

11/1/23 Wednesday

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US Deploys 300 More Troops to Middle East as White House Dispels Post-Hamas Peacekeeping Rumors

US troops have occupied parts of eastern Syria for more than four years, supporting Kurdish militia forces without the permission of the Syrian government to operate in the country. In 2019, the Iraqi Parliament asked US forces to leave until Washington threatened to freeze Baghdad's bank accounts at the Federal Reserve.

The Pentagon has moved another 300 troops into the Middle East as the Palestine-Israel conflict threatens to widen into a regional war.

"These troops will provide capabilities in explosive ordnance disposal, communications and other support functions for forces already in the region," the Defense Department said in [a news release](#). "These forces will not go to Israel."

US forces based in Iraq and Syria have faced some 27 attacks in recent days by local militia groups, the DoD said, and the new troops will "further bolster" their numbers. Officials offered no indication on what type of troops were being moved.

The new deployment is just the latest shifting of forces into the region over the last month amid the outbreak of war between Israel and Palestinian militant groups in the Gaza Strip, including Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and others. Gaza militants staged a surprise attack on October 7, breaking through the Israeli border fence and attacking several towns near the border, killing more than 1,300 Israelis.

Following the attack, Israel declared a "complete siege" of the Gaza Strip and launched an intense bombing campaign that as of Wednesday had killed [more than 8,000 people](#), according to Gaza's health ministry. Israel has also exchanged fire with Lebanon-based Hezbollah, and the Israeli Air Force (IAF) has struck targets in Lebanon and in Syria, where it claims Iran has been preparing bases from which to attack Israel. On Tuesday, the Yemeni Ansarallah group, better known as the Houthi movement, [fired ballistic missiles](#) and drones that hit the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

The US has shifted two aircraft carrier battle groups into the region, along with 2,000 more troops and additional air defenses such as a THAAD anti-ballistic missile battery, and rushed weapons to Israel to replenish its stocks.

On Sunday, US Vice President Kamala Harris said: "We have absolutely no intention, nor do we have any plans, to send combat troops into Israel or Gaza, period." However, a US newspaper reported two days later that the US and Israel were [discussing the possibility](#) of US troops being part of a multinational force to patrol Gaza after Israel's operation to destroy Hamas.

John Kirby, the spokesperson for the White House National Security Council, told reporters on Wednesday that "there's no plans or intention to put US military troops on the ground" when asked about the report.

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Israel 'Already Lost' Gaza Battle Even Before Eviction Plan Leaked - Journo

Israel's all-out attack on the Gaza Strip, which has killed nearly 9,000 people, as well as its leaked plans to evict the territory's entire population, are happening because the country is in denial about having already lost the struggle with Hamas and other Palestinian groups, a journalist told Sputnik.

On Tuesday, Israeli media reported that the Israeli Ministry of Intelligence, which is equivalent to the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), had drawn up a plan to completely relocate all 2.3 million Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip to Egypt.

The proposal, created on October 13, suggests pushing all Gaza residents across the border into Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, where tent cities will be established, followed by the construction of permanent cities. It would create a "humanitarian corridor" of an undefined nature, as well as a security zone on the Israeli side of the border to prevent Palestinians from returning to Israeli territory.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has dismissed the outrage over the report, saying it was nothing more than a "concept paper" or hypothetical exercise and that the ministry has no power to suggest policy in Jerusalem. However, the Israeli Defense Ministry has already ordered more than 1 million Gazans to leave the northern half of the Gaza Strip as it prepares for an all-out attack on Gaza City, where it expects to meet Hamas in a decisive battle that will destroy the organization. Hamas has governed the Gaza Strip since it won elections in 2006, and its militants helped carry out a cross-border raid on October 7 that killed more than 1,300 Israelis.

In response to the news, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova urged that "we are talking about millions of civilians."

"Everyone is exhausted: Israelis, Palestinians, neighbors in the region, sympathizers of both around the world," she said. "And why? But because one country judged itself as having the right to decide the destinies of millions according to its own plans. And when such an approach led absolutely everyone to a dead end, it turned out that the United States did not bear any responsibility for what it had done. It's Halloween for them."

"It's clear that it is an intentional leak," Laith Marouf, award-winning broadcaster and journalist based in Beirut, Lebanon, told [Radio Sputnik's The Critical Hour](#) on Tuesday. "It is trying to normalize, within the Western audience, this concept of ethnically cleansing Palestinians from their land. So we have to sometimes be wary when these leaks come out and understand that they were intentionally released."

