fossil fuel projects, including in Africa. The claims have been made especially [as part of a narrative](#) that China is colonizing Africa [just like Europeans did](#), to exploit the continent’s natural resources and ravage their societies. By contrast, China’s refusal to meddle in the internal affairs of other nations has served as a cornerstone of its relations with African nations, including joint infrastructure projects made via the Belt and Road Initiative.

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US Media Claims Musk Plans to Charge Verified Twitter Accounts \$20 Per Month

By - Fantine Gardinier

Ever since billionaire industrialist Elon Musk announced he was buying Twitter, rumors have proliferated about impending changes to the social media platform and the corporation that keeps it running.

Over the weekend, rumors have spread across US media that “Chief Twit” Musk is planning to strip Verified accounts of their status if they fail to pay a monthly fee. They claim that [Twitter Blue](#), a subscription service that unlocks additional features such as an “Undo Tweet” button, will be expanded to include Verified status, a feature that is presently free on the platform. Twitter Blue presently costs subscribers \$4.99 per month, but under the reported plan, the price would increase to \$19.99 per month, or \$240 per year.

Verification is used to identify the accounts of public figures such as politicians, celebrities, and journalists, as well as institutions and corporations, as being the authentic accounts of those entities. The feature was first [implemented in 2009](#) in response to a lawsuit by Tony La Russa, then the manager of the Arizona Cardinals professional baseball team, over a fake account that was impersonating him.

Twitter paused verifying further accounts in 2017 after Twitter verified [Jason Kessler](#), a self-described leader of the “alt-right” who planned the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, which drew thousands of neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and fascists of other stripes. That rally resulted in widespread violence, including a car ramming attack into a crowd by an attendee that killed a counter-demonstrator. Verification was later revived in late 2021.

So far, Twitter has remained silent about the rumored changes, although Musk tweeted on Sunday that “The whole verification process is being revamped right now.”

Musk has [previously stated](#) that as part of his effort to crack down on automated “bot” accounts on the site, he would “authenticate all real humans,” although it’s unclear what that would entail and how it might relate to Verified status.

That’s not the only rumor going around about Twitter right now, either. On Sunday, he clarified that [no, the company isn’t planning](#) to fire 75% of its staff in an effort to avoid paying out stock

grants. As part of the deal to buy Twitter for \$44 billion, Musk bought back every single stock in the company, effectively returning it to being a private company.

Musk [finalized that deal on Friday](#) after months of disputes with Twitter over the various aspects of the deal, including information about bots on the platform. A Delaware judge gave Musk until the end of October to finalize the deal, or Twitter's lawsuit against him for trying to back out of the purchase would lead to a trial.

Other plans Musk reportedly has in store include allowing former US President Donald Trump to regain his account. Twitter deleted the account in the wake of the January 6, 2021, insurrection at the US Capitol by Trump's followers, [saying that his tweets](#) about the event amounted to encouraging violence. [Musk has said](#) that the lifetime ban was "morally wrong and flat-out stupid" and that "permanent bans just fundamentally undermine trust in Twitter."

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Photos: Hollywood Celebs Go the Extra Mile With Incredible Halloween Costumes
By - Fantine Gardinier

Halloween, the autumn festival that celebrates all things macabre and terrifying, is being celebrated around the world on Monday, but many chose to mark the holiday at get-togethers over the weekend.

Among those who wear costumes on Halloween, the skill, dedication, and attention to detail that goes into homemade costumes enjoys the highest respect. Even celebrities seem to have found the time to piece together some amazing outfits.

Kim Kardashian as Mystique from "The X-Men"

Kylie Jenner as Elvira

Kylie Jenner again, as Bride of Frankenstein from the 1935 film

Frankie Jonas as his brother Joe Jonas and Anna Olson as Taylor Swift

Olivia Rodrigo as Betty Boop

Lizzo as Marge Simpson from "The Simpsons"

Diddy as The Joker from "Batman"

Lili Reinhart, Camila Mendes, and Madelaine Petsch as the Sanderson Sisters from the 1993 film "Hocus Pocus"

Janelle Monae as Diva Plavalaguna from the 1997 film "The Fifth Element"

Halloween revelers had better step their game up if they want to outdo these celebs!

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Putin: Ukrainian Drones Used Humanitarian Corridor to Attack Sevastopol, Put Grain Shipments at Risk

By - Fantine Gardinier

Western powers have blamed Russia for supposedly blocking the export of Ukrainian grain shipments, which are vital for parts of Africa and the Middle East. However, Moscow has denied blocking them and Kiev has repeatedly acted to disrupt the safety measures made to allow such exports.

Speaking at a press conference in Sochi with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan following trilateral talks aimed at restoring peace in the Caucasus, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Ukrainian forces had endangered cargo ships carrying grain through a humanitarian corridor set up by Russian forces to allow their passage near the conflict zone.

"These drones, both underwater and aerial, [they partially traveled in the corridor](#) along which grain is exported from Ukraine," Putin said. "And in this way they created a threat both to our ships, which should ensure the safety of grain export, and to civilian ships that are engaged in this, and we have pledged to ensure this security, but if, pardon me for the expression, Ukraine strikes these ships, we will be 'guilty.'"

"Just like everyone is now blathering on about what Russia is doing, not remembering what caused it, but it is caused by creating a threat to this humanitarian corridor," he added.

The deal establishing the corridor was [suspended in the wake](#) of the Saturday drone attack, which hit infrastructure in the Crimean port city as well as ships of Russia's Black Sea Fleet which are based there.

Putin added that the corridor was established "under the pretext of ensuring the interests of the poorest countries," but that most of the grain exported through it hadn't gone to those who need it the most.

"I don't remember the data of the last hours and the last days, but in general it looks like 34% of grain goes to Turkey, 35%, a little more - to the EU countries, and only 3 to 4%, well, according to the Ministry of Agriculture - maybe sometimes it happened a little more, up to 5%, this figure fluctuates, because more is exported here and there - went in favor of the poorest countries," the Russian president told reporters.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail [Bogdanov said earlier on Monday](#) that Moscow would step in and help as much as possible the nations most affected by the suspension of the grain deal.

Putin also told reporters in Sochi that the decision has "not yet been made" about whether or not he will attend the Group of 20 (G20) summit on November 15 and 16 in Bali, Indonesia.

Indonesian President Joko [Widodo said last week](#) he would not give in to Western pressure to rescind the invitation, [as happened with Putin's invite](#) to the funeral of UK Queen Elizabeth II last month.

Putin added that European nations were trying to exclude Russia from various international formats, including the talks between Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev that had just concluded thanks to Putin's moderation.

The Russian president also noted that Gazprom had been [allowed to examine the blast site](#) on the Baltic Sea seafloor where the Nord Stream pipeline had ruptured for several days last month, but gave no further details.

Russia's special operation in Ukraine began in February following the collapse of months of negotiations with NATO about Russia's security red lines in the region. The operation aims to accomplish what the talks did not: neutralization of Ukraine as a potential base from which

NATO forces could attack Russia, and the ending of the neo-Nazi threat posed to ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking peoples in the region. Last month, four breakaway regions from Ukraine with Russian-speaking majorities voted to join the Russian Federation.

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Johnson & Johnson Acquires Heart Pump Maker Abiomed for \$16.6Bln - Statement

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – Johnson & Johnson said on Tuesday it is purchasing heart pump maker Abiomed in a \$16.6 billion deal, according to a statement released by the company.

“Johnson & Johnson (NYSE: JNJ), the world’s largest, most diversified healthcare products company, and Abiomed (NASDAQ: ABMD), a world leader in breakthrough heart, lung and kidney support technologies, today announced that they have entered into a definitive agreement under which Johnson & Johnson will acquire through a tender offer all outstanding shares of Abiomed, for an upfront payment of \$380.00 per share in cash, corresponding to an enterprise value of approximately \$16.6 billion,” the statement read.

Both companies’ boards of directors approved the transaction, which allows Johnson & Johnson to broaden its position as a cardiovascular innovator and advance the standard of care in this area of medical science, the statement added.

Chief Executive Officer of Johnson & Johnson Joaquin Duato called this deal an important step in the company’s strategic priorities.

“We have committed to enhancing our position in MedTech by entering high-growth segments. The addition of Abiomed provides a strategic platform to advance breakthrough treatments in cardiovascular disease and helps more patients around the world while driving value for our shareholders,” he was quoted as saying in the statement.

The transaction will benefit patients by advancing mission to make heart recovery the global standard of care, according to the statement.

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US National Mood Indicators Favor Republican Party Victory in Midterm Elections – Poll

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – All US national mood indicators favor the Republican Party ahead of the November 8 midterm elections, according to a Gallup poll released Tuesday. The ratings for the health of the economy (only 14% of Americans describe it as excellent or good and 49% say it is poor) and national satisfaction (only 17% are satisfied) are at their lowest for a midterm election since Gallup began measuring the indicators in 1994 and 1982, respectively.

