

**6/9/23 Friday**

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Listen: Archeologists Recreate 12,000-Year-Old Bird-Bone Flute Found in Israel

Archeologists have unearthed what they believe to be the oldest wind instruments ever found in the Middle East: a collection of tiny flutes made from the bones of birds.

The find was made in northern Israel by a joint French-Israeli team of archaeologists, who summarized their work in an article [published on Friday](#) in the peer-reviewed Nature Scientific Report.

The flutes date to around 10,000 BCE, a time when humans were beginning to make the transition from roaming to a sedentary lifestyle based on agriculture as the Ice Age drew to a close and the global climate warmed.

The site, about 16 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, is called Eynan, and represents a window into the Natufian culture of this transitional time, when the first cities were being founded. It was first excavated in 1955.

The settlement was in an ideal location near Lake Hula, a marshy body of water that the Israelis drained in the 1950s to combat mosquitoes and create more farmland. Before it was drained, Lake Hula attracted huge quantities of birds, including waterfowl and migratory birds, which continue to frequent the area's nature reserve.

The humans who settled in Eynan consumed the birds in large quantities, and piles of bird bones have been found across the area. Some of the bird bones, which are naturally hollow, were found to have holes carved in them, turning them into tiny flutes.

Dr. Laurent Davin, a post-doctoral fellow at Hebrew University, was examining some of the bones recovered from the site when he noticed tiny holes drilled at regular intervals along a few of the bones. At first, experts had dismissed the holes as regular wear and tear on the delicate bird bones. But Davin examined the bones more closely and noticed that the holes were at very even intervals, and clearly created by humans.

"One of the flutes was discovered complete, and so far as is known it is the only one in the world in this state of preservation," Davin said in a release that accompanied the article's publication.

Dr. Hamoudi Khalaily, a senior researcher with the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) who has spent 10 years excavating at the Eynan site, told Israeli media he had helped create a replica of the flute, allowing them to play it and hear the sounds produced by those humans 12,000 years ago.

"There were a lot of doubts that this was even possible [to recreate], but the replica was created exactly [in the same way] as the original and it allowed us to hear what people would have heard 12,000 years ago," Khalaily said.

"When we first heard it, it gave us this feeling like, we are really doing something for history," Khalaily said.

Professor Rivka Rabinovich, the scientific director of archeozoological collections at the National Natural History Collections at Hebrew University, said it could have been used for communication, hunting, or music, but there was no way to be sure. Still, the discovery opens up new questions about the lives of humans during the transition from hunter-gatherers to settled farmers.

"It's very interesting because this is just at the starting point of people becoming more sedentary," Rabinovich explained. "It's a very exciting period at which to understand the day-to-day life and also larger questions beyond day-to-day life, and why they did certain things."

The flutes are believed to be the oldest instruments found in the Middle East, but they're not the oldest ever found on Earth. In 2008, archeologists in southern Germany found flutes made from vulture bones and mammoth ivory that were roughly 40,000 years old. The flutes are so old they might have been made by Neanderthals, an extinct subspecies of mankind that lived alongside humans at the time.

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#### UK's Boris Johnson Steps Down as MP Over Partygate Scandal

Johnson's resignation came after he received a copy of a report detailing whether he misled Parliament about a series of social events attended by high-ranking UK government officials, including himself, during COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns.

Former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Friday he was stepping down from his position as the representative of Uxbridge and South Ruislip in the British House of Commons with immediate effect.

"I am now being forced out of Parliament by a tiny handful of people, with no evidence to back up their assertions, and without the approval even of Conservative party members let alone the wider electorate," Johnson said in his statement. "I believe that a dangerous and unsettling precedent is being set."

"I am very sorry to leave my wonderful constituency. It has been a huge honour to serve them, both as Mayor and MP," he added. "It is very sad to be leaving Parliament - at least for now - but above all I am bewildered and appalled that I can be forced out, anti-democratically, by a committee chaired and managed, by Harriet Harman, with such egregious bias."

The probe, opened by Parliament's Privileges Committee, is [focused on whether](#) Johnson purposefully misled the legislature over a series of parties thrown in 2020 and 2021 that the then-prime minister attended, in defiance of COVID-19 lockdown laws implemented by his government. [Johnson admitted](#) in March to having misled Parliament, but said he did so "in good faith."

On Thursday, the committee sent Johnson a "warning letter" that includes its findings in the matter, giving him two weeks to respond. Among the penalties he could suffer would be a 10-day suspension from the Commons, triggering a special election in Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency.

"Their purpose from the beginning has been to find me guilty, regardless of the facts. This is the very definition of a kangaroo court," Johnson said on Friday.

Johnson has represented the western London constituency since 2015, winning the election while he was still Mayor of London. He served as the capital's mayor from 2008 until 2016, and before that represented Henley in Oxfordshire in the House of Commons from 2001 until 2008. In July 2019, he secured his position as leader of the Conservative Party and as prime minister, which he held until September 2022, when his government collapsed under the weight of a scandal over his appointment of Chris Pincher as deputy chief whip.

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### Binance Exchange Halts US Dollar Use as Banks Plan Blocking in Wake of SEC Lawsuit

The cryptocurrency exchange is indefinitely pausing use of the US dollar on its platforms, freezing some \$2.2 billion in assets.

Binance.US told its US users late on Thursday that its payment and banking partners had signaled their intent to halt their cooperation with Binance as a consequence of the case brought by the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) [launched earlier this week](#).

"Our priority is, and has always been, our customers. We are taking these proactive steps as we - for a time - transition to a crypto-only exchange," [Binance.US said in a statement](#) posted on Twitter. "While we remain open to a productive compromise that enables a thriving digital asset marketplace in America, Binance.US will continue to vigorously defend ourselves, our customers, and industry against the meritless attacks of the SEC."

The lawsuit is part of a larger crackdown on cryptocurrency exchanges that has also targeted Binance, the China-based crypto exchange that is the world's largest, and which claims its US is separate from Binance.US. The SEC also brought a civil suit this week against Coinbase, the only coin trader listed on the US stock exchanges.

Binance CEO Changpeng Zhao [has been charged](#) with civil fraud and the company faces around a dozen securities charges for allegedly transferring billions of dollars in customer money to other companies owned by Zhao.

Binance also has a history of having done business with FTX Trading, the crypto exchange that [collapsed earlier this year](#) after founder and owner Sam Bankman-Fried was accused and later charged with criminal fraud, conspiracy, and campaign finance law violations stemming from similar alleged activity as that of which Zhao is accused.

Previously in March, the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) brought its suit against Binance as well, accusing the company of offering crypto derivatives, such as futures or options contracts, with leverage for assets such as cryptocurrencies bitcoin, ether, and litecoin, to people in the US without having registered as a futures commodity merchant.

At the time, Zhao said the CFTC complaint "appears to contain an incomplete recitation of facts, and we do not agree with the characterization of many of the issues alleged."

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Trump's Second Indictment Shows Democrats Uninterested in 'Fair' 2024 Election

The federal indictment against former US President Donald Trump was unsealed earlier Friday and revealed he was being charged with 37 felony counts, 31 of which were for violating the Espionage Act through his "willful retention" of classified records. The remaining offenses were for false statements and obstruction of justice.

The latest indictment filed against former US President Donald Trump highlights how much Democrats are uninterested in holding a "fair election" ahead of the 2024 presidential cycle, Ethan Ralph, a conservative political commentator and host of the Killstream, told Sputnik. Ralph noted that "Democrats don't seem to be interested in a fair election."

"The increase in lawsuits, indictments, and other legal assaults on Trump is directly related to the viability of his 2024 candidacy," the commentator said. "The Democrats themselves do not seem to think that they can beat Trump in a fair fight. Just look at their actions."

The latest indictment filed against Trump centers around classified documents retrieved by FBI agents during a raid on his Mar-a-Lago residence. Although Trump has stated records were unclassified prior to him leaving office, his claims have not proven concrete as he did not follow government protocol.

Prior to this week's indictment, Trump was previously hit with a [34-count indictment](#) in New York for business fraud in April, and was later [found liable](#) for sexual abuse and defamation in early May in relation to a civil case filed by columnist E. Jean Carroll.

Asked whether the indictment had the potential of affecting the former president's chances at returning to the Oval Office, Ralph admitted it was not likely Trump would wind up behind bars before the election kicked off.

"The latest federal indictment could hurt him with independents and other potential voters, but the polarization of the electorate and hardened views on Trump himself mean that it's unlikely to hurt him very much," he pointed out.

Not long after records were retrieved from Mar-a-Lago, classified documents began to turn up in the possession former US Vice President Mike Pence and US President Joe Biden.

In Biden's case, several documents had been found at his Delaware home and office, as well as the Penn Biden Center in Washington, DC. However, unlike steps taken at Trump's Florida residence, both the Biden and Pence cases did not involve a full blown raid and they haven't received the same treatment in the media.

Ralph pointed out that "it's particularly egregious" in how American media treated the cases - specifically that involving Biden. He noting that if outlets are going to cover the topic, it's best to "have an equal playing field for Trump and non-Trump alike."

"Last night on the cable news, you heard them making excuses for Biden's behavior. But the fact remains; he mishandled classified material," he pointed out. "It's my opinion that this is a pretty common thing that goes on. It seems to cross both parties. It would be better not to politicize it to this degree."