"Until now, without removing the Palestinians of Gaza, out of Gaza, the Israelis have already killed upwards of 12,000 - because there's 2,000 people under the rubble - and have displaced a million-and-a-half people inside Gaza. So the number of displaced Palestinians in this war has surpassed the number of [displaced Palestinians in 1948](#) - because in 1948, the Israelis expelled, removed 800,000 Palestinians. Now, we're past that number and we're approaching very fast the number of Palestinians that the Israelis massacred in 1948: 15,000 dead."

“So you have to understand that this is already a second ‘Nakba’, a second catastrophe, for the Palestinians that could be bigger than the first one. And people are seeing this happening live on television this time, so there is no way anybody can deny that this has happened. And there is nobody in the West - in terms of authorities, regimes, governments, institutions - that wants to even stop this, they are all actually finding reasons to allow more of this to happen. Therefore, the only thing that the Palestinian people can do is the same thing that they've always had to do: stand up for their rights and fight back the oppressor, the genocider, the occupier or the colonizer and who is behind them.”

“You see, yesterday President Putin made a statement that I think is the most severe statement that we've heard from a Russian president ever, when he said that the Palestinians are fighting and the reason the Palestinians are being killed is because [of] the governments that are behind Israel, and that Russia is fighting those people in Ukraine right now. So this is aligning, right now, Russia's future and its battle [in Ukraine] with the battle of the Palestinian people against the Zionists and the imperialists behind them,” Marouf said.

“And, you know, we are entering right now a stage that is different. And of course, everybody's waiting for Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah's speech, the secretary-general of Hezbollah, on Friday, to show us what's the next chapter in this battle. But nothing's going to stop, no war is going to stop, the Americans are not going to stop the Zionists from committing this genocide and therefore, be prepared for what's next.”

Recently in an [interview with US-based media](#), Vijay Prashad, the executive director of the Tricontinental Institute think tank, said that soon, the outrage across the Middle East over Israel's war in Gaza would reach such great heights that their own governments “will not be able to contain their population.”

“The populations are going to be on the street, furious, if we watch the Israelis massacre Palestinian civilians - not 500 a day, 800 a day, but 10,000 a day, 15,000 a day, that is going to be something the Arab populations won't stand for,” he said, describing the potential for the Israeli invasion of Gaza to become as brutal as the 2016-2017 Battle of Mosul, which at the time was controlled by Daesh*.

Marouf said he thought Prashad's analysis to be “accurate,” predicting “a total regional war” by the end of the week, due to recent developments.

“I mean, just today, Yemen declared war on the Zionist colony [Israel] and flew tens of guided missiles, cruise missiles, drones on to hit the Zionist colony and they hit their targets. So we already have one country, a state, actually declaring war on the Zionist colony and others will follow soon. I mean, I believe by Friday we will be in a total regional war if the Zionists don't back up now in fear of what's going to happen.”

“Yesterday the Germans sent in destroyers that are now on the coast of Lebanon and they sent a letter from the Embassy of Germany to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon saying that ‘our troops are going to land in Lebanon’ without asking for permission. So we are getting to a point of direct occupations and direct colonization by European powers. And this is not going to stand, you know? I think most of the people here in Lebanon right now are waiting to see which ship within the imperialist armada that has been gathered on our shores here is going to sink first,” Marouf noted.

“By the way, this is the [largest armada of ships](#) to have been assembled since 1945. It's like 40, 50-somewhat warships right now across the coast of Lebanon and Palestine. That means we

haven't seen this number of warships since World War Two. We are already in World War Three. And I tell you, everybody wants the German ship to be the first sunk, you know, because Palestinians have carried the weight of the [crimes of German Nazis against the Jewish Europeans](#) for 75 years. And we're sick of that. We don't want to carry the weight of the Holocaust perpetrated by Europeans on us anymore.”

Marouf noted that within the Western media and the upper echelons of political power, the language with which they can speak about the conflict is tightly controlled.

“Its directives come from one side, then all the leaders line up, repeating, parroting what the ‘emperor’ in DC says, and all of the media copy-pastes from those statements and publishes them as good propaganda agents,” he told Sputnik. “So, everything is very clear now: there is no sovereignty for any European state, Israel itself is not sovereign anymore, there's thousands of of Canadian, American, British, French, Italian, German troops on the ground in Palestine, more Western troops on the ground than than the the core of the Israeli military, if we don't count their reserves. So Israel has ceded its sovereignty the minute this war started because they already lost the war.”

“And so, you know, partially, I would agree Netanyahu has already lost the war. Israel has already lost the war against the Palestinian resistance in Gaza and they don't want to admit it. And they think that killing civilians will somehow give them a modicum of a win somehow,” he said.

“And as we saw today, the Israelis attempted for the fifth time to enter Gaza by land and they again got clobbered. And as a response, the Israelis not only bombed the only cancer hospital, they also [bombed a refugee camp](#) with one of the biggest bombs ever deployed. And in one hit, they took down 40 buildings in one bomb, 600-plus massacred civilians. It's almost the number [of dead] of a few days ago when they attacked the Baptist hospital.”