The 35-point gap between the positive and negative evaluation of the economy is the largest for a midterm election since Gallup began measuring the indicator in 1994. Gallup noted that the economy tends to be less strongly related to midterm election outcomes than other indicators, but coupled with President Joe Biden's weak approval rating, it may hold more significance this year.

Approval of presidential and Congressional job performances are also near historical lows at 40% and 21%, respectively. Gallup noted that the incumbent president's party typically lost seats in every midterm election when the president's approval rating was below 50% and when Congress' approval rating was at or below 35%

Gallup also noted that midterm elections usually favor the party not in power.

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US Assistant Secretary Donfried Visiting Ukraine November 1-2 - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - US Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Karen Donfried is paying a two-day visit to Ukraine for talks with senior leaders aimed at highlighting Washington's "unwavering support," the State Department said in a press release on Tuesday. "Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Dr. Karen Donfried is visiting Ukraine November 1 and 2. The focus of her trip is to underscore unwavering and enduring U.S. support for Ukraine as it defends its freedom and territorial integrity from Russia's brutal war," the release said.

Donfried will meet with members of the Ukrainian administration and cabinet as well as Foreign Ministry officials for talks on "ongoing efforts to provide security assistance and energy support, and help Ukraine's reform and reconstruction efforts," the release added.

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Blinken to Travel to Germany November 3-4 to Attend G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to Germany on November 3-4 to attend the G7 foreign ministers' meeting, the State Department said on Tuesday.

"Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken will travel to Munster, Germany on November 3-4 for the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the U.S.-German Futures Forum. The G7 ministers will discuss a range of pressing global challenges, including the G7's sustained support for a democratic, sovereign, and prosperous Ukraine, strengthened economic and democratic resilience in Africa and the Indo-Pacific, tackling the climate crisis, global health security, and the food and energy crises caused by Russia's war against Ukraine," the statement said.

Blinken will also join German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock at the Futures Forum for a moderated discussion on the future of democracy in a digital world, it added

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Fed's Power Must Be Reined In, Rate Changes Will Not Solve Inflation - US Senate Candidate

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The US Federal Reserve playing with interest rates and exploiting its power will not solve skyrocketing inflation, LaRouche independent Senate candidate Diane Sare told Sputnik.

To fight inflation that has hit 40-year highs the Fed raised interest rates significantly throughout the course of the year. The US inflation rate, currently running at 8.2%, is one of the top issues on voters' minds going into the November 8 midterm elections, according to polls.

"We're not going to solve this by playing games with interest rates and giving the people who created the mess, more power," the candidate said. "If I had my way, the Federal Reserve would be shut down and we would have a national bank under the direction of the Congress, which would be able to issue credit to do the things we desperately need in the United States."

Those needs include water management infrastructure, she added, 43,000 miles of high speed rail and 500 new nuclear power plants along with solutions to schooling and poverty issues.

"The problem is that since Nixon took the dollar off the gold reserve system, we've had these floating exchange rates and you have billionaires who gamble against other people's currencies," Sare said.

It is as zero sum game, she added, where doing well means crushing others.

"The universe wasn't created that way. So, my policy would be - we have to regulate these things," Sare said.

Sare believes that the solution is to go back to fixed exchange rates.

"That's one of the purposes of US, Russia, China, India meeting to say, 'Okay, we're not going to keep bailing out these central bankers. We're going to return to fixed exchange rates,'" she said.

Sare said the key is also to create institutions which will lend at very low interest rates for internal improvements and infrastructure that allows people to become more productive.

"In the case of the United States, that means kind of reining in the power of the Federal Reserve," she added.

Sare is competing for the New York seat currently occupied by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer.

US voters go to the polls on November 8 to cast ballots in the midterm elections, with the Democratic Party's narrow control of Congress hanging in the balance. 35 of the 100 seats in the US Senate - and all 435 House seats - are up for election this year, in addition to statewide and local positions.

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Saudi Interest in Joining BRICS Indicates US Becoming More Isolated - Senate Candidate

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - Saudi Arabia's interest in becoming a member of the BRICS group indicates that the United States is becoming more isolated under the current administration, LaRouche independent Senate candidate Diane Sare told Sputnik.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that he supports Saudi Arabia's possible accession to the BRICS group. Earlier in October, following the visit to Saudi Arabia, President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa, said that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud had expressed Riyadh's desire to join the BRICS.

"I think the fact that Saudi Arabia has applied to join the BRICS, merely indicates that under the policies of this administration, the United States... we are becoming the isolated nation, the pariah nation," Sare said.

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.

"I don't think it's right for Biden to threaten Saudi Arabia given what we have been doing with our sanctions and the price of oil," she said. "The danger is that we do have the nuclear arsenal. I fear we have some people who have absolutely no conscience, who are prepared to unleash hideous destruction of people. That's why it's very urgent that we get off the trajectory that we are on."

Saudi Arabia's desire to have more than just a petroleum producing economy should be respected, she added.

Earlier in the month, OPEC Secretary General Haitham Al Ghais said the decision to cut production was not politically motivated and not related to the confrontation between some countries, but came from assessments of high recession risks.

Sare is competing for the New York seat currently occupied by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. According to her campaign site, Sare is running against the interests of Wall Street and in support of a new world economic order.

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Cancel Russian Culture War 'Complete Outrage,' Limits Interaction - US Senate Candidate

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The outrageous cancel culture war waged against Russia limits the ability of people to communicate in a domain of common interests, LaRouche independent candidate for the US Senate, Diane Sare, told Sputnik.

"I think it's a complete outrage," Sare, who is a trained classical musician and choral conductor, said. "The role of the artists is not a political role. It's not a partisan role. The role of the artist is to ennoble mankind."

Canceling great artists or great writers, whether it's Tchaikovsky, the Bolshoi Ballet, Tolstoy, or Dostoevsky, she added, is "very ugly" because culture is universal among human beings.

"So, trying to stop this, to nullify it, you really are limiting the ability for human beings to communicate with each other in the domain where we have common interests and a common identity," she added.

Sare went on to say that 2024 will mark the 200th anniversary of of the Missa Solemnis of Beethoven, which was premiered in St. Petersburg.

"It was written for that chorus because the chorus in St. Petersburg in 1824 probably was the best chorus in the world," she said. "Beethoven is slandered all the time, because the vocal parts in this piece are so difficult. Everyone said he was crazy. He didn't understand the singing voice. No, he was writing it for the best chorus in the world. Now, I think this is incredible. We just had the 250 year anniversary of Beethoven, which we didn't celebrate properly because of the pandemic. But what an extraordinary thing. Shouldn't we be collaborating to celebrate the 200 year anniversary of this masterpiece, and the legacy of the history of the choral tradition in St. Petersburg, and probably we're not even allowed to talk about it?"

Sare said it is impossible to erase somebody's culture.

"The media, the news media are really making a terrible mistake. They think that they control the narrative because they control the airwaves," she said.

Since the beginning of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, performances of many representatives of Russian arts and culture, ballet troupes, and musicians have been canceled, while works of Russian composers Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Dmitri Shostakovich, and Sergei Rachmaninoff have been removed from posters.

Sare, who is competing for the New York seat currently occupied by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer in the November 8 midterm elections, was the founder and co-director of the Schiller Institute New York City Chorus.

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Independent Senate Candidate Says Idea of Democracy in US 'Complete Fraud'

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The affirmations that the United States has democracy is a complete fraud in light of the challenges third party candidates face in trying to run for office, LaRouche independent Senate candidate Diane Sare told Sputnik.

"I want the world to know that the idea of democracy in the United States is a complete fraud," Sare said. "I'm telling you this without saying anything about what happened in 2020, but merely my own experience, what I had to do to get on the ballot, and then a rigged blatantly rigged opinion poll to keep me out of the debate."

Sare, who is running as an independent candidate in New York in a bid to oust US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, said in order to get on the ballot she had to get triple the

signatures of the Democrats and Republicans. They were only required to get 15,000 signatures in a statewide race, whereas Sare was required to get 45,000 signatures in six weeks.

"They had many minor parties which people have heard of - the Libertarian Party, the Green Party, the Serve America party. Not one minor party succeeded to make this threshold. It was designed to silence debate," she said. "They were frankly very unhappy that I succeeded. I did not pay anyone. I had a full volunteer force and we turned in 66,000 signatures."

Sare said she was the only statewide Independent candidate to make it on the ballot in New York but was excluded from a debate between Schumer and the Republican challenger.

Spectrum News told her she was not invited to the debate because she did not meet the criterion of 15% in the opinion poll. However, Sare said there was a major problem with the surveys.