In the hours since Trump first revealed via a Truth Social post that he had been indicted, multiple political figures have come forward to condemn what they see as the weaponization of the US justice system against the former commander-in-chief.

Among the critics are [Florida Governor Ron DeSantis](#) and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, who [said](#) late Thursday that it was "unconscionable" that Biden indicted "the leading candidate opposing him" in the 2024 election.

While the Biden White House has claimed it only found out about the indictment through the media, Ralph stated that the weaponization of federal law enforcement by Democrats is unlikely to ease up.

"I think as we move forward, the real danger is not just political retribution that the parties take on each other, but the retribution they eventually try to take on the other side's voters," Ralph said. "If empowered by a reelection and perhaps gains elsewhere, there's a likelihood they take things further."

"The useless US media certainly won't do anything other than cheerlead the moves," he concluded, pointing out that the "trend is towards repression by the West."

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'I'll Never Leave': Trump Claims He Won't Drop 2024 Bid if Convicted Over Classified Docs

A 37-count indictment unsealed on Friday revealed prosecutors were set on charging former US President Donald Trump over his "willful" retention of classified documents at his Florida residence, months after a probe was launched. The development marks the second indictment naming the president since the start of the year.

Former US President Donald Trump revealed over the weekend that he has no intention of leaving the 2024 campaign trail, even if he winds up convicted over the classified records he stored at his Mar-a-Lago Florida home.

Trump admitted to [US media](#) on Saturday that if he was ever going to drop out of the political sphere, he would have done so before the start of the 2016 election cycle.

"I'll never leave," Trump said. "Look, if I would have left I would have left prior to the original race in 2016. That was a rough one. In theory that was not doable."

The former commander-in-chief followed up his remarks by reiterating past criticisms of special counsel Jack Smith, who is overseeing the Mar-a-Lago case, and noting that he does not believe any of the 37 charges being leveled at him will stick.

Even if prosecutors do manage to successfully convict the former president, Trump would still be legally cleared to participate in the 2024 presidential cycle.

At present, he meets the three base requirements of becoming a presidential contender and would have only been legally barred from the race if the US Senate had convicted him during one of his two impeachment proceedings. However, Trump was acquitted on both occasions. While Trump also pointed out he has no present desire to take a plea deal, he also informed reporters that he didn't see him pardoning himself if he successfully clinches the Oval Office in the upcoming US election.

"I didn't do anything wrong," Trump said. "I don't care that my poll numbers went up by a lot. I don't want to be indicted. I've never been indicted. I went through my whole life, now I get indicted every two months. It's been political."

In addition to the Friday-released indictment against Trump, the former president was previously hit with a 34-count indictment over business fraud in April. However, that's not the end of Trump's troubles as he is also facing down a separate investigation in Georgia, where investigators are looking into his alleged efforts to overturn the 2020 election results. In regards to the Mar-a-Lago indictment, Trump is scheduled to appear in court for the case on Tuesday in Miami, Florida.

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Several British Royal Guards Collapse During Parade Rehearsals as Temps Hit Summer Highs

As the official start of summer nears, meteorologists have forecasted that the UK has about a 45% chance in experiencing a repeat 2022 heat wave, which caused wildfires, shuttered schools and saw temperatures exceed 40 degrees Celsius.

At least three members of the King's Guard collapsed on Saturday as service members held parade rehearsals during scorching summer heat in London.

Royal guard members had been participating in a rehearsal of the Colonel's Review ahead of the Trooping the Colour scheduled to take place during King Charles' birthday parade in the coming week.

Footage that has since surfaced showed several members of the guard fainting and being carried away during the day's dress rehearsal.

While some members of the guard had to be taken away on a stretcher, others were walked off the parade grounds.

Local media reported that temperatures in the capital city ranged as high as 31 degrees Celsius (88 degrees Fahrenheit), with forecasters warning that the nation may experience sweat-inducing temps similar to heat waves recorded in 2022.

Speaking to the ceremony, a member of the Welsh Guards [told](#) UK media that the proceedings are "a lot harder than it looks on the TV," adding that taking part in the parade is "like being stood in a sauna with a 200kg dumbbell in your left hand."

"Once you have got your tunic and bearskin on and carrying your rifle in heat it is incredibly uncomfortable," he noted.

The Saturday incidents weren't the first time that guards were seen taking a fall in public; in fact, in September 2022, a royal guard collapsed by Queen Elizabeth's coffin during funeral services.

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Manchester City Win First Champions League Title After Besting Inter Milan

Man City's weekend win saw the team take a rare claim to the European treble after having previously won England's Premier League and FA Cup. The move marked the 10th time in history that the treble has been claimed, and the second-ever claimed by an English team. Manchester City won its first Champions League trophy on Saturday after beating out Inter Milan in a 1-0 match.

The single goal was made by midfield guard Rodri in the game's 68th minute after he managed to slip past a screen of defenders. The 1-0 score remained in place for the duration of the match, even after a stunning save by City's goalie Ederson in the 88th minute.

Following the match, Rodri told press the match's outcome was "a dream come true."

"I've been here just four years but we deserve it. We were so close these last years but when you go to semi-finals, finals, finally God gives you this present," Rodri said. "It's a dream for all of us."

The Spanish player went on to admit that he felt as though he was "not good in the first half," but that he ultimately delivered after pulling through mentally. "The good thing is that we want more. This project is to want more, more ambition," he added.

Teammate Jack Grealish, who was picked up by Man City in 2021 after activating a £100 million release clause from fellow club Aston Villa, praised his colleagues and specifically called out team manager Pep Guardiola as a "genius."

"I want to say thank you (to him). You've made this happen for me. You've put so much faith in me, buying me for a lot of money," Grealish told media of Pep. "Even last year when I was playing crap he stayed there with me and this year he's given me that platform to perform, so I just want to say thank you to him."

Not only does the win see Manchester clinch the highly-coveted treble after earlier winning the Premier League and FA Cup, it also marked the first instance a team manager claimed the achievement twice.

Man City's Pep previously won the treble with FC Barcelona in 2009; in fact, Saturday's win also recorded his third time taking the Champions League title.

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The Taliban's Ban Works: Opium Production Collapses in Afghanistan

Opium production fell dramatically in Afghanistan under Taliban\* rule in 2001 after a ban was instituted in 2000. After the US-led invasion of the country at the end of 2001, poppy production returned to its historic levels and the country remained the world's largest supplier of opium until this year.

Poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has decreased dramatically after a ban on poppy production was instituted in April 2022, [new findings](#) by the research group Alcis have revealed.

The production of poppy, the plant opium is harvested from and which serves as a precursor to other opiates like heroin, saw a steep decline in the Helmand province, previously the largest producer in Afghanistan from more than 120,000 hectares (nearly 300,000 acres) in 2022 to less than 1,000 hectares in 2023.

Nationwide, Alcis, which cited high-resolution satellite imagery and other research, says poppy production has fallen by 99%.

The reduction in Helmand alone far exceeds any attempt to curb opium production by the former Afghan Republic or occupying US forces, even when considering the entire country. The majority of the land previously dedicated to poppy production is now focused on growing wheat. Opium prices have increased accordingly. By November 2022, opium in Afghanistan increased to \$360 per kilogram in the south and southwest of the country and \$475 per kilogram in the eastern part of the country. That is a 500% to 691% increase from its \$60 price in 2020 before the Taliban returned to power.

That increase is similar to the price increase following the 2000/01 ban, which saw opium prices increase from \$30 in 2000 to a record high of \$700 in 2001. By 2008, it had decreased to \$92. Taliban leader Mullah Haibatullah imposed a ban on drugs in April 2022, an announcement that was met with much skepticism by the West and media outlets. Those skeptics received a significant boost when the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) issued its [annual Afghanistan Poppy Production Report](#) that year, stating that production had increased 32%.

2021 was a down year for poppy production in Afghanistan, seemingly due to weather, but the roughly 10% drop from 2020 could only partially explain the 2022 increase. This led many to doubt that Haibatullah was serious about enforcing the ban.

That skepticism was increased when the Taliban released videos showing tractors destroying small, newly planted poppy fields, while chest-high nearly harvestable poppies remained untouched in the background.

But the UNODC report and skeptics did not take into account the cultivation cycle of poppy production. The crops harvested in the first half of 2022 were planted 12 months before the UNODC report and five months before the drug ban.

The Taliban ultimately decided against destroying those crops as it would have left farmers, who had invested significant effort and money into cultivating them, destitute without it, which may have caused mass unrest in the country.

Instead, they focused on the second and third plantings of that year, which tend to have much smaller harvests and would affect the bottom line of farmers far less. But the action largely served as a sign to farmers that the Taliban would destroy more crops the next season.

The Taliban also used the early stages of the ban to focus on the destruction of a growing methamphetamine market, with great success. There was also the issue of getting other factions of the government on board and rural farmers. Afghanistan is a very rural country and whatever government controls it, including the Taliban, has limited reach in many areas.

That effort may have only been partially accomplished by Haibatullah, because opium production has continued and even increased in some areas, like Badakhshan, reflecting what happened after the 2000/01 ban. Then, as now, the increase in Badakhshan is not nearly enough to make up the difference.