“So the Israelis have lost this battle, they don't want to admit it, and they want to continue with genocide to feel like they have done something,” Marouf stated. “And of course, the Americans are letting them do that because America cannot also admit that its own forces that have been leading this war since October 7 have already also been defeated.”

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Federal Reserve Maintains Record-High US Interest Rates for Fourth Consecutive Meeting

After the global economic crash triggered by social lockdowns at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Reserve tolerated rising inflation for fear that raising interest rates would impact the fragile economic recovery. However, after it hit record highs in early 2022, the central bank was compelled to act.

At its monthly meeting on Wednesday, the US Federal Reserve again declined to raise interest rates above their already-record-high point, marking the fourth consecutive meeting at which they have maintained rates.

“Tighter financial and credit conditions for households and businesses are likely to weigh on economic activity, hiring and inflation,” the central bank [said in a statement](#). “The extent of these effects remains uncertain. The Committee remains highly attentive to inflation risks.”

Fed chair Jerome [Powell told reporters](#) in comments on Wednesday afternoon that the bank isn’t sure that interest rates are high enough to fight inflation, so it cannot discount the possibility of further rate hikes in the near future. However, he noted the Fed had not put expectations of a recession back into its economic forecast, either.

Powell spoke of a “lag effect” on last year’s aggressive rate hikes, saying that the impact on inflation, or the depreciation in value of the US dollar, was only now being felt.

“The stance of policy is restrictive, meaning that tight policy is putting downward pressure on economic activity and inflation, and the full effects of our tightening have yet to be felt,” he said.

“Recent indicators suggest that economic activity has been expanding at a strong pace, and well above earlier expectations,” Powell said. “We are attentive to recent data showing the resilience of economic growth and demand for labor. Evidence of growth persistently above potential, or that tightness in the labor market is no longer easing, could put further progress on inflation at risk and could warrant further tightening of monetary policy.”

“Financial conditions have tightened significantly in recent months, driven by higher longer-term bond yields, among other factors. Because persistent changes in financial conditions can have implications for the path of monetary policy, we monitor financial developments closely. In light of the uncertainties and risks, and how far we have come, the Committee is proceeding carefully.”

At its [previous meeting in September](#), the Fed indicated it [expected to raise interest rates](#) by another 25 points, to between 5.5% and 5.75%, by the end of the year. However, the bank only has one more meeting left before 2024.

In the two months before that meeting, inflation had begun to slowly creep upward after more than a year of decline, but the US Bureau of Labor Statistics’ [report in October](#), which reflected economic data from September, showed inflation holding steady at a 3.7% increase over the previous year.

However, Powell acknowledged the negative economic impacts of increasing interest rates as well, which include a marked decline in job creation and a spike in mortgage interest rates, which discourages buying houses - a key US market.

Critics of the Fed have said the bank [waited far too long](#) to react to rising interest rates in 2020 and 2021, and that raising interest rates impacts poorer Americans the worst while largely sparing the rich. They have pointed to [data from 2022](#) showing that the majority of price increases over the previous two years was attributable not to inflationary pressures such as high gas prices, but to speculation and price-gouging by sellers.

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Western Failure to Make 'Unified Call' for Gaza Ceasefire Driving Regional Escalation

While a number of resistance groups have fired at US and Israeli targets outside of the Palestine-Israel crisis, a more serious regional struggle could develop as Jerusalem continues to reject ceasefire demands and presses the attack in the Gaza Strip, experts told Sputnik. For the second time since Israel declared it was at war with Hamas early last month, the Yemeni rebel group Ansarallah, better known as the Houthi movement, [launched missiles](#) and drones at Israel on Tuesday, with several projectiles being shot down over the southern Israeli city of Eilat. However, Gen. Yahya Saree, a spokesperson for the group, claimed that at least one had struck its target.

During its eight-year-long conflict with the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, Ansarallah demonstrated its [ability to strike targets](#) hundreds of miles away using ballistic missiles and kamikaze drones, including Saudi Aramco petroleum sites that were defended by American anti-air systems.

The Eilat attack is the latest in a string of incidents targeting Israeli or US bases in the region, including against [US troops in Syria](#) and Iraq by local militia groups, and ongoing hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah along the Israel-Lebanon border. Israel has also struck targets in Lebanon and Syria.

Luciano Zaccara, an adjunct associate professor at Georgetown University in Qatar and a research associate professor in Gulf Politics at Qatar University, told Sputnik that Ansarallah's declaration "underscores" how the conflict between Israel and Hamas, which governs the Gaza Strip, has become international.