"Not one of the polls allows the voters to choose Diane Sare," she pointed out.

Sare wrote to the station and said this is rigged, "you must include me. 66,000 people want me in this debate." The station said there is an option to pick "other."

"My name is not 'other.' My name is Diane Sare," she said. "I know personally that two of my petitioners got called by the pollsters and when they said we're voting for Diane Sare, they were told that's not an option."

Sare said regardless of the results she is not going to disappear as a political voice.

"This fight is not going to go away. My point of this campaign is to win the policy. And I intend to win the policy, whether I'm in the Senate or whether I'm not," she said.

US voters go to the polls on November 8 to cast ballots in the midterm elections, with the Democratic Party's narrow control of Congress hanging in the balance. 35 of the 100 seats in the US Senate - and all 435 House seats - are up for election this year, in addition to statewide and local positions.

"If Republicans don't take the majority of the seats, I'm afraid the lunatic wing of the Democratic Party will see this as a mandate to continue their insane policies, first of all," Sare concluded. "If the Republicans do take the majority, then we perhaps have an opportunity for change but I really fear that change is not going to be made through the electoral process, but through the citizenry, raising their voices and forcing our so-called representatives to actually represent us." According to recent polling, Republicans appear well-positioned to take the US House while the battle for control of the Senate is expected to come down to the wire and may hinge on the outcome of six tight races.

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US Senate Candidate Vows to Do Utmost to Repair Inter-Parliamentary Ties With Russia -

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - LaRouche independent candidate for US Senate Diane Sare told Sputnik that she is determined to do her best to revive inter-parliamentary relations with Russia.

Sare is competing for the New York seat currently occupied by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer in the November 8 midterm elections.

"I would absolutely do it," Sare said when asked about reviving the process. "I would do whatever I could do to repair this [US-Russian] relationship."

Regarding her possible travel to Russia in the capacity of a lawmaker, Sare said, "You know, I would have to convince people at the State Department, I suppose."

"I don't know what the restrictions are on that right now," she said. "I think we have an enormous amount of work to do here... You know, I say everything, somewhat hypothetically, because I don't know what the conditions will be. I don't know what conditions this regime will place on US senators."

US voters go to the polls on November 8 to cast ballots in the midterm elections, with the Democratic Party's narrow control of Congress hanging in the balance. 35 of the 100 seats in the US Senate - and all 435 House seats - are up for election this year, in addition to statewide and local positions.

Sare was the founder and co-director of the Schiller Institute New York City Chorus and worked as an organizer for Lyndon LaRouche, a political figure who ran as a third party candidate in several presidential elections. In 2012 and 2014, Sare ran for the House seat in New Jersey's 5th congressional district.

Sare, according to her campaign site, is running against the interests of Wall Street and in support of a new world economic order.

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US Must Be Part of Ukraine Talks, But Major Shift Needed to Build Trust - Senate Candidate

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States should be part of possible peace talks with Ukraine because the US started the conflict, but a fundamental shift is needed to build trust and a massive cleanup of the intelligence agencies, LaRouche independent Senate candidate Diane Sare told Sputnik.

"I think the US has to be at the table because we are an instigator," Sare said. "[But] there's no reason [for Russia] to trust such negotiations without a fundamental shift in the United States... we have betrayed our word so many times."

The senate candidate said Congressman Paul Gosar from Arizona has offered that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin could meet in his state. However, she added, the US track record of betrayal would likely be of great concern for Putin. Moreover, the US intelligence agencies have been given way too much power to do things, "behind the backs of even members of Congress," she said.

Sare also said former President Donald Trump and his National Security Aide Michael Flynn made noises about reorganizing the intelligence agencies.

"We have a massive cleanup to do in the United States," Sare said. "I think we need a total audit of the CIA, the FBI, the NSA, the DIA - all of them."

Sare said she read that Russia has evidence the British, a US ally, were involved in supervising the recent terrorist drone attacks on the Navy near Sevastopol.

"So, you know, how can you ignore this?" she asked.

On February 24, Russia launched a military operation in Ukraine, responding to calls for help from the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics. Western countries responded by imposing comprehensive sanctions against Moscow, while also ramping up their military support for Kiev. US voters head to the polls on November 8 to determine who will control congress, with the Democrats at risk of losing both chambers.

Sare is competing for the New York seat currently occupied by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. Sare, according to her campaign site, is running against the interests of Wall Street and in support of a new world economic order.

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RPT - Inflation, Denial of Rights Key Issues in 2022 Midterm Elections - Texas State Lawmaker

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - Inflation and the denial of rights in the United States will be key issues most US voters may consider when they head to the polls in next week's midterm elections, Texas state representative Mary Gonzalez told Sputnik.

US voters head to the polls for midterm elections on November 8 to determine who controls Congress, with Republicans poised to seize the House from the Democrats while the Senate struggle is expected to come down to the wire.

"Inflation and the denial of rights. I think those two things are [key issues]," Gonzalez, a Democrat, said.

Gonzalez said this year's midterm election is unique because there is an interesting balance between day-to-day and future dynamics coming into play.

"I think there's very real day-to-day concerns, i.e. inflation, the economy, but then there's also long term concerns about like the future of our country, for example, like rights, voting rights or women's rights, all these rights that are now being limited or denied," Gonzalez said.

The Supreme Court in June overturned the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, which had for decades upheld a pregnant women's right to seek an abortion without government restrictions.

On matters of gun control rights, Gonzalez said she believes it is possible to find a balance on respecting Americans' second amendment right to bear arms but also adopt measures to help curb gun violence issues in the United States.

"I think that we can have balanced gun control policy that can both honor people's understanding of their rights and keep communities and families safe," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez and several of her colleagues were appointed to a state investigative committee tasked with conducting an examination of the circumstances in the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, that left 19 children and two teachers dead.

Thirty-five of the 100 seats in the US Senate and all 435 House seats are up for election this year, in addition to state and local positions. The Democrats currently control the House of

Representatives by eight seats while the Senate is split 50-50 with Vice President Kamala Harris representing the tie-breaking vote in her role as president of the upper chamber. According to the averages of surveys gathered by poll aggregator RealClearPolitics (RCP), Republicans are likely to win 225 House seats, well over the 218 needed to win the majority. House Democrats are likely to win 173 seats while 37 are in the toss-up category, according to the RCP data. If the Senate races ended today, the Republicans would likely end up with at least 48 seats to the Democrats 46, with six still too close to call, the data shows.

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Washington Must End Military Aid to Ukraine, Stop Fueling Conflict - US Senate Candidate

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States should end its military assistance to Ukraine and stop inflaming the ongoing conflict, LaRouche independent Senate candidate Diane Sare told Sputnik.

US voters head to the polls on November 8 to determine who will control congress, with the Democrats at risk of losing both chambers. The Senate is likely to be decided by six tight races. Sare is running for the New York seat currently occupied by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer.

Biden recently expressed concern that Republicans could jeopardize future aid for Ukraine after current House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy vowed to cease writing "blank checks" to Kiev if Republicans get the majority after the elections. The Republicans are highly favored to seize the House, according to recent polls, while control of the senate appears to remain "up for grabs." "First of all, I think we should stop supplying weapons to Ukraine. Number one. But it's really not about Ukraine. That's the problem. The problem comes from the West," Sare said. "We know that [Ukraine President Volodymyr] Zelenskyy was inclined already back in March-April to talk about Ukraine remaining neutral, [and] not joining NATO."

Then Boris Johnson, who was the UK prime minster at the time, Sare added, flew over there and said, "don't negotiate. We'll send you more weapons."

"We [the United States] have to completely change our policy," Sare said.

Sare said it is a definite possibility that the funding for weapons and aid to Ukraine will be cut if Republicans take Congress.

She believes that by changing Washington's policy on military assistance to Ukraine, the situation can be resolved and a diplomatic solution to the conflict can be found.

"I can't imagine myself how the soldiers on the ground, at least the ones who are not Nazis, on both sides, I mean, the Russian troops, and the regular Ukrainian people who are not in Azov or these extremist groups are feeling about this because the people of Ukraine, the people of Russia are very close. It's the same family," she said. "Therefore, you're going to have, I think, an approach like Abraham Lincoln after the Civil War. We're going to have to have a massive plan for reconstruction."

The United States, the CIA, and British intelligence will have to stop backing Nazi insurgent groups, Sare added.

"And we're going to have to put it in the context of a new order of relations among nations in the world which is based on mutual respect of the security interests of all and that includes emphatically the right of every nation to sovereign economic development," Sare said.

When asked what role Congress can play in doing that, Sare pointed out the situation with the letter recently sent by the American lawmakers to US President Joe Biden.

Last Monday, media reported that a group of 30 Democratic Congressmen sent a letter to Biden urging him to fundamentally change his administration's strategy with respect to the crisis in Ukraine and seek direct negotiations with Russia. However, the following day, the Congressional Progressive Caucus said it withdrew the letter.