Despite the dramatic decrease in production, Alcis says it does not seem that Europe and other countries are experiencing an opiate shortage, judging by the amount seized by Afghanistan's neighbors. This suggests poppy farmers have significant stockpiles, and since the Taliban has

not yet banned the trade of already harvested poppy, it's likely some farmers are making a significant windfall from the increased prices.

During the 2000/01 ban, it took 18 months for the UK to see a significant decrease in heroin purity. Some have speculated that the ban would result in an increase in synthetic opiates, like fentanyl, however, that has not manifested.

"It is difficult to determine whether the same kind of time lag would apply this time round," the report states. "After all, the 2000/01 ban was imposed for only one season and collapsed in the wake of 9/11."

The report adds that if the Taliban extends the ban another season, or if they ban the sale of harvested poppy, an opiate shortage may occur.

The ban may also have a negative economic effect on the Afghan population. While large landowners, who were able to save their stockpiles until prices rose and likely saw a benefit because of that, the farm helpers, who are hired to weed and harvest the crop and are typically paid with part of the harvest, likely would have to sell it immediately. Many poor Afghans make a third or more of their income sharecropping on opium farms.

Smaller farms, particularly in the northern provinces are also likely to suffer since it is unlikely they may grow enough wheat to feed their families, or enough cash crops like cotton and melons, to make up for the lost income.

Exacerbating the issue is undoubtedly the economic crisis that has hit the country, brought on at least in part by UN sanctions and the US freezing of \$7 billion of Afghanistan's assets, though half of that has been put into a fund by the US and Swiss governments to be selectively doled out.

Alcis notes this may lead to an increase in Afghan migration, which remains relatively cheap. It costs roughly \$2,000 to be ferried by land to Turkey, and for a little more they can get further, including Europe. "Indeed, were a protracted ban in place, European nations might face a choice between Afghan drugs or Afghan migrants," the study concludes.

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What Are the Charges Filed Against Trump?

Trump's second indictment appears more serious than the first, but his defenders say it's just further proof the political establishment has no other way to keep him out of the Oval Office. Former US President Donald J. Trump is facing up to 20 years in prison after US prosecutors charged the former commander-in-chief with 37 counts in relation to allegations that he handled classified documents inappropriately.

The indictment makes Trump the first former president in US history to face criminal charges. Trump faces 37 charges including seven felony counts, five of which relate to allegations that he mishandled classified information and supposedly showed classified documents to people without the necessary security clearance.

The charges include 31 counts of willful retention of national defense information, as well as a single count each of conspiracy to obstruct justice, withholding a document or record, corruptly

concealing a document or record, concealing a document in a federal investigation, scheme to conceal, and false statements and representations.

Also included in the indictment was Trump aide Walt Nauta. Both men are expected to appear at a federal courthouse in Miami, Florida, at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, a spokesperson for special counsel Jack Smith said.

Charges leveled against the pair include:

**Willful Retention of National Defense Information**

Charges 1 through 31 refer to allegations Trump intentionally retained national defense documents and failed to hand them over to investigators.

Prosecutors insist the documents included military information and contained details of the US nuclear arsenal as well as White House intelligence briefings — all of which were supposedly labeled either “secret” or “top secret.”

The charges carry a maximum prison sentence of 10 years and a fine of \$250,000 each.

**Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice**

The 32nd charge was filed against both Trump and Nauta.

Prosecutors claim Trump tried to hold onto classified documents and keep the federal grand jury from finding out.

The charge comes with a maximum prison sentence of 20 years and a possible \$250,000 fine.

**Withholding a Document or Record Related to National Defense**

The 33rd charge pertains to the pair of Trump and Nauta, and relates to allegations they withheld information related to national defense.

It carries a maximum prison sentence of 20 years and could mean a \$250,000 fine.

**Corruptly Concealing a Document or Record Related to National Defense**

The 34th charge relates to claims that Trump and Nauta corruptly concealed a document or record related to national defense.

The charge stipulates a maximum prison sentence of 20 years and a fine of up to \$250,000.

**Concealing a Document in a Federal Investigation**

The 35th charge is also directed at both Trump and Nauta, and relates to claims they concealed a document in a federal investigation.

It carries a maximum prison sentence of 20 years and a fine of \$250,000.

**Scheming to Conceal Relevant Information or Evidence from Law Enforcement**

The 36th charge involves prosecutors’ claims that Trump and Nauta plotted to conceal relevant information or evidence from law enforcement.

The charge could mean a five-year prison sentence and \$250,000 in fines.

**Making False Statement or Representations to Law Enforcement**

The final charge relates to claims that Trump made false statements or representations to law enforcement.

If convicted, he could be hit with a maximum prison sentence of five years and a \$250,000 fine.

Despite numerous reports of former presidents keeping similar documents after their time in office, prosecutors now insist Trump jeopardized America’s national security by holding onto classified records after exiting the Oval Office in 2020.

In a post on Truth Social on Friday, Trump maintained there’s no legal prohibition against former presidents holding onto “personal records” allegedly stored at his Florida residence Mar-a-Lago. “There’s nothing wrong with that,” he said.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Glenn Greenwald said the case shows America's ruling class is "petrified that Trump will run and win again."

The most recent indictment against the former president "is another case of the political establishment very scared that Donald Trump is going to run again in 2024 and win — all the polls right now show that he would — and because they fear his return to the White House and believe they may not have a chance to defeat him politically," Greenwald said in his most recent [broadcast](#) on Rumble, adding: "they thought they did in 2016 and he won."

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### US Envoy Pours Cold Water on Ukraine's NATO Entry Prospects

Once again, Ukraine's chances of joining NATO have been rejected by the very forces which demand they join the aggressive military alliance.

US Ambassador to NATO Julianne Smith said Ukraine has little chance of entering the military alliance, further solidifying suspicions that the military bloc has no intention of allowing the Kiev regime to drag the West into a hot war with Russia.

Smith claimed the US would provide Kiev with other "deliverables," but didn't specify what they might consist of.

In an interview with US media published on Friday, Smith said: "I think the allies now are in agreement that a proper invitation is unlikely while they're engaged in a full-scale war."

But Smith insisted NATO has an "array of options" short of full Ukrainian NATO membership that could be taken under consideration.

The comments come just days after former NATO Secretary General Anders Rasmussen claimed that NATO's Baltic states could send their troops to Ukraine of their own volition even without the military bloc's accompaniment.

"There is a clear possibility that some countries might take action individually" absent a full NATO commitment to war with Russia, Rasmussen [claimed](#).

Estonian Foreign Minister Kaja Kallas has [flatly denied](#) those suggestions, saying Thursday that "not a single country has declared its desire to intervene in this war, to send its military to it, and I have not heard of such plans."

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### CIA Privately Attributed Nord Stream Attack to Ukraine While US Blamed Russia - Report

Whether their allegation is true or not, the effort by the CIA to convince European intelligence that a rogue faction of Ukrainians loyal to Gen. Zaluzhny blew up the Nord Stream pipelines suggests US officials who continued to blame Russia for the attack were talking out of both sides of their mouth.

Western media is reporting that the CIA told its Belgian counterparts that Ukrainian forces were responsible for the destruction of the Nord Stream gas pipelines last September.

“Shortly after the attack, our military intelligence agency ADIV received strictly confidential information that pointed to Ukraine's likely role in sabotage,” a mainstream Belgian newspaper [wrote](#) Saturday.

The publication said it “learned from well-informed sources that our military intelligence service then 'got a visit' from the American intelligence service CIA.”

The story “illustrates how Western intelligence agencies, including the Belgian ones, have been aware for months that Ukraine is believed to have a hand in one of the most brutal and dangerous attacks on European energy infrastructure itself,” the outlet wrote.

The newspaper wrote that the CIA was apparently unwilling to reveal where it obtained the information in question, citing the desire to protect their sources.

The suggestion of Kiev's involvement “could have put the alliance with Ukraine under” stress, according to the publication, which noted that Germany was “dependent on Russian natural gas” before Moscow's special military operation “and both the French Engie, the Dutch Gasunie and the German Wintershall together with the Russian Gazprom invested in Nord Stream 1.” In public, the US continued to blame Moscow for the destruction of the Russo-German pipelines well after the CIA reportedly advised its colleagues at European intelligence agencies that Ukraine was actually responsible.

US media reported this week that the US received detailed information about supposed Ukrainian plans to destroy the Nord Stream pipelines last June, several months before the sabotage was carried out.

According to this theory, Ukrainian forces involved “received orders from Valery Zaluzhny, the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces,” a theory which conveniently leaves the Ukrainian president “ignorant and able to continue to deny his involvement,” the Belgian publication explained.

In February, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh wrote that the US used Navy divers to deploy C4 explosive charges on the exterior of the Nord Stream pipelines which were subsequently detonated via sonar.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack on Nord Stream, Russian President Vladimir Putin condemned the “unprecedented sabotage” as an act of “international terrorism.”

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Biggest ‘Supervolcano’ in Europe Inching Toward Explosion, Scientists Say

A groundbreaking new study by Italian researchers suggests the explosion of a massive volcano in Italy is creeping closer.