"That was a very mild letter in terms of what I think is needed, but it shows that you can influence the Congress," Sare said. "Of course, it wasn't as strong enough influence because they are clearly more terrified of Chuck Schumer, [former US President Barack] Obama and the FBI or whatever they were threatened with, because within 24 hours, they took it back."

However, Sare said the situation is not completely doomed.

"I don't think it's hopeless. I think the Congress could be moved to demand that we stop fueling the fire," Sare said.

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Pelosi Hammer Attack Suspect Faces Federal Assault, Kidnapping Charges - Justice Dept.
(Adds details on state charges in paras 5-6)

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The suspect arrested in connection with an attack on Paul Pelosi, husband of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, is facing federal assault and attempted kidnapping charges for his alleged role in the incident, the Justice Department said in a statement.

"DePape is charged with one count of assault of an immediate family member of a United States official with the intent to retaliate against the official on account of the performance of official duties... DePape is also charged with one count of attempted kidnapping of a United States official on account of the performance of official duties," the Justice Department said on Monday.

The first charge carries a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison, and the second charge a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, the statement said.

David DePape, 42, was booked in San Francisco County Jail on charges including attempted homicide, assault with a deadly weapon and elder abuse on Friday. During a wellbeing check, officers found Pelosi and DePape both holding a hammer, which DePape then purportedly began using to beat Pelosi before police detained him.

San Francisco District Attorney Brooke Jenkins also confirmed state charges including attempted murder, residential burglary, assault with a deadly weapon, elder abuse, false imprisonment of an elder, and threatening a public official or their family.

DePape is scheduled to be arraigned on Tuesday.

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Twitter Founder Jack Dorsey Retains Stake in Company After Takeover by Elon Musk - Filing

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - Twitter co-founder and former CEO Jack Dorsey is retaining an indirect stake in the social media company after it was acquired by billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk, according to a US Securities and Exchange Commission filing. "Pursuant to the terms of the Rollover Agreement, the Dorsey Parties committed to contribute to Parent, immediately prior to the Merger and subject the conditions set forth in the Rollover Agreement, the 18,042,428 shares of Common Stock owned by the Dorsey Parties in order to retain an indirect equity investment in the Issuer following the Merger in lieu of receiving cash merger consideration," the filing said on Monday. Dorsey acquired the stakes through his co-founding of Twitter, open market purchases with personal funds and exercise of stock options, the filing said. On Thursday, Musk closed the \$44 billion purchase of Twitter after initiating the process in April. The acquisition was delayed due to concerns by Musk about the number of fake accounts on the platform that he claimed was much higher than the company initially reported.

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US Judge Rejects Russian National Klyushin Motion to Partially Dismiss Indictment - Order
WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - US Judge Patti Saris has ordered that Russian national Vladislav Klyushin's motion to dismiss two counts from the indictment in the case against him is rejected, according to a court filing. "[O]rdered: Motion to Dismiss - Denied as stated on the record," the order said on Monday. The order also set the pretrial date for January 5 at 2:30 p.m. (18:30 GMT), while the jury trial will begin on January 30 at 8:30 a.m. (12:30 GMT). In September, Klyushin's defense filed a motion to dismiss Count IV or conspiracy to obtain unauthorized access to computers, and to commit wire fraud and securities fraud, and to partially dismiss Count I or securities fraud. In December, Klyushin and four other Russian nationals were charged with crimes in connection with an alleged global hacking and trading scheme that netted the defendant \$82 million through the use of stolen company data to inform trading decisions. The US Justice Department accused the defendants of hacking the computer networks of two US filing agents used by publicly traded companies to make quarterly and annual filings during the period between January 2018 and September 2020. Klyushin denied all accusations during the initial court hearing in January but the judge then rejected his request for bail and ordered that he be kept detained until the trial commences. Klyushin owns the media monitoring and cybersecurity services company M13. He was arrested in Switzerland in March of 2021 and extradited to the United States later that year.

In September, Klyushin's attorney, Maksim Nemtsev, told Sputnik that the defense team can neither confirm nor deny whether Klyushin may be part of a possible prisoner exchange between the United States and Russia to free imprisoned US citizens Brittney Griner and Paul Whelan.

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Biden Mulls Raising Taxes on Oil Companies, Team Will Meet US Lawmakers to Look at Options

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden said he has formed a team that will meet with US lawmakers to discuss potentially raising taxes on oil companies if they do not help lower gasoline prices for US consumers.

"Lowering prices for consumers at the pump... if they don't, you're gonna pay a higher tax on their excess profits and face other restrictions. My team will work with Congress to look at these options that are available to us and others," Biden said during a press conference on Monday. In the last six months, six of the largest oil companies have made more than \$100 billion, Biden said, noting that Shell earned \$9.5 billion in the third quarter while Exxon made \$18.7 billion during the same period.

Biden called the profits earned by the oil companies "outrageous," but added that if the companies pass some of their profits to the consumers, the price of gas would come down an additional 50 cents at the pump.

In addition, Biden said the US oil industry has not met his commitment to invest in the American people.

Oil companies in the United States have a responsibility to act in the interest of their consumers, community and country instead of the interest of their executives and shareholders, Biden said. Biden also urged the oil companies to invest in increasing production and refining capacity in the United States.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) -

ATTACKS ON RUSSIAN SHIPS IN SEVASTOPOL BAY

* The Defense Ministry statements on attack on Russian Black Sea Fleet and civilian ships are absolutely credible, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday.

* The United States considers that there is no justification for Russia to suspend its participation in the United Nations-brokered grain exports agreement, formally known as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said.

* The United States assesses that explosions took place during the recent attack on the Russian Black Sea Fleet in the bay of the port city of Sevastopol, a senior US Defense Department official said.

* The European Union would like to see the grain deal extended beyond November and calls on Russia to reverse the decision to suspend the deal, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said

GRAIN AGREEMENT

* Traffic along the security corridor in the Black Sea has been suspended until the situation with the terrorist attacks by Ukraine in Sevastopol is clarified, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Monday.

* Russia is surprised that the United Nations leadership has not even expressed concerns after Kiev carried out an attack on Sevastopol by using the Black Sea grain agreement humanitarian corridor, Russian Ambassador to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia said.

* The process of getting grain out of Ukraine under the Black Sea Initiative is stuck due to the insufficient inspection capacity in the days before Russia suspended its participation, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths said.

* The United Nations believes Russia's suspension of the grain exports agreement - formally known as the Black Sea Initiative - is temporary, Griffiths said.

* Russia continues its contacts with Turkey and the United Nations regarding the grain agreement, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

* Russia can guarantee its readiness to compensate for the undelivered grain supplies for the poorest African countries at its own expense, Peskov said.

GLOBAL ENERGY MARKETS

* For Italy the import of gas through the Turkish hub will require the construction of new infrastructure, investments and may lead to an increase in gas prices, the head Italian oil and gas company Eni, Claudio Descalzi, said on Monday.

* Futures for gas in Europe were losing more than 10%, going below \$1,300 per thousand cubic meters on Monday, according to the London-based ICE exchange.

RUSSIA-ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN TALKS

* The purpose of today's trilateral summit of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in Sochi is to implement all the agreements on the Nagorno-Karabakh settlement reached in 2020 and 2021, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Monday.

* The Russian project for establishing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan is acceptable for Yerevan, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said.

* Baku has put forward five basic principles for normalizing relations with Yerevan, which could be achieved on this basis, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said.

* Putin expressed the hope that the sides will advance in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict during a trilateral meeting in Sochi.

EGYPT-RUSSIA COOPERATION

* The Egyptian Nuclear and Radiological Regulatory Authority (ENRRA) has issued a license to Rosatom to build the second power unit of the El Dabaa nuclear power plant in the north of the country, the watchdog said in a statement.

* Russia will fulfill all its obligations on the supply of wheat to Egypt after suspending its participation in the grain deal, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said.

MOLDOVA-RUSSIA DIPLOMATIC DISPUTE

* Moldova is declaring one employee of the Russian Embassy in Chisinau persona non grata, the Moldovan Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

* Russia will respond to Moldova's decision to declare an employee of the Russian Embassy in Chisinau persona non grata, the Russian Foreign Ministry told Sputnik.

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Russia Has No Acceptable Justification for Pulling Out of Grain Agreement - US State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - The United States considers that there is no justification for Russia to suspend its participation in the United Nations-brokered grain exports agreement, formally known as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said on Monday.

"Whatever justification Russia wishes to offer, whatever justification it wishes to offer today, there is no justification for the actions that it has taken," Price said during a press briefing.

The spokesperson said that throughout the conflict in Ukraine and particularly since the Black Sea Grain Initiative came into effect, Russia has attacked Ukrainian ports such as Odessa and Pivdennyi.

The Biden administration believes the Russian justifications for the actions it has taken are "detached from reality."

On October 29, Russia said it was suspending participation in the grain exports agreement after Ukraine attacked Russian military and civilian vessels in the bay of Sevastopol.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that preparations for the attacks were carried out under the guidance of United Kingdom military specialists, with Ukraine using the Black Sea grain deal security corridor. The humanitarian corridor in the Black Sea rated to safely export rains and fertilizer had been suspended until the situation with the terrorist attack in Sevastopol is clarified. The movement of ships along the humanitarian corridor in the Black Sea is unacceptable, since Kiev uses it to conduct military operations against Russia, the Defense Ministry added.

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Trump Files Appeal to US Supreme Court to Block Release of Tax Documents - Legal Plea

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - Former President Donald Trump has filed an appeal with the US Supreme Court asking them to block the release of his tax documents to a Democratic-controlled House of Representatives committee, the document said on Monday. "This case raises important questions about the separation of powers that will affect every future President," the appeal said. "The only way to preserve these certiorari-worthy questions and to avoid causing Applicants irreparable harm is for this Court to grant an administrative stay by Wednesday, November 2."

The Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia circuit ruled to allow the release of the Internal Revenue Service documents pertaining to Trump to go in effect on October 3.

Trump's appeal therefore called on the US Supreme Court to stay the issuance of the mandate pending the filing and disposition of a petition for writ of certiorari.

"No Congress has ever welded its legislative powers to demand a president's tax returns," it said.

The US House of Representatives committee is investigating Trump's alleged role in the events at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, and the 2020 presidential election returns were being certified inside it.

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Russian Oil Loaded Before Dec. 5, Unloaded by Jan. 19 Not Subject to Price Cap - Treasury
WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - Russian oil loaded onto vessels prior to December 5 and unloaded before January 19 will not be subject to a prospective price cap, the US Treasury Department said on Monday.

"Crude oil of Russian Federation origin that is loaded onto a vessel at the port of loading prior to 12:01 a.m., eastern standard time, December 5, 2022, and unloaded at the port of destination prior to 12:01 a.m., eastern standard time, January 19, 2023, is not subject to the price cap," the Treasury Department said on its website.

The Biden administration has been developing an international price cap coalition on Russian oil in an attempt to limit the Kremlin's revenue from energy exports. Details on the prospective price cap are not expected until after the November 8 US midterm elections, US media reported on Friday.

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RECAST - Biden Congratulates Lula da Silva on Victory in Brazil's Presidential Election
(Recasts to fix typo in headline)

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden by phone congratulated Brazilian President-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on his election and discussed a range of issues, including climate change and food security, the White House said on Monday.

"President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. spoke today with President-Elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil to offer his congratulations on his election," the White House said in a press release. "The two leaders discussed the strong relationship between the United States and Brazil, and committed to continue working as partners to address common challenges, including combatting climate change, safeguarding food security, promoting inclusion and democracy, and managing regional migration."

Lula won 50.9% of the vote in Sunday's runoff, while incumbent Jair Bolsonaro got 49.1%, according to official results from Brazil's Superior Electoral Court released after 100% of the ballots were processed.

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UN Says Watching Twitter 'Closely' Post-Musk Takeover, Warns Against Pushing Hate Speech

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - The UN is closely watching how Twitter is being used after Elon Musk's buyout amid concerns over the promotion of hate speech on social media, Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Monday.

"We have expressed our concern that Twitter and other social media companies can not be used as a platform for accelerating hate, disinformation or discrimination... We are watching the situation very closely," Dujarric told a briefing.

The UN has not had any specific contacts with Twitter, he added.

The United Nations is a big user of Twitter - having dozens of accounts for all its departments, officials and parts of the UN. The main UN account has over 16 million users.

On Thursday, Musk closed the \$44 billion deal to acquire Twitter, negotiations for which began in April. The acquisition was delayed due to concerns by Musk about the number of fake accounts on the platform. The billionaire plans to liberalize the social network's editorial policy, which has been widely criticized for heavily censoring content.

On Friday, the media reported that Twitter had already begun laying off employees. The Washington Post, citing corporate documents, reported earlier that Musk intended to fire 75% of Twitter workers. At the same time, the entrepreneur denied these reports.

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Grain Deal Progress May Disappear Unless Russia Resumes Participation – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) – The progress reached under the Black Sea grain deal can disappear unless Russia resumes its participation in the agreement, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said on Monday.

"All of that progress can disappear if Russia does not resume its participation in this," Price told a briefing.

He recalled it is not a bilateral deal between Russia and Ukraine. "This is an urgent imperative on the part of much of the world. All of the developing countries of the world need this grain," Price said.

On October 29, Russia said it was suspending participation in the grain deal after Ukraine attacked Russian military and civilian vessels in the bay of Sevastopol. The Russian Defense Ministry said that preparations for the attacks were carried out under the guidance of United Kingdom military specialists, with Ukraine using the Black Sea grain deal security corridor. Earlier on Monday, the Istanbul-based Joint Coordination Center said that Ukraine, Turkey and the United Nations agreed on the traffic route for 16 vessels in the Black Sea on October 31 under the grain agreement.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that traffic along the security corridor in the Black Sea had been suspended until the situation with the terrorist attack on the Sevastopol naval base is clarified. The movement of ships along the security corridor in the Black Sea is unacceptable, since Kiev uses it to conduct military operations against Russia, it added.

Russian Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Chumakov said on Monday that the grain deal is not effective in bringing grain and fertilizer to developing countries.

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Turkey's UN Envoy Says Trust Between Nations Can Be Easily Lost, Grain Deal Must Continue

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - The trust can be easily lost unless proactive steps are taken and the Black Sea Initiative must continue, the Turkish Permanent Representative to the United Nations Feridun Hadi Sinirlioglu said on Monday.

"The Black Sea Grain Initiative must continue. Trust between nations with different development levels can be easily lost unless we take proactive steps today," Sinirlioglu told Security Council members.

He also said they must overcome any difficulties that prevent full implementation of this deal.

On October 29, the Russian defense ministry said that Moscow was suspending its participation in the grain deal following Ukraine's drone attack targeting vessels of the Russian Black Sea Fleet as well as civilian ships in Sevastopol.

The ministry said that preparations for the attacks were carried out under the guidance of UK specialists.

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Biden Congratulates Lulu da Silva on Victory in Brazil's Presidential Election

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden by phone congratulated Brazilian President-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on his election and discussed a range of issues, including climate change and food security, the White House said on Monday. "President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. spoke today with President-Elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil to offer his congratulations on his election," the White House said in a press release. "The two leaders discussed the strong relationship between the United States and Brazil, and committed to continue working as partners to address common challenges, including combatting climate change, safeguarding food security, promoting inclusion and democracy, and managing regional migration." Lula won 50.9% of the vote in the Sunday runoff, while incumbent Jair Bolsonaro got 49.1%, according to official results from Brazil's Superior Electoral Court released after 100% of the ballots were processed.

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Pelosi Hammer Attack Suspect Faces Federal Assault, Kidnapping Charges - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - The suspect arrested in connection with an attack on Paul Pelosi, husband of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, is facing federal assault and attempted kidnapping charges for his alleged role in the incident, the Justice Department said on Monday.

"DePape is charged with one count of assault of an immediate family member of a United States official with the intent to retaliate against the official on account of the performance of official duties ... DePape is also charged with one count of attempted kidnapping of a United States official on account of the performance of official duties," the Justice Department said in a statement.

The first charge carries a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison, and the second charge a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, the statement said.

David DePape, 42, was booked in San Francisco County Jail on charges including attempted homicide, assault with a deadly weapon and elder abuse on Friday. During a wellbeing check, officers found Pelosi and DePape both holding a hammer, which DePape then purportedly began using to beat Pelosi before police detained him.

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Kenya Calls on UN to Probe Attack on Russian Military, Civilian Vessels in Sevastopol

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - Kenya's Ambassador to the United Nations Martin Kimani on Monday called on the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to create a fact-finding mission to investigate the attack on Russian military and civilian ships in the bay of Sevastopol.

"We therefore call for immediate action to deploy a UN fact finding and verification mission to report on arm or blockading actions related to the war in Ukraine that endangered Global Food Security last week," Kimani said.

The ambassador noted that the UN Security Council discussed last Wednesday Article 100 of the United Nations Charter and the Kenyan delegation urged a heightened respect for the good offices and fact finding capabilities of the UN Secretary-General.

Earlier on Monday, the United Nations, Turkey and Ukraine agreed on the traffic route for 16 vessels in the Black Sea for October 31 under the grain exports agreement, the Istanbul-based Joint Coordination Center (JCC) said. A total of nine vessels transited the maritime humanitarian corridor under the grain deal on Saturday and the United Nations has informed Moscow about the movements, the JCC added.