A long-dormant “supervolcano” in Italy is approaching its first eruption since 1538, according to a new study which warns that such an event could have catastrophic consequences.

The weakening of the crust around Italy's Campi Flegrei volcano is “making an eruption more likely,” researchers indicate.

The volcano has been restless for over 70 years, with spikes of unrest lasting up to two years occurring in the 1950s, 1970s and 1980s. Over the last 10 years another phase of unrest has been unfolding, although it's reportedly not been as noticeable as previous outbursts.

"Our new study confirms that Campi Flegrei is moving closer to rupture," [said](#) the study's lead author, professor Christopher Kilburn at the University College London. "However, this does not mean an eruption is guaranteed."

"The rupture may open a crack through the crust, but the magma still needs to be pushing up at the right location for an eruption to occur," Kilburn continued.

The findings were confirmed by the Vesuvius Observatory's Dr. Nicola Alessandro Pino, who reportedly said the results "show that parts of the volcano are becoming weaker."

"This means that it might break even though the stresses pulling it apart are smaller than they were during the last crisis 40 years ago," Pino said.

Around half a million Italians currently live atop the depression which constitutes the volcano's top, and 1.5 million more reportedly live near the potential blast radius.

Kilburn says the study, which was described as "the first of its kind to forecast rupture at an active volcano," marks a "step change in our goal to improve forecasts of eruptions worldwide."

"This is the first time we have applied our model, which is based on the physics of how rocks break, in real-time to any volcano," Kilburn explained.

"Our first use of the model was in 2017 and since then Campi Flegrei has behaved as we predicted, with an increasing number of small earthquakes indicating pressure from below," the scientist noted.

According to Kilburn, scientists "will now have to adjust our procedures for estimating the chances of new routes being opened for magma or gas to reach the surface."

The findings were [published](#) Thursday in the journal Communications Earth & Environment.

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Report: As Tesla Ownership Rates Rose, So Did Self-Driving Mode Crashes

Describing wrecks by Tesla's self-driving vehicles in excruciating detail, a major US newspaper says it's found that the number of fatalities increased alongside the vehicle's surging sales.

Mainstream US media has reported that hundreds of Teslas have been involved in automobile accidents, providing a tally of crashes that exceeds previously reported numbers.

The US media insisted in an [article](#) published Saturday that there were "736 US crashes since 2019 involving Teslas in Autopilot mode," a number which it claims is "far more than previously reported."

"The number of such crashes has surged over the past four years," the outlet maintains.

The outlet wrote that the figure reflects what they called the "hazards" related to the "increasingly widespread use of Tesla's futuristic driver-assistance technology as well as the growing presence of the cars on the nation's roadways."

As the number of Teslas driven across the globe has exploded over the past several years, “the number of deaths and serious injuries associated with Autopilot also has grown significantly,” the outlet said.

“When authorities first released a partial accounting of accidents involving Autopilot in June 2022, they counted only three deaths definitively linked to the technology,” the paper wrote, adding that, now, “the most recent data includes at least 17 fatal incidents, 11 of them since last May, and five serious injuries.”

The report further claimed the vehicular fatalities “reveal distinct patterns” because “four involved a motorcycle” and one “involved an emergency vehicle.”

The outlet charges that “some of Musk’s decisions... appear to have contributed to the reported uptick in incidents.”

The article’s authors did not indicate whether the number of fatalities that occurred in self-driving Teslas was greater than the number of deaths that would be expected in traditional vehicles. When challenged on the issue, Tesla CEO Elon Musk has referred to crash rate data that indicates cars using in Tesla’s Autopilot mode are safer than those being driven by humans.

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#### US Preparing Evacuation Plans for American Citizens in Taiwan - Reports

WASHINGTON, June 12 (Sputnik) – The United States has been planning a potential evacuation of its citizens from Taiwan over the past six months amid heightened tensions over the island between Washington and Beijing, The Messenger reported on Monday citing three US officials.

Among the reasons for starting the preparations, American intelligence officials also cite the conflict in Ukraine, as well as the rapprochement between Russia and China.

"It's nothing you wouldn't read in the news," a senior intelligence official was quoted as saying. "Forces building up. China aligning with Russia on Ukraine."

As of 2019, as many as 80,000 American nationals were living in Taiwan in 2019.

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#### Fox News Demands Carlson Stop Competing Series on Twitter – Reports

WASHINGTON, June 12 (Sputnik) - Fox News has sent a "cease and desist" letter to Tucker Carlson after the network’s former top star debuted his own show on Twitter, Axios reported on Monday.

The letter is not meant for publication, the report said.

Fox News is continuing to pay Carlson and says that his contract keeps his content exclusive to Fox through December 31, 2024, the report added.

Carlson has released two episodes of his "Tucker on Twitter" show, a 10-minute monologue in which the conservative political commentator discusses latest developments. The host said that his Twitter videos are protected under the First Amendment and accuses Fox of committing material breaches of his contract.

In late April, Fox News agreed to part ways with the host of its highest-rated news show. Reports suggest Carlson was let go due to his coverage of controversial topics — ranging from the January 6 events at the US Capitol and the COVID-19 measures to the US involvement in the Ukraine conflict — while others have said Carlson was fired for his criticism of Fox News' senior management.

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Johnston Quits as Canada's Special Rapporteur for Foreign Political Interference - Letter

WASHINGTON, June 10 (Sputnik) - David Johnston is resigning as Canada's Special Rapporteur responsible for investigating foreign interference in Canadian politics and elections, Johnston said in a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

"When I undertook the task of Independent Special Rapporteur on Foreign Interference, my objective was to help build trust in our democratic institutions. I have concluded that, given the highly partisan atmosphere around my appointment and work, my leadership has had the opposite effect. I am therefore tendering my resignation," Johnston said on Friday.

The resignation is effective no later than the end of June, or as soon as Johnston delivers a brief final report, the letter said.

Earlier this month, the Canadian parliament adopted a non-binding motion in a vote of 174-150 calling for Johnston to resign. Johnston's appointment raised concerns among opposition parties and civil society due to the potential for bias because of his personal ties to Trudeau.

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US State Dept. Refutes Reports About Blinken's Travel to China Soon

WASHINGTON, June 10 (Sputnik) - A US State Department spokesperson in a statement refuted media reports about Secretary of State Antony Blinken's travel to China soon amid a row in bilateral relations following the spy balloon incident.

"We have no travel for the Secretary to announce; as we've said previously the visit to the People's Republic of China will be rescheduled when conditions allow," the statement said on Friday.

Multiple US media outlets reported on Thursday that Blinken is scheduled to potentially visit China as soon as next week while the State Department is still working on finalizing details.

Tensions with China further increased in February of this year when an alleged Chinese spy balloon traversed over the continental United States before being shot down by the US military

over the Atlantic Ocean. China maintains that the balloon was a civilian airship engaged in scientific research.

The balloon incident prompted Blinken to cancel a previously scheduled trip to China.

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Trump Says 'Allowed' to Handle Sensitive Docs, Claims There Was No Crime in Indictment

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump said on Friday that he is allowed to handle sensitive national security materials as laid out in a 38-count criminal indictment, arguing that he never committed any crimes.

"Under the Presidential Records Act, I'm allowed to do all this. Under the Clinton Socks Case, the decision is clear. There was no crime, except what the DOJ and FBI have been doing against me for years," Trump said in a statement via social media.

Earlier on Friday, an indictment was unsealed charging Trump and a personal aide with 38 total criminal counts, including for willful retention of national defense information and making false statements.

Trump said he had "nothing to hide" and cooperated with authorities openly and without question. Nobody told the former president that he was not permitted to look at personal records he brought to his Mar-a-Lago residence from the White House, Trump said.

Trump also questioned why Justice Department Special Counsel Jack Smith is not investigating current US President Joe Biden for his alleged mishandling of classified information.

"Biden moved his Boxes all over the place, including to Chinatown and up to his lawyer's office in Boston. Why isn't deranged Jack Smith looking at that?" Trump said.

Moreover, Trump dismissed newly released pictures appearing to show boxes of records at Mar-a-Lago, claiming that their spilled contents showed newspapers and personal photos.

The FBI may have tipped over one of the boxes in a manner similar to how they "staged" papers on the floor during the Mar-a-Lago raid, Trump said, adding that the boxes were "neat, orderly, and clean" beforehand.

Smith, Biden, Attorney General Merrick Garland and others are "Trump Haters" who are incapable of treating the former president fairly, Trump said.

Trump currently leads the pack of Republican presidential candidates for the 2024 election.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, June 10 (Sputnik)

ATTACKS INSIDE RUSSIA

\* Three people received minor injuries after a drone crashed into an apartment building in

Russia's Voronezh on Friday, Governor Alexander Gusev said.

- \* The Russian Investigative Committee opened a criminal investigation under the terrorism article of the criminal code in the wake of the attack on Voronezh, stating it was carried out by individuals that were acting in the interests of the leadership of Ukraine.

- \* A drone crashed into an oil depot area in Russia's Kursk, Governor Roman Starovoit said, adding that the facility was not damaged.

#### PUTIN ON UKRAINE OFFENSIVE

- \* Ukraine has begun an offensive, but failed in every area of the conflict zone thanks to the courage of Russian soldiers.