On July 22, Russia and Ukraine signed an United Nations- and Turkey-brokered agreement to provide a humanitarian maritime corridor for ships exporting grain and fertilizer from three Ukrainian Black Sea ports. However, Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly said that most of the ships carrying Ukrainian grain did not make it to the world's poorest countries and ended up in Europe, where some of the grain has been resold to poor countries in need at higher prices.

Russia has said that the part of the agreement concerning the export of its grain and fertilizer under the accord was not working.

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US Homeland Security Department Colludes With Big Tech to Censor Disputed Info - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - Officials with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are engaged with big tech platforms to censor information they consider inaccurate, The Intercept reported on Monday, citing court documents and government reports.

DHS plans to target "inaccurate" information about stories including the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, racial justice and US support for Ukraine, a draft copy of DHS's Quadrennial Homeland Security Review reportedly said.

The report comes amid a lawsuit by Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt over alleged collusion between top Biden administration officials and big tech companies to censor certain stories.

Earlier this month, a US federal court granted Schmitt's request to depose several officials, including presidential medical adviser Anthony Fauci and former White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki.

The lawsuit cites alleged suppression of the Hunter Biden laptop story ahead of the 2020 presidential election, the COVID-18 "lab leak" theory and concerns about election integrity as examples of the Biden administration colluding with or coercing social media companies to censor speech they do not favor.

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UN Continues to Move Ships Outbound Stuck in Traffic Jam Under Grain Deal - Official

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - The United Nations continues to move ships exporting grain outbound from Ukrainian ports that were stuck in traffic jams, UN Under-Secretary-General and Humanitarian and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths said on Monday.

"The Russians have not withdrawn as many people have said. The Russians have not terminated," Griffiths said. "The words they used is that they have suspended participation in that initiative for an indefinite period. As a result, we continue with this initiative, which remains extent to move the ships outbound where we are able with Turkey... to inspect those outbound ships and to move the 2 million tonnes out to the world."

Griffiths added that inspection of ships exporting grain and fertilizer will continue in the future, he added.

On October 29, Russia said it was suspending participation in the grain exports deal after Ukraine attacked Russian military and civilian vessels in the bay of Sevastopol. The Russian Defense Ministry said that preparations for the attacks were carried out under the guidance of United Kingdom military specialists.

Earlier on Monday, the Istanbul-based Joint Coordination Center said that Ukraine, Turkey and the United Nations agreed on the traffic route for 16 vessels in the Black Sea on October 31 under the grain agreement.

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Biden Sends Condolences to Victims of Bridge Collapse in India – White House

WASHINGTON, October 31st (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden extended his condolences on Monday to the families of the victims of the collapse of a foot bridge in the Indian state of Gujarat.

"Today, our hearts are with India. Jill and I send our deepest condolences to the families who lost loved ones during the bridge collapse, and join the people of Gujarat in mourning the loss of too many lives cut short. The United States and India are indispensable partners, with deep bonds between our citizens. In this difficult hour, we will continue to stand with and support the Indian people," Biden said in a statement.

The 143-year-old cable suspension bridge collapsed on Sunday, leaving at least 141 people dead. The bridge reopened on October 26, after two years of renovations.

According to official estimates, more than 500 people, including children, were on the bridge at the time of the tragedy. Rescuers have saved 177 people.

The search and rescue operations continue.

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Grain Exports Agreement Not Effective in Helping Poor Countries - Russian Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - The grain exports agreement - formally known as the Black Sea Initiative - is not effective in bringing grain and fertilizer to developing countries that greatly need these items, Russian Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Chumakov said on Monday.

"[M]ore than half of the recipients are in high-income countries and the vast majority are states in the European Union," Chumakov told the UN Security Council members.

The Russian diplomat noted that low- and middle-income countries receive less than a quarter of the exported grain under the Black Sea Initiative.

Moreover, the EU member states are reselling commercially part of the grains from Ukraine to various poor countries, Chomakov said.

On Monday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Ukraine's actions have disrupted the grain exports agreement and are undermining the atmosphere of trust and guaranteed security under the accord. Peskov also said that Russia, nevertheless, continues contacts with Turkey and the United Nations regarding the agreement.

On October 29, the Russian Defense Ministry said that Moscow was suspending its participation in the grain agreement after Ukraine's drone attack on Russia's military and civilian ships in the bay of the port city of Sevastopol. The Defense Ministry said the preparations for the attacks were carried out under the guidance of United Kingdom military specialists.

Earlier on Monday, the Istanbul-based Joint Coordination Center said that Ukraine, Turkey and the United Nations agreed on the traffic route for 16 vessels in the Black Sea on October 31 under the grain agreement.

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US Aware of Arms Trafficking Risk in Ukraine, Has Not Seen Its Weapons Diverted - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - The United States is aware of the risk of arms sent to Ukraine being redirected to the black market, but has not yet seen evidence indicating that US-supplied weapons have been diverted, a senior Defense Department official said on Monday.

"As we continue to provide security assistance packages at a steady rate, I want to emphasize that the Department has not seen credible evidence of the diversion of US-provided weapons," the official said. "Nonetheless, we are keenly aware of the possible risk of illicit diversion and are proactively taking all available steps to prevent this from happening."

On Thursday, the US State Department launched a plan to address the potential flow of weapons sent to Ukraine into the illegal arms trade.

The United States remains vigilant about the possibility of criminal and non-state actors attempting to illegally acquire weapons from sources in Ukraine during and after the current conflict there ends, the State Department said.

The Defense Department official said that the United States is working with Ukraine to ensure internal monitoring of weapons from logistics hubs to the front line. Washington is also working with other allies to strengthen external controls on arms.

US personnel are engaged in on-site inspections of weapons stocks when and where security conditions allow it, the official also said.

Ukraine has been transparent and supportive of the inspections, the official added.

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US Inspects Ukrainian Weapons Stocks to Prevent Diversion of Arms - Defense Official

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - The United States conducts inspections of Ukrainian weapons stocks as part of its efforts to prevent the illegal diversion of US arms, a senior defense official said on Monday.

"US personnel have recently resumed on-site inspections to assess weapons stocks in-country whenever and wherever the security conditions allow. The return of our defense attache and Office of Defense Cooperation personnel in-country has allowed us to resume this critical function," the senior defense official said at a briefing. "I'm not going to detail the specifics of the site inspections in terms of numbers, but there have been several of these inspections."

The US Embassy in Kiev has found Ukraine to be transparent and supportive of inspections, the official added.

On Thursday, the US State Department launched a plan to address the potential flow of weapons sent to Ukraine into the illegal arms trade. The US remains vigilant about the possibility of criminal and non-state actors attempting to illegally acquire weapons from sources in Ukraine both during and following the conflict there, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said.

The United States is aware of the risk of arms in Ukraine flowing to the black market but has not yet seen evidence indicating the diversion of US weapons, the senior defense official said.

The US is working with Ukraine to ensure internal monitoring of weapons from logistics hubs to the frontlines, as well as working with other allies to strengthen external controls on arms, the official said.

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US Not to Waste Time on Reviving Iran Nuclear Agreement Now - Special Envoy

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - The United States will not waste its time at present on trying to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement, US Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley said on Monday.

"It's really not our focus right now. It [the nuclear agreement] is not on our agenda because nothing has changed. We're not going to waste our time on it if nothing is going to happen," Malley said.

In 2015, Iran and the P5+1 group of countries comprising the United States, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and Germany as well as the European Union, signed an agreement - formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - that obliged Tehran to scale back its nuclear program and reduce its uranium reserves in exchange for sanctions relief. In 2018, then US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from the JCPOA and re-imposed comprehensive sanctions against Iran. Tehran responded with a gradual abandoning of its commitments under the nuclear agreement.

Since, Vienna has hosted several rounds of talks since April 2021, aimed at preventing the Iran nuclear agreement to end. However, negotiations have stalled and led to an impasse. Iranian-American activists have increasingly criticized the Biden administration and called on the White House to abandon its efforts to resurrect the nuclear agreement. However, Malley said that the Biden administration makes no apologies for trying to do everything it can to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

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US Assesses Explosions Took Place in Attacks on Russian Black Sea Fleet Ships - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - The United States assesses that explosions took place during the recent attack on the Russian Black Sea Fleet in the bay of the port city of Sevastopol, a senior US Defense Department official said on Monday.

"We're tracking the reports and Russian statements regarding an alleged attack against Russian navy vessels in Sevastopol. We do assess that there were explosions there, but I'm not going to have a damage assessment to share nor am I going to have any further information to provide in terms of what may have caused these explosions," the official said during a press briefing.