- \* According to Putin, the Ukrainian armed forces have suffered significant losses in recent days that are "higher than usual."

- \* Russia does not have enough modern weapons, but the defense industry is developing rapidly and will fulfill all the necessary tasks, Putin added.

#### ATTEMPTED DRONE ATTACK ON ZAPORIZHZHIA NPP

- \* Russian electronic warfare equipment intercepted three Ukrainian attack drones launched at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP), a law enforcement representative said.

- \* The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said it will independently assess information about strikes with kamikaze drones against the Zaporizhzhia thermal power plant (ZTPP) facility, which is linked to the ZNPP.

#### KAKHOVKA DAM ATTACK

- \* The death toll from the Kakhovka dam breach in Russia has risen to six after a body of a woman was found since the previous day, a spokesperson for emergency services told Sputnik.

- \* White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Olivia Dalton on Friday refused to confirm Ukrainian security forces' claims that Russia was behind the attack on the Kakhovka dam.

- \* A US spy satellite detected signatures of an explosion at the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant immediately prior to the collapse of the dam, The New York Times reported.

#### MILITARY AID FOR UKRAINE

- \* The US is providing Ukraine with a new \$2.1 billion military aid package featuring munitions for Patriot air defense systems, HAWK air defense systems and missiles and Puma drones, the Pentagon said.

- \* A bipartisan group of US House lawmakers introduced a resolution calling on the Biden administration to provide Ukraine with long-range Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS), the House Foreign Affairs Committee said.

#### TRUMP INDICTMENT

- \* The US Justice Department unsealed an indictment listing a total of 38 charges against former President Donald Trump and his personal aide, including willful retention of national defense information and making false statements.

- \* Trump faces a maximum prison sentence of up to 20 years on several of the charges, the indictment said.

- \* The White House declines to comment on the indictment against Trump, Principal Deputy Press Secretary Olivia Dalton said.

- \* Republican Congressman Paul Gosar told Sputnik that the indictment against Trump over his alleged mishandling of classified documents is an effort by Democrats to take down the greatest threat to their ideology.

\* Congressional Republicans need to respond to the new indictment against Trump by prosecuting President Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden over an alleged bribery scheme involving a foreign entity, Congressman Andy Biggs' office told Sputnik.

#### WILDFIRE SMOKE FROM CANADA

\* Smoke produced by wildfires in Canada is already over Norway and could eventually reach countries further south in Europe, the Norwegian Institute for Air Research said.

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McCarthy Says Trump Indictment Will 'Disrupt' US, Calls It 'Dark Day in America'

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - The indictment against former US President Donald Trump will disrupt the United States due to the lack of equal justice on display in the case, US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy said on Friday.

"This is a very dark day in America when you think about what they're trying to indict President Trump on," McCarthy told Fox News in an interview. "This is going to disrupt this nation, because it goes to the core of equal justice for all, which is not being seen today."

Earlier on Friday, an indictment was released charging Trump and an aide on 38 total criminal counts, including willful retention of national defense information and making false statements. US Justice Department Special Counsel Jack Smith said prosecutors are seeking a speedy trial against Trump.

McCarthy said that he has talked to congressional leaders including House Oversight Committee Chair James Comer and Judiciary Committee Chair Jim Jordan about ways Republicans can ensure equal justice.

Jordan will reveal that Trump was treated differently from others, McCarthy said. Jordan sent a letter on Friday to US Attorney General Merrick Garland requesting information on the FBI's raid of Mar-a-Lago and related decisions, expressing concern about potential misdeeds.

Trump denies the accusations against him, claiming that his actions were permissible under the Presidential Records Act. Trump has also criticized prosecutors for not investigating current US President Joe Biden's alleged mishandling of classified documents with the same rigor.

The indictment comes as Trump leads the pack of Republican presidential candidates for 2024.

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US Commits to Buy 6Mln Barrels in Initial Restocking of US Oil Reserve - Dept. of Energy

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - The US government has committed to buy approximately 6 million barrels of crude oil thus far to replenish its Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), which has seen draws of about 200 million barrels over the past year and half, the Department of Energy (DoE) said Friday.

A DoE statement said the department was undertaking the “purchase of 3 million barrels and new solicitation for purchase of 3 million additional barrels [that] advances efforts to replenish the reserve at a good deal for American taxpayers, maintain the SPR’s operational readiness, and protect the nation’s energy security.”

Ten companies submitted 30 proposals in all to supply the first tranche of 3 million barrels, and five were successful, the DoE said.

“This purchase has been fully subscribed, and the contracts were awarded to five companies,” the statement said. “These 3 million barrels are being purchased for an average price of about \$73 per barrel, lower than the average of about \$95 per barrel that SPR crude was sold for in 2022, securing a good deal for taxpayers.”

The first tranche of oil, when ready for shipment, will be delivered to the Big Hill SPR storage site between August 1-31.

The DoE said bids to provide the other 3 million barrels must be received by June 20.

“Contracts will be awarded to successful offerors by June 30, 2023. This purchase is in continuation of the Biden-Harris Administration’s three-part replenishment plan and DOE will pursue additional repurchase opportunities this year as market conditions allow,” the statement said.

The Biden administration has leaned heavily on the SPR since late 2021 to offset tight crude supplies that had raised fuel costs for Americans. As of last week, the SPR’s crude balance was at its lowest since November 1983 after the release of about 200 million barrels or more from the reserve over the past 18 months.

The DoE reiterated on Friday it has canceled 140 million barrels in congressionally mandated sales from the SPR scheduled for fiscal years 2024 through 2027.

The administration’s use of the SPR has been a highly-charged matter for oil bulls and opponents of President Joe Biden. Both sides accuse him of indiscriminately releasing hundreds of millions of barrels from the stockpile to subdue crude prices and shore up his political standing with American voters — when the reserve is meant for emergency use, in times of critically short oil supply.

Biden, in his defense, said he was acting to reduce record high pump prices of fuel, which stood at above \$5 per gallon last June and now hovers at around \$3.50. The administration also blames last year’s high crude prices for US inflation getting to four-decade highs of above 9% in June.

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Trump Indictment Risks Appearance of ‘Miscarriage of Justice’ - US House Judiciary Chair

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - The US Justice Department’s indictment of former US President Donald Trump for his alleged mishandling of classified documents risks appearing as a miscarriage of justice amid concerns about the motivations behind the probe, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan said on Friday.

"The indictment creates, at the minimum, a serious appearance of a double standard and a

miscarriage of justice – an impression that is only strengthened by allegations that a Biden Justice Department lawyer ‘inappropriately sought to pressure’ a Trump-affiliated lawyer with the prospect of a judgeship," Jordan said in a letter to US Attorney General Merrick Garland.

On Friday, a 38-count indictment against Trump and an aide, Walt Nauta, was unsealed. The indictment charges the two with crimes including willful retention of national defense information and making false statements.

Earlier this week, Stanley Woodward, a lawyer representing Nauta, alleged that Justice Department counterintelligence chief Jay Bratt sought to inappropriately pressure him to convince Nauta to cooperate with prosecutors by bringing up his application for a judgeship.

Moreover, the Judiciary Committee conducted an interview on Wednesday with former Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, Steven D'Antuono, the letter said. D'Antuono expressed concerns about the Justice Department's pursuit of a raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence, during which sensitive materials were purportedly recovered. In particular, D'Antuono raised concerns about the FBI assigning the Mar-a-Lago raid to the Washington Field Office instead of the Miami Field Office, which is closer to the residence, the letter said.

D'Antuono also testified that it was "unusual" for the FBI not to have assigned a US Attorney to investigate the matter, given the significance of the case. The FBI also sought to exclude Trump's attorneys from the raid by refusing to wait for their presence prior to execution of the search, D'Antuono said.

The letter requests Garland provide all documents and communications related to meetings between the FBI and Justice Department prior to execution of the Mar-a-Lago raid, as well as materials related to collaboration between the Washington Field Office and the US Secret Service about the raid.

The letter requests the information no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on June 16.

The case against Trump has received criticism from both the former president and Republican officials, who have characterized it as a weaponization of the US justice system. Trump currently leads the pack of Republican presidential candidates running in the 2024 race.

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Republicans Must Respond to Trump Indictment By Prosecuting Hunter, Joe Biden - Lawmaker

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - Congressional Republicans need to respond to a new indictment against former President Donald Trump by prosecuting President Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden over an alleged bribery scheme involving a foreign entity, Congressman Andy Biggs' office told Sputnik on Friday.

Earlier in the day, a federal court unsealed a new indictment against Trump showing he faces 37 counts in connection to his alleged mishandling of classified documents, 31 of which relate to the willful retention of national defense information.

"The Department of Justice is rogue and weaponized. The Republican Party has to step up and counter their efforts," Biggs' office said in a statement. "The Republican Party has to prosecute

people like Hunter and Joe Biden as the party now has a mountain of evidence."

Several of Trump's charges carry sentences of 20 years in prison, according to the indictment. Trump, who denies the allegations, is set to appear at a federal courthouse in Miami on Tuesday for proceedings.

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US Special Counsel Jack Smith Says Will Seek Speedy Trial in Trump Classified Docs Case

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - US Justice Department prosecutors will pursue a speedy trial in the criminal case involving former US President Donald Trump's alleged mishandling of classified documents, Special Counsel Jack Smith said on Friday.

"My office will seek a speedy trial in this matter, consistent with the public interest and the rights of the accused," Smith said during a press conference, following the release of an indictment listing 37 charges against Trump.

The defendants must be presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law, Smith noted.

Earlier on Friday, the Justice Department unsealed an indictment listing a total of 38 charges against Trump and a personal aide, including willful retention of national defense information and making false statements.

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UPDATE 2 - Trump Faces 37 Criminal Counts Including Willful Retention of Sensitive Info

(Corrects count distribution in headline, lede, para 2, adds details in para 7)

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - The indictment against former US President Donald Trump includes 38 criminal charges related to his alleged mishandling of classified documents, which include willful retention of national defense information and conspiracy to obstruct justice, according to a copy of the document released Friday.

Trump faces a total of 37 charges, including 31 counts of willful retention of national defense information, one count of conspiracy to obstruct justice, concealing a document in a federal investigation, making false statements and other related charges, the indictment said.

Trump faces a maximum prison sentence of up to 20 years on several of the charges, the indictment said.

Trump denies the allegations of wrongdoing and has criticized prosecutors for not pursuing sitting US President Joe Biden for his alleged mishandling of classified materials with the same level of rigor.

The case stems from a raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida, during which federal agents purportedly seized sensitive materials. Trump showed classified documents to others at

Mar-a-Lago on two occasions in 2021, the indictment said.

Sensitive documents in Trump's possession allegedly include materials on the "nuclear capabilities of a foreign country," military capabilities of a foreign country, military attacks by a foreign country, and US military contingency planning, the indictment said.

Other charges in the indictment relate to alleged efforts by Trump and his assistant, Waltine Nauta, to cover up retention of the sensitive materials. Nauta faces his own separate count of making a false statement in addition to being listed beside Trump on five other charges.

The indictment was signed by US Justice Department Special Counsel Jack Smith, who is expected to make a public statement later on Friday.

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Trump Kept Classified Docs in Storage Room, Bathroom, Shower, Ballroom - Indictment

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - Investigators found that former President Donald Trump kept US classified documents in his bedroom, a bathroom and shower, a storage room, a ballroom, and office at his Mar-a-Lago residency in Florida, court documents revealed on Friday.

A federal court unsealed the indictment against Trump showing he faces 37 counts in connection to his alleged mishandling of classified documents, including 31 counts of willful retention of national defense information.

"In April 2021, some of Trump's boxes were moved from the business center to a bathroom and shower in The Mar-a-Lago Club's Lake Room," the indictment stated.

The boxes in the Lake room were eventually moved to the Storage room, which had more than 80 boxes when authorities searched the residency, according to the indictment.

The indictment states that Trump at his Mar-a-Lago residency had 17 documents labeled top secret, 54 documents labeled secret, and 3 documents labeled confidential.

The indictment said the documents in the boxes included information about defense and weapons capabilities of both the United States and foreign countries; US nuclear programs; potential vulnerabilities of the United States and its allies to military attack; and plans for possible retaliation in response to a foreign attack.

An unauthorized disclosure of these documents could put at risk US national security, foreign relations, and US intelligence gathering methods, the indictment states.

Several of Trump's charges carry sentences of 20 years in prison, according to the indictment.

Trump is set to appear at a federal courthouse in Miami on Tuesday for proceedings. He denies the allegations of misconduct and has criticized the Justice Department for not looking into President Joe Biden's alleged mishandling of sensitive materials with the same rigor.

Trump leads the pack of Republican Party presidential candidates for the 2024 election, prompting criticism of the case even among fellow primary contenders.

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Trump Faces 38 Criminal Counts Including Willful Retention of Sensitive Info - Indictment

(Adds details in paras 5-8)

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump faces 38 criminal charges for his alleged mishandling of classified documents, which include willful retention of national defense information and conspiracy to obstruct justice, according to an indictment released Friday.

Trump faces 31 counts of willful retention of national defense information, one count of conspiracy to obstruct justice, a count of concealing a document in a federal investigation, two separate counts of making false statements and other related charges.

Trump faces a maximum prison sentence of up to 20 years on several of the charges, the indictment said.

Trump denies the allegations of wrongdoing and has criticized prosecutors for not pursuing sitting US President Joe Biden for his alleged mishandling of classified materials with the same level of rigor.

The case stems from a raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida, during which federal agents purportedly seized sensitive materials. Trump showed classified documents to others at Mar-a-Lago on two occasions in 2021, the indictment said.

Sensitive documents in Trump's possession allegedly include materials on the "nuclear capabilities of a foreign country," military capabilities of a foreign country, military attacks by a foreign country, and US military contingency planning, the indictment said.

Other charges in the indictment relate to alleged efforts by Trump and his assistant, Waltine Nauta, to cover up retention of the sensitive materials.

The indictment was signed by US Justice Department Special Counsel Jack Smith, who is expected to make a public statement later on Friday.

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Trump Faces 38 Criminal Counts Including Willful Retention of Sensitive Info - Indictment

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Trump faces a maximum prison sentence of up to 20 years on several of the charges, the indictment said.

Trump denies the allegations of wrongdoing and has criticized prosecutors for not pursuing

sitting US President Joe Biden for his alleged mishandling of classified materials with the same level of rigor.

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US Lawmakers Reintroduce Bill to Designate Russia as State Sponsor of Terrorism

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) – A bipartisan group of US lawmakers led by Congressman Ted Lieu on Friday reintroduced a bill that would designate Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the congressman's office said in a press release. "Today, Congressman Ted W. Lieu (D-Los Angeles County) led a bipartisan group of Members in reintroducing the Russia is a State Sponsor of Terrorism Act, bipartisan legislation to officially deem Russia a state sponsor of terrorism," the press release said.

The legislation is sponsored by Representatives Steve Cohen, Joe Wilson, Jared Golden, Ken Buck, and Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick, who claim in the bill that Russia's alleged support for "non-state terrorist groups" prior to and during the Ukraine conflict warrants the designation.

The Biden administration has repeatedly stated that it is not planning to designate Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism since it is not conducive to holding Moscow accountable for its alleged crimes in Ukraine and may have harmful consequences. At the same time, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in May "never say never" when asked whether the Biden administration intends on designating Russia a state sponsor of terrorism.

The US currently designates Cuba, North Korea, Iran, and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism.

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White House Says Has Nothing to Share on Reports That Russia Destroyed Kakhovka Dam

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Olivia Dalton on Friday refused to confirm Ukraine security forces' claims that Russia was behind the destruction of the Kakhovka dam.

"We don't have anything definitive or new to share with you on the [Kakhovka] dam," Dalton said during a press briefing when asked to comment on Ukraine's allegations.

Earlier in the day, the Ukrainian Security Services, also known as SBU, said that it intercepted a phone call between Russian military personnel that allegedly proves Russia destroyed the dam.

The Kakhovka dam in southern Ukraine suffered heavy damage in an attack last week, causing an uncontrollable outflow of water to towns downstream.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said Ukrainian armed forces attacked the dam, qualifying it as a "terrorist act" against civilian infrastructure launched as part of Ukraine's "so-called" counteroffensive. Kiev, in turn, blamed Moscow for the attack.

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US House Lawmakers Introduce Bill to Allow Australia to Receive US Nuke-Powered Subs

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - A group of Democratic lawmakers introduced legislation on Friday that would provide the legislative authority to allow Australia to receive US-made nuclear-powered submarines and training to maintain them, the House Foreign Affairs Committee said in a press release.

The trilateral partnership between the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia (AUKUS) was launched in September 2021 based on the premise that the US and UK would provide Canberra with the technology to obtain its own nuclear-capable submarines.

"This bill supports the AUKUS Trilateral Security Framework by providing legislative authority to allow for the transfer of Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, the training of Australian private sector defense personnel, as well as the integration of Australian financial contributions to the US defense industrial base," the release said.

The AUKUS Undersea Defense Act was introduced by House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Gregory Meeks, House Indo-Pacific Subcommittee Ranking Member Ami Bera, and Joe Courtney, Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee Ranking Member Joe Courtney.

In March, Russia and China in a joint statement expressed serious concerns about the risks to strategic stability in the Asia-Pacific region related to the AUKUS security pact and their plans to build nuclear submarines.

Russia and China urged the AUKUS parties to fulfill their obligations to non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

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US Sanctions European Defense Conglomerate For Working With Russia - Commerce Dept.

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - The US suspended a European defense conglomerate's export privileges for allegedly helping Russian intelligence services acquire advanced technology, the Commerce Department said on Friday.

"Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement Matthew S. Axelrod... issued a Temporary Denial Order (TDO) suspending the export privileges of the Aratos Group, a network of defense-related companies in the Netherlands and Greece, and its president, Nikolaos Bogonikolos," the release said. "The Aratos Group acted as a procurement agent for Russian intelligence services, falsifying documents to evade US export controls."

Bogonikolos and three associates were charged in a federal court last month with smuggling and violating US export restrictions by providing advanced technology that could support Russia's military.

Bogonikolos was arrested in Paris on May 9 and remains in custody pending the resolution of extradition proceedings, the release added.