On Saturday, Russia said it was suspending its participation in the grain exports agreement after Ukraine engaged in a drone attack on the Russian Black Sea fleet vessels in the bay of Sevastopol.

The Defense Department official noted that the United States has seen nothing to indicate that Russia has been firing at grain ships leaving the port of Odessa.

Earlier on Monday, the United Nations, Turkey and Ukraine agreed on the traffic route for 16 vessels in the Black Sea under the grain exports agreement, the Istanbul-based Joint Coordination Center (JCC) said. A total of nine vessels transited the maritime humanitarian corridor under the grain deal on Saturday and the United Nations has informed Russia of the movements, the JCC added.

On July 22, Russia and Ukraine signed a United Nations- and Turkey-brokered initiative to provide a humanitarian maritime corridor for ships with food and fertilizer exports from Ukrainian Black Sea ports. However, Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly said most of the

ships carrying Ukrainian grain did not make it to the world's poorest countries and ended up in Europe. Russia has also maintained that the part of the agreement concerning

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US Considering Ways to Assist Ukraine Repair Critical Infrastructure - Defense Official

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - The United States is considering the various ways to assist Ukraine repair its critical infrastructure amid Russia's special military operation in the country, a senior US Defense Department official said on Monday.

"When it comes to the question of the power grid and repairs for Ukraine's critical infrastructure, I can tell you that that is a topic that we are talking a lot about inside of the US government," the official said during a press briefing. "So, we are considering how we might be able to support the Ukrainians as they try to get their infrastructure back online, but I don't have any specific announcements to say on that."

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Austin, Polish Counterpart Discuss Efforts to Enhance Ukraine Defense - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin discussed with his Polish counterpart Mariusz Blaszczak the efforts by the so-called collective West to enhance the defense of Ukraine, Defense Department spokesperson Gen. Pat Ryder said on Monday. "Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III spoke with Polish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense Mariusz Blaszczak to discuss the current security situation along NATO's Eastern Flank and joint efforts to enhance Ukraine's defense capabilities," Ryder said in a statement.

Warsaw and Washington have numerous programs intended to boost their military cooperation and increase US military exports to Poland, including the Patriot program, the HIMARS program for M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems and the program for the purchase of F35 fighter jets, as well as the recently started program for the purchase of Abrams tanks.

After the start of Russia's military operation in Ukraine in February, the United States decided to deploy an additional 4,700 US troops to Poland on top of the nearly 5,000 military personnel who are routinely deployed in the country.

On February 24, Russia launched a special military operation in Ukraine after the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics requested help to defend them from intensifying attacks by Ukrainian troops. The Russian Defense Ministry said the special military operation is solely targeting Ukraine's military infrastructure.

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Global Affairs Canada Announces New Sanctions on 4 Iranian Individuals, 2 Entities

TORONTO, October 31 (Sputnik) - Canada is imposing new sanctions on four Iranian individuals and two entities for alleged involvement in human rights violations and malign foreign activity, Global Affairs Canada announced on Monday.

"The Honourable Melanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today announced that Canada is imposing additional sanctions under the Special Economic Measures (Iran) Regulations," Global Affairs Canada said in a statement. "Today's sanctions list four individuals and two entities, and includes senior officials and prominent regime supporters."

Canada has reason to believe that the sanctioned individuals and entities engaged in gross and systematic human rights violations either in Iran or in its alleged malign activities abroad, including attacks on other states, the statement said.

Three of the individuals directly participated in the systematic persecution of Iran's Baha'i religious minority, the statement added.

The sanctioned individuals include Tehran police commander Hossein Rahimi and Deputy Attorney General Ahmad Fazelian, according to the statement.

The sanctions come in response to anti-government protests in Iran, sparked by the death of 22-year old Mahsa Amini in police custody. Iranian officials contend Amini died of a heart attack, while demonstrators say she was beaten by the so-called Morality Police.

"The Iranian people, including women and youths, are risking their lives because they have endured for far too long a regime that has repressed and violated their humanity... Canada will continue to support the Iranian people as they courageously demand a better future," Joly said in the statement.

As of today, Canada has sanctioned 93 Iranian individuals and 179 entities, the statement said.

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Russia Surprised by UN Silence Over Kiev Using Grain Deal Corridor to Attack Sevastopol

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) – Russia is surprised that the UN leadership has not even expressed concerns after Kiev carried out an attack on the Sevastopol naval base using a Black Sea grain deal humanitarian corridor, Ambassador to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia said on Monday.

"We are surprised that the UN leadership not only did not condemn but didn't even express concern over the terrorist attacks used under the cover [of] a humanitarian corridor," he told a UN Security Council meeting.

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One-Third of US Voters Agree With Elon Musk's Peace Plan for Ukraine - Poll

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - One-third of eligible voters in the United States say they agree with billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk's peace plan for Ukraine, a new Redfield & Wilton Strategies/Newsweek poll revealed on Monday.

Earlier in October, Musk published a Twitter poll on a hypothetical peace deal between Kiev and Moscow would guarantee Russian control of Crimea but re-do referenda with UN monitoring in other territories that have joined Russia. The results of Twitter poll showed that about 40% of the respondents agreed Musk's proposition.

The poll results released on Monday showed that nearly half (43%) of US voters said they "don't know" if Musk's plan can become the basis for a stable peace settlement that could end the Ukraine conflict.

More than a half (52%) of US voters said they believe Ukraine should focus on the ways to recover the territories lost since the start of Russia's special military operation on February 24 instead of trying to return Crimea, the poll revealed.

In addition, 41% of respondents said they do not know if either Ukraine or Russia is likely to win the conflict at this moment, the poll also showed.

The poll was conducted among 1,500 respondents October 23-24 and has a margin of error of 2.5%.

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Biden Expected to Push for Windfall Tax on Oil Companies - Reports

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden will give a speech later on Monday during which he is expected to bring up the possibility of imposing a so-called windfall tax on oil companies as part of his administration efforts to lower gasoline prices in the United States, the Associated Press reported on Monday.

Biden will respond to reports about major oil companies making record-setting profits as his administration works to lower gas prices for US consumers.

The US president has previously been urging the major oil companies to help lower the price of gasoline in the United States amid the administration's failure to persuade oil producing countries to increase output.

Any additional tax on oil producers in the United States would need to be approved by Congress, the report noted.

The price of gasoline at the pump in the United States reached a record high of \$5 per gallon in mid-June but has come down since to an average price of \$3.76 as of Monday.

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UN Complains of Insufficient Inspection Capacity of Grain Deal Coordination Center

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - The process of getting grain out of Ukraine under the Black Sea Initiative had been getting stuck due to insufficient inspection capacity in the days before Russia suspended its participation, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths said on Monday.

On Saturday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that Moscow was suspending its participation in the grain deal following a drone attack by Ukraine on the Black Sea naval base of Sevastopol. "In the days leading up to Russia's suspension of its participation, the process had been getting bogged down, due to insufficient inspection capacity. Food for millions is stuck in an almighty maritime traffic jam, visible from space. Ships' captains are calling in, desperate to get moved up through the queue, and on with their journeys," Griffiths told a UN Security Council meeting.

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UN Believes Russia's Suspension of Grain Agreement Temporary - Under-Secretary-General

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - The United Nations believes Russia's suspension of the grain exports agreement - formally known as the Black Sea Initiative - is temporary, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths said on Monday.

"We are encouraged by Russia's assurance that it is not pulling out of the Initiative and it is only temporarily suspending activities in the implementation," Griffiths told the UN Security Council. Griffiths said that Russia has deployed a "highly professional team" to implement the grain exports agreement and the United Nations looks forward to welcoming back the team as a full and active participant to fulfil the deal.

"The United Nations is ready to address concerns and listen to suggestions from all sides, as we approach the 120-day extension point on November 19," Griffiths added.

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UN Says Open to Discuss Grain Deal Concerns With All Parties as Russia Halts Participation

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - The United Nations is ready to discuss any concerns regarding the implementation of the Black Sea grain initiative, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Coordinator Martin Griffiths said on Monday, after Russia

announced it is suspending its participation in the deal following an attack by Ukraine on its Black Sea naval base of Sevastopol.

"We stand ready to discuss any concerns with the Initiative and its implementation with all parties. And we continue to rely on the key contribution of Türkiye as a mediator, facilitator and a host," Griffiths told a UN Security Council meeting.

"Acting as a Secretariat, the UN is ready to investigate, along with the Member States party to the Initiative, any and all evidence presented, if requested," he said.

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ICAO Report on Ryanair Plane Grounding Biased in Favor of West - Russian Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) report regarding the grounding of the Ryanair aircraft on May 23, 2021, in Belarus is biased against countries with which the so-called collective West wants to settle scores, Russian Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanskiy said on Monday.

"We have every reason to believe that the process of the so-called fact finding as regards the event in actual fact was nothing other than the widely practiced settling of scores by Western countries with the countries they dislike," Polyanskiy told the UN Security Council.