The order, which was issued for a renewable 180-day period, denies the entities export privileges including licenses or engaging in or benefiting from such transactions.

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UPDATE - US Charges 2 Russian Nationals With Hacking Cryptocurrency Exchange - Justice Dept.

(Adds details in paras 3-6)

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) – The US Department of Justice charged on Friday Russian nationals Alexey Bilyuchenko and Aleksandr Verner with hacking a cryptocurrency exchange and illegally operating another one.

"Bilyuchenko and Verner are charged in the Southern District of New York with conspiring to launder approximately 647,000 bitcoins from the 2011 hack of Mt. Gox (the 'SDNY Case'). Bilyuchenko is separately charged in the Northern District of California with conspiring with Alexander Vinnik to operate the illicit cryptocurrency exchange BTC-e from 2011 to 2017 (the 'NDCA Case'). The SDNY Case has been assigned to U.S. District Judge P. Kevin Castel. The NDCA Case has been assigned to U.S. District Judge Chhabria," the department said in a statement.

Bilyuchenko, Verner and their co-conspirators are accused of conducting several financial transactions to steal bitcoins from Japan based Mt. Gox and conceal their origins, between 2011 and 2014, after unlawfully gaining access to the platform servers and its private keys, the indictment notice reads.

During the same period, the Russian nationals and their acolytes fraudulently transferred the 647,000 bitcoins from Mt. Gox wallets to addresses generated and controlled by Bilyuchenko and Verner, the notice continues.

The significant amount of cryptocurrency stolen and the revelation that most of the customers assets had disappeared from the cryptocurrency platform eventually caused the insolvency of Mt. Gox in 2014.

The notice added that the funds were then used by Bilyuchenko and Verner to set up another platform, the BTC-e virtual currency exchange, known for laundering the funds for cyber-criminals across the world.

Some of the criminal actors for whom the platform laundered money included computer hackers, individuals involved with ransoms, narcotics, as well as corrupt public officials, DoJ's statement pursued.

The Department of Justice will tirelessly work to identify cyber criminals no matter their location the statement added, noting the DoJ's "long arms and even longer memory" for crimes that harm the community.

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Bipartisan Group of Lawmakers Introduce Bill Urging US to Send Ukraine ATACMS - Statement

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - A bipartisan group of US House lawmakers introduced a resolution calling on the Biden administration to provide Ukraine with long-range Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS), the House Foreign Affairs Committee said on Friday.

The resolution was introduced by committee chairman Michael McCaul and several other colleagues from both parties, the statement said on Friday.

"The success of Ukraine's counteroffensive is directly tied to the military assistance provided by the US and our allies. As such, it is extremely disappointing the administration is sitting on billions in remaining military funding with which it could immediately transfer ATACMS to Ukraine and, in turn, help their Armed Forces make a major difference on the battlefield," McCaul said in the statement.

The resolution calls on the United States to immediately provide ATACMS in "sufficient quantity" to assist Ukraine on the battlefield. The resolution also calls on US allies and partners to transfer similar systems to Ukraine.

The resolution also expresses the belief that ATACMS will provide Ukraine with a "critical deep-strike capability" that they currently lack.

The US has so far been reluctant to provide Ukraine with ATACMS due to a concern that their long-range capability could be used to strike targets deep within Russian territory and potentially escalate the conflict.

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Biden Admin. Issues Advisory to Thwart Iranian Drone Program, Defense Ties With Russia

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) – The US Departments of Justice, Commerce, State, and Treasury on Friday issued a joint advisory in a bid to hinder the Iranian drone program and thwart the strengthening defense ties between Moscow and Tehran amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

"The Departments of Justice, Commerce, State, and Treasury today issued an advisory to alert the international community, private sector, and public to the threat posed by Iran's procurement, development, and proliferation of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)," the Justice Department said in a press release.

The drones, which Iran has allegedly transferred to Russia since late August 2022 for use in Ukraine, led the United States to conclude that Tehran is dependent on foreign procurement to obtain UAV parts that it cannot produce domestically and uses commercial grade components in its weapons, according to the advisory.

Besides the advisory, the White House on Friday released new intelligence claiming that Iran is aiding Russia in building a new drone factory east of Moscow in the Alabuga special economic

zone, which is expected to become operational early next year, and support Russia's special military operation in Ukraine, multiple media reports said.

Also on Friday, Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the National Security Council John Kirby said that Iran allegedly continues to supply Russia with kamikaze drones that are shipped via the Caspian Sea, from Amirabad in Iran to Makhachkala, Russia, and eventually find their way to the battlefield in Ukraine, according to the reports.

Iran has been manufacturing UAVs since the 1980s, but the issue became a subject of public focus last year after Western countries accused Tehran of supplying combat drones to Moscow for alleged use in Russia's special operation in Ukraine. Moscow and Tehran have rejected the allegations. Despite this fact, in February 2023, the European Union introduced sanctions against "individuals in Iran who are involved in the elaboration of drones and components supporting Russia's military." The bloc also mulled including Iran's drone operators in the sanctions list.

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'Phony Indictment' Against Trump Effort to Take Down Dems' Greatest Threat - Congressman

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - Republican Congressman Paul Gosar told Sputnik on Friday that the expected indictment against former President Donald Trump over his alleged mishandling of classified documents is an effort by Democrats to take down the greatest threat to their ideology.

"Another phony indictment to try and take down the democrats' greatest threat to their woke ideology and mob mentality," Gosar said in a statement.

On Thursday, a federal grand jury voted to indict Trump for allegedly mishandling classified documents, for which he faces charges including willful retention of national security information, destruction or falsification of records and making false statements. He is set to appear at a federal courthouse in Miami on Tuesday for proceedings.

Earlier in the day, Republican Congressman Andy Biggs in a statement accused the Biden administration of weaponizing the Justice Department to target their top political opponent.

Moreover, Biggs pointed out that the decision to indict Trump comes after Republican lawmakers unveiled that President Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden each purportedly received \$5 million from a foreign entity in an alleged bribery scheme. Biden has rejected that allegation.

Trump denies the allegations of misconduct and has criticized the Justice Department for not looking into Biden's alleged mishandling of sensitive materials with the same rigor.

Trump leads the pack of Republican Party presidential candidates for the 2024 election, prompting criticism of the case even among fellow primary contenders.

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US Spy Satellite Detected Blast at Kakhovka HPP Prior to Dam Collapse - Reports

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - A US spy satellite detected signatures of an explosion at the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant immediately prior to the collapse of the dam, The New York Times reported on Friday.

The satellite's infrared sensors detected a heat signature that could indicate an explosion in the moments before the dam's collapse, which has sent water flowing uncontrollably downstream, the report said, citing a senior Biden administration official.

The United States does not possess any conclusive evidence about who was behind the damage to the power station, although it suspects Russia, the report said.

A deliberate explosion inside the dam most likely caused the collapse, the report said, citing engineering and munitions experts. However, structural failure or an outside attack are also plausible, the experts reportedly said.

Russia has pinned responsibility for the attack on Ukrainian forces, characterizing the incident as an act of terror against civilian infrastructure. Ukraine has inversely blamed Russia for the situation.

At least six people have died as a result of the dam breach, an emergency services spokesperson told Sputnik on Friday.

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Canada Pledges \$51.1Mln for Counterterrorism, Peace, and Stabilization – Global Affairs

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) – Ottawa pledged C\$69.5 million (\$51.1 million) in funding for counterterrorism, peace and stabilization projects in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia, Global Affairs Canada said on Friday.

“During the meetings, Parliamentary Secretary Oliphant announced more than \$69.5 million in funding for new and expanded counter-terrorism capacity-building projects, as well as peace and stabilization projects, in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia, on behalf of the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs,” Global Affairs statement reads.

Although the progress achieved by the Global Coalition is significant, Daesh is trying to replenish its effectives in the Middle East, the statement added, and further expand its influence and operations to Africa and Central Asia.

Some of the countries where the initiatives will be implemented are Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Jordan, Tunisia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.

The announcement was made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Robert Oliphant during his visit to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia to assist at the meeting of the Global Coalition against Daesh (banned in Russia).

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Two Trump Lawyers Resign From Classified Docs Case, Say He'll Be Vindicated - Statement

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - Trump attorneys Jim Trusty and John Rowley in a joint statement to Sputnik on Friday said they stepped down from representing former President Donald Trump in a case over his alleged mishandling of classified documents, but they believe he will be vindicated of upcoming charges.

On Thursday, a federal grand jury voted to indict Trump for allegedly mishandling classified documents, for which he faces charges including willful retention of national security information, destruction or falsification of records and making false statements.

"This morning we tendered our resignations as counsel to President Trump, and we will no longer represent him on either the indicted case or the January 6 investigation," the statement said. "It has been an honor to have spent the last year defending him, and we know he will be vindicated in his battle against the Biden Administration's partisan weaponization of the American justice system."

The attorneys said now that the case has been filed in Miami, it is a logical moment for them to step aside and let others carry the cases through to completion. They have no plans to hold media appearances that address their withdrawals or any other confidential communications they've had with Trump or his legal team, according to the statement.

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White House On Potential Protests After Trump's Indictment Says We Are Always Prepared

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - The US Administration is always prepared for possible protests, Principal Deputy Press Secretary Olivia Dalton told reporters on Friday amid the indictment of former US President Donald Trump.

"We are always prepared, i don't have anything specific to share with you on that," Dalton said when asked whether there are any preparation for possible protests.

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White House Declines Comment on Trump Indictment in Classified Documents Case

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - The White House declines to comment on the indictment of former US President Donald Trump over his handling of classified documents, Principal Deputy Press Secretary Olivia Dalton said on Friday.

"We are just not going to comment on this case, and would refer you to the DOJ, which runs its

criminal investigations independently," Dalton told reporters.

On Thursday, a federal grand jury voted to indict Trump for allegedly mishandling classified documents, for which he faces charges including willful retention of national security information, destruction or falsification of records and making false statements.

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Canada's Unemployment Rises for First Time Since August 2022 – StatCan

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) – The Canadian unemployment rate rose from 5% to 5.2% after remaining unchanged for nine months, Statistics Canada said on Friday.

"The unemployment rate rose 0.2 percentage points to 5.2%—the first increase since August 2022," StatCan said in its May 2023 labor survey.

According to the labor survey, the provinces of Ontario, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador saw declines in employment, by 0.3%, 1%, and 1.8%, respectively. Manitoba, in contrast, recorded a 1.2% rise in employment.

Business, building and other support services as well as professional, scientific, and technical services observed the greatest losses in terms of employment, losing 31,000 and 13,000 employees, respectively.

Manufacturing, "other services" and utilities added 13,000, 11,000 and 4,200 new jobs, respectively.

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## US Charges 2 Russian Nationals With Hacking Cryptocurrency Exchange - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) – The US Department of Justice charged on Friday Russian nationals Alexey Bilyuchenko and Aleksandr Verner with hacking a cryptocurrency exchange and illegally operating another one.

"Bilyuchenko and Verner are charged in the Southern District of New York with conspiring to launder approximately 647,000 bitcoins from the 2011 hack of Mt. Gox (the 'SDNY Case'). Bilyuchenko is separately charged in the Northern District of California with conspiring with Alexander Vinnik to operate the illicit cryptocurrency exchange BTC-e from 2011 to 2017 (the 'NDCA Case'). The SDNY Case has been assigned to U.S. District Judge P. Kevin Castel. The NDCA Case has been assigned to U.S. District Judge Chhabria," the department said in a statement.

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## Ex-Reagan Aide Says Gifted Archive to Russia's Presidential Library to Spark Peace Talks

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - Suzanne Massie, who used to advise US President Ronald Reagan on Russia in the final years of the Cold War, told Sputnik that her decision to hand over her archive to the Presidential Library in St. Petersburg was one of the most important decisions in her life and is aimed at bringing the two countries' leaders together amid the heightened tensions.

"I have made one of the most important decisions of my life. I have done it with the hope that the leaders of our countries will start peace talks as their predecessors did," Massie said. "I have pondered for a long time and made the decision to gift my archive to the people whom I love so much - the Russian people, in these challenging times."

Massie shared with Sputnik that she has signed an agreement with Russia's Presidential Library on handing over her archive to the institution.

"A secret about the relations between the USSR and the USA is carefully stored in my personal archives, which I have collected in 100 boxes and kept classified all these years," she said.

"Now, following the deaths of Reagan and Gorbachev, I am ready to reveal the whole truth to the world. The Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library has earned my highest respect by agreeing to accept it. I have signed a donation agreement for my archive with the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library in St. Petersburg, the city where I have worked for over 20 years and consider it the city of my heart."

Massie revealed that in the near future, the archive will be transported from the US to Russia. It will be scanned and made available to the public, allowing anyone interested to access it by obtaining a reader's ticket from the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library.

Massie's archive includes Reagan's personal letters, her correspondence with US President Bill Clinton, Vice President Albert Gore and other political and other personalities, including writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn and choreographer George Balanchine. The author's research papers and original manuscripts of her books on the history and culture of Russia are also included in

the archive.

Before signing the agreement on the transfer of the archive, Massie met with US Ambassador to Moscow Lynne Tracy, during which she notified the American side of her decision.

In the near future, Massie, together with a group of Russian specialists involved in the transfer of the archive, will go to the United States. An agreement with the American side on obtaining visas has been reached.

The transfer of the archive is supported by the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Russian Embassy in Washington.

Massie pointed out that she devoted her whole life to studying the history and culture of Russia. She shared that during her very first visit to Russia and communication with its people, she was immediately fascinated by the soul of the Russian people.

"I have written six books about my vision of Russia, they are used in the best US universities to study and understand the peculiarities of the Russian people," she said. "I became an adviser to the 40th US President, Ronald Reagan, and thanks to my books, which he loved to read and after that he never called Russia the 'Evil Empire' again."

Massie went on to say that she was personally sent by Reagan on an important assignment to the USSR "behind the scene" to convince the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev to accept Reagan's invitation to go to Washington to negotiate the end of the Cold War.

Massie underscored that she deeply respects current Russian President Vladimir Putin and has had "the fortunate opportunity to personally meet him."

"I would very much like to meet him again, shake his hand, and personally express my gratitude," she said.

Massie acted as an unofficial adviser to President Reagan as a backchannel to the Soviet Union from 1984-1988. During her service, Massie shared with Reagan her extensive knowledge of Russian culture and people, helped him prepare for the meetings with Gorbachev and contributed to ending of the Cold War between the two countries. She famously taught Reagan the Russian proverb, "trust but verify," which he repeatedly used during missile treaty talks.

Massie is fluent in Russian and has written numerous books on Russia's history and culture.

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US Announces New \$2.1Bln Military Aid Package for Ukraine - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - The United States is providing Ukraine a \$2.1 billion military aid package featuring munitions for air defense systems and drones, the US Defense Department said on Friday.

"Today, the Department of Defense (DoD) announced a new security assistance package, underscoring the unwavering U.S. support for Ukraine. This package, which totals up to \$2.1 billion and includes critical air defense and ammunition capabilities, is being provided under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI)," the Pentagon said in a statement.

The package includes munitions for Patriot air defense systems, HAWK air defense systems and missiles, Puma drones and laser-guided rocket system munitions, the statement said.

The USAI authority procures the equipment from the defense industry or partners instead of drawing from Pentagon stocks, the statement added.

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Trump-Appointed Judge Set to Oversee Classified Documents Case Against Ex-POTUS - Reports

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) - The criminal case against former US President Donald Trump for his alleged mishandling of classified documents is set to be overseen by Trump-appointed judge Aileen Cannon, ABC News reported on Friday.

Cannon, a US District Judge for the US District Court for the Southern District of Florida, will be assigned to oversee Trump's case, the report said, citing sources briefed on the matter.

Trump appointed Cannon, who would determine his sentence if he is found guilty, to the position in 2019.

On Thursday, a federal grand jury voted to indict Trump for allegedly mishandling classified documents, for which he faces charges including willful retention of national security information, destruction or falsification of records and making false statements.

Trump denies the allegations of misconduct and has criticized the Justice Department for not looking into current US President Joe Biden's alleged mishandling of sensitive materials with the same rigor.

Trump is set to appear at a federal courthouse in Miami on Tuesday for proceedings.

Cannon was involved in a lawsuit filed by Trump in 2022, which sought a special master to review materials seized during a raid on his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida in connection with the classified documents case.

Cannon granted the request for a special master, which was later overruled by the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

The summons sent to Trump on Thursday also included the name of Magistrate Judge Bruce Reinhart, who signed off on the Mar-a-Lago search warrant last year and unsealed the search affidavit, the report said.

Although most federal cases assign judges at random, the references to Cannon and Reinhart in the summons could indicate that they may have already played roles in court proceedings on the matter, the report said, citing experts.

The indictment comes as Trump leads the pack of Republican Party presidential candidates for the 2024 election, prompting criticism of the case even among fellow primary contenders.

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## Trump on Tape Admits 'Secret Information' He Retained Was Not Declassified - Reports

WASHINGTON, June 9 (Sputnik) – Former US President Donald Trump admitted in a 2021 recording that he had failed to declassify "secret" military information that he retained after leaving the White House, CNN reported on Friday, citing a transcript of the audio.

"As president, I could have declassified, but now I can't," Trump said, according to the transcript.

The transcript reportedly concerns a portion of the meeting where Trump discussed a classified Pentagon document on a potential attack on Iran. The audio recording was obtained by prosecutors, the report said.

The audio recording also reportedly showed Trump complaining about Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley in the wake of media reports alleging that he instructed the Joint Chiefs to ensure Trump would not issue any illegal orders in the last days of his presidency.

On Thursday, Trump announced that he has been indicted in a federal investigation over alleged mishandling of classified documents at his Florida residency and is summoned to appear in court next week.

His attorney, Jim Trusty, confirmed that Trump was facing charges of obstruction of justice, destruction or falsification of records, conspiracy, and false statements, as well as a charge under the Espionage Act, which he called "ludicrous."

Trump has repeatedly said that all the documents he took to his Florida home Mar-a-Largo had been declassified. He has also persistently attacked the special investigator's probe as a political witch hunt against him. Opinion polls still show him as the favorite choice of registered Republicans as their candidate for a third presidential election run in 2024.