The idea was to make sure that the ICAO report was political in nature and this could be used to justify the unlawful restrictions against Belarus, Polyanskiy added.

On May 23, 2021, the Belarus authorities diverted the Ryanair airplane to Minsk from its original route from Athens to Vilnius due to a bomb threat that turned out to be false. The authorities arrested Belarusian opposition activist Roman Pratasevich and his girlfriend when the airplane landed in Minsk.

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Top US Court Rejects Turkey's Bid to Avoid Suits Over Assault of Protesters in Washington

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - The US Supreme Court has rejected Turkey's attempt to avoid two lawsuits against its security forces who assaulted protesters outside the Turkish ambassador's residence in 2017 in Washington, the court's order list showed on Monday.

In May 2017, Recep Tayyip Erdogan's bodyguards attacked a group of Kurdish protesters outside the ambassador's residence during the Turkish president's visit to Washington. The incident left 11 people injured, nine of whom were hospitalized.

In August 2017, the US government brought charges against 19 people, including 15 officers from the Turkish security services, in connection with the attacks.

In its appeal against lower court decisions, filed in January 2022, Turkey stated that Erdogan's bodyguards should not be prosecuted because they were acting in accordance with the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act while protecting diplomatic premises and persons.

"The petitions for writs of certiorari are denied," the order said.

In 2018, two US citizens were sentenced to one year in prison each for helping Erdogan's bodyguards violently beat Kurdish protesters during the rally in Washington.

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Austin to Visit N. Carolina to Welcome US Troops Returning From Europe - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin will visit the military base Fort Bragg in the US state of North Carolina to meet with troops from the 18th Airborne Corps returning back from their deployment in Europe, the Defense Department said on Monday.

"The Secretary will welcome the 18th Airborne Corps back from their deployment to Europe," the statement read.

Austin will also receive unit briefings, conduct troop engagements and host a spouse roundtable during the trip, the statement added.

The Biden administration bolstered its force posture in Europe after Russia launched a special military operation in Ukraine. President Joe Biden has vowed to keep US forces not involved in Ukraine.

Austin said last week that the United States maintains the ability to rapidly deploy military capabilities in Europe.

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Biden to Comment on Record Oil Companies Profits Amid High Gasoline Prices - White House

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden will address reports of American oil companies making record profits in recent days while gasoline prices remain high across the country, the White House said on Monday.

"In the afternoon [4:30 p.m. (20:30 GMT)], the President will respond to reports over recent days of major oil companies making record-setting profits even as they refuse to help lower prices at the pump for the American people," the White House said in a daily guidance.

Biden has repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the the oil companies' significant profits amid the remaining high prices for gasoline, which is of particular importance for the administration ahead of the midterm elections in November.

The price of gasoline at the pump in the United States reached a record high of \$5 per gallon in mid-June but has come down since to an average price of \$3.76 as of Monday.

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Russia Has Doubts About Impartiality of ICAO After Ryanair Incident Probe - Mission to UN UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - Russia has big doubts about the impartiality of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) after it failed to conduct an objective investigation into the emergency landing of a Ryanair plane in Belarus last year, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanskiy said on Monday. "We have great doubts about the impartiality of the ICAO because there was no objective and open investigation of the Ryanair situation," Polyanskiy told a UN Security Council meeting. On May 23, a Ryanair plane traveling from Greece to Lithuania made an emergency landing in Minsk over a bomb threat that turned out to have been fake. Two passengers aboard the aircraft, Roman Protasevich, a co founder of a Telegram channel that Minsk has designated as extremist, and his girlfriend, Sofia Sapega, were detained during the stopover at the airport. Protasevich has since been released. Sapega was sentenced in Belarus to six years in prison on charges of releasing the private data of Belarusian security officers into the public domain. In June 2022, she asked for pardon. In July 2022, ICAO concluded in its latest updates to the report on the Ryanair flight incident that the bomb threat against the aircraft was "deliberately false" and was communicated to the crew upon instructions of senior Belarus officials.

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US Senator Urges Congressional Probe Into Saudi Investors' Twitter Stakes

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - US Senator Chris Murphy on Monday urged a congressional panel to launch an investigation into investments in Twitter by Saudi Arabia's Kingdom Holding Company after billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk recently acquired the social media company. "Today, I am requesting the Committee on Foreign Investment - which reviews acquisitions of US businesses by foreign buyers - to conduct an investigation into the national security implications of Saudi Arabia's purchase of Twitter," Murphy said. Kingdom Holding Company and Prince Alwaleed bin Talal will retain ownership of approximately \$1.89 billion in Twitter shares following Musk's acquisition of the company, making them the platform's second largest investors, bin Talal said on Friday. Murphy said the United States should be concerned about Saudi investments in Twitter due to their interest in repressing political speech and influencing US politics. Foreign ownership of major social media platforms such as Twitter and TikTok, whose parent company is based in China, represents a "dangerous trend" that the United States does not have to accept, Murphy added.

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Man Charged With Murder in Connection With 2017 Killing of Two Indiana Teens - Police
WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - An arrest has been made in connection with the 2017 double murder of two teenage girls in Delphi, Indiana, State Police Superintendent Douglas Carter said on Monday.

"The arrest of Richard M. Allen of Delphi on two counts of murder is sure a major step in leading to the conclusion of this long-term and complex investigation," Carter said in a press conference.

Allen was charged in connection with the deaths of 13-year old Abigail Williams and 14-year old Liberty German, whose bodies were discovered near a hiking trail in Indiana. The case garnered particular attention due to a recording recovered from German's smartphone, which captured both the image and voice of the suspected killer.

Carter declined to provide details about the case in order to preserve the integrity of the investigation. Police will continue investigating to make sure anyone who may have participated in the murders is held accountable, Carter said.

The probable cause affidavit against Allen will remain under seal at this time, Carter added.

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US Department of Energy 'Very Concerned' About Threats to European Energy Infrastructure

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) – The US Department of Energy said Monday it is "very concerned" about threats to critical energy infrastructure in Europe following the suspicious damage to the Nord Stream pipeline.

"I don't have information of specific threats, but what I would say is we are very concerned about threats to infrastructure," Brad Crabtree, assistant secretary for the Department of Energy's Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management, said.

Crabtree said all countries needed to be "very vigilant in making extra efforts to monitor the security" of their energy infrastructure, adding that the US was doing so itself while also supporting the efforts of its allies.

He noted that he had just visited Norway, which he characterized as playing a "vital role" in supplying natural gas to Europe amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Its government was "very, very concerned" about threats to the country's oil and gas production.

On September 26, a rapid gas pressure drop and fuel leakage were detected along the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines, the main routes to supply Russian gas to Europe. Initial investigations by Swedish and Danish authorities pointed toward likely sabotage, leading to the Russian Prosecutor General's Office to investigate the incident as an act of international terrorism.

The Nord Stream 1 pipeline has not transported any gas since August when Russia shut it down, citing maintenance issues. Nord Stream 2 has never been put into operation, as Germany halted the certification process last year.

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UN Says 12 Vessels Transiting Grain Deal Corridor En Route to Istanbul, 2 to Ukraine Ports

UNITED NATIONS, October 31 (Sputnik) - No incidents have been recorded on Monday in the Black Sea corridor created under the grain deal, with 12 loaded vessels currently heading en route to Istanbul and two inbound vessels sailing toward Ukrainian ports, the chief of the media and communications unit in the Office of the UN Coordinator for the Black Sea Initiative told Sputnik.

"We can only speak about the maritime corridor (not the whole of the Black Sea). In the maritime humanitarian corridor, there have been no incidents recorded today. 12 loaded vessels are transiting the corridor as we speak with destination Istanbul where they will undergo inspection. Two inbound vessels have also transited the corridor with destination Ukrainian ports," Ismini Palla said.

On Saturday, the Russian Defense Ministry said that Moscow was suspending its participation in the grain deal following attacks by Ukraine on vessels of the Russian Black Sea fleet in Sevastopol, Crimea.

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Biden Keeps Military Option on Table to Prevent Iran From Getting Nuclear Arms - Envoy

WASHINGTON, October 31 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden keeps a military option on the table to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, Robert Malley, US special envoy for Iran, said on Monday.

"As the President has said, if all other means fail, as a last resort, he would keep the military option, very clearly on the table, if that's what it would take to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons," Malley said at a Carnegie Endowment event.

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

In 2018, then-President of the US Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA and reimposed sanctions on Iran, to which the latter responded with a gradual abandoning of its own

commitments under the deal. Several packages of US sanctions against Iran have since been imposed.

Vienna has hosted several rounds of talks since April 2021, aimed at preventing the Iran nuclear deal from failing altogether. However, the negotiations have stalled.