"This evolution highlights the inability of regional governments and international powers to broker even a temporary, humanitarian ceasefire, essential for preventing further devastation in Gaza and ensuring the release of hostages," Zaccara said.

"While countries like Iran, Qatar, and Turkey have attempted mediation - as proven by the two visits of [Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein] Amirabdollahian to Doha to meet [Hamas political bureau chief Ismail] Haniyeh and three visits to Ankara, as well as the direct communication between [Iranian President Ebrahim] Raisi and [Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman] - the US, UK, and EU have yet to present a unified call for Israel to halt its Gaza offensive despite the visits of [US President Joe] Biden, [European Commission President Ursula] von der Leyen and [UK Prime Minister Rishi] Sunak to Tel Aviv," he said. "Given this backdrop, threats, particularly from Iran, about mobilizing the 'axis of resistance' across the Middle East are becoming increasingly tangible, especially given the broader Arab states' apparent paralysis in the face of escalating Israeli actions in Gaza."

The widening scope of attacks "directly harm the interests of countries other than Israel, including the United States and Saudi Arabia," Yoram Meital, a professor of Middle East Studies at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, told Sputnik.

Mehmet Rakipoglu, a researcher on international affairs at the London-based Dimensions for Strategic Studies think tank, said that for many groups across the region, expressing support for Palestine is "more rhetoric." He noted, however, that if Israel "achieves serious gains in the ground operation in Gaza," it could still be enough to spark a regional war.

After militants from Gaza broke through the Israeli border fence on October 7 and attacked several settlements near the border, killing more than 1,300 Israelis, the IDF declared a

“complete siege” of the Gaza Strip and severed essentially all contact with the outside world. The IDF’s bombing campaign has [killed nearly 9,000 people](#) in the three weeks since, including more than 3,000 children, prompting a global outcry and demands for a ceasefire - demands so far rebuffed by Israel and its chief benefactors, including the United States.

Late last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced the opening of a “third phase” of the war: a ground invasion of the Gaza Strip by more than 300,000 IDF troops. With communications into Gaza severed, little information is known about developments in the battle, but Hamas has claimed to have put up stiff resistance to the IDF incursion, which has been mostly limited to the agricultural and suburban areas surrounding Gaza City.

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US Adds 13 Entities in Russia, Uzbekistan to Export Control List - Commerce Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) – The US Commerce Department on Thursday added 13 entities in Russia and Uzbekistan to its export control list.

"In this rule, the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) amends the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) by adding 13 entities to the Entity List under the destinations of Russia (12), and Uzbekistan (1). These entities have been determined by the U.S. Government to be acting contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the United States," a notice said.

The entities are added for supporting Russia’s military through the procurement, development, and proliferation of Russian unmanned aerial vehicles, the notice added.

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Blinken in Seoul to Discuss South Korea’s Aid to Ukraine – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) – US Secretary Antony Blinken will discuss South Korea’s military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine during his upcoming trip to Seoul, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Kritenbrink said on Thursday.

"I am confident that such pressing global matters will feature prominently on Secretary Blinken’s agenda while he is in Seoul," Kritenbrink told reporters.

The official said the US was gratified by the unprecedented aid that Seoul had already provided to Ukraine.

Kritenbrink also expressed confidence that Blinken will discuss South Korea's efforts to provide assistance to Gaza.

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Fundamentals of US-China Relationship Unchanged Ahead of Biden-Xi Summit - State Dept

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) – The United States' approach to China is unchanged ahead of the anticipated summit between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel J. Kritenbrink said on Thursday.

"I would underscore that our approach to China remained consistent, we remain focused on our 'invest, align, compete' strategy with the PRC, and I agree with that the fundamentals of the US-China relationship have not changed," Kritenbrink said during a briefing.

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Blinken in Seoul Will Discuss Russia-DPRK Military Cooperation - State Dept

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) – US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will discuss Russian-North Korean military cooperation during his trip to Seoul, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel J. Kritenbrink said on Thursday.

Blinken will travel to Israel, Jordan, Japan, South Korea and India from November 2-10.

"Discussions there [in Seoul], we anticipate, will focus on addressing the security implications of DPRK-Russian military cooperation, extended deterrence and shared economic growth on top of a range of other regional and global issues as well," Kritenbrink said during a briefing.

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Eleven US Companies Win Fuel Delivery Defense Contracts Totaling \$565Mln - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - Eleven companies won Defense Logistics Agency contracts totaling \$565 million for various types of fuel, the Department of Defense announced in a press release.

BRZ Investment & Consulting won a contract worth \$247.7 million and GLA Global secured a deal amounting to \$125.2 million, with the remainder split between nine other companies, the release said on Wednesday.

Each company has been awarded a fixed-price with economic-price-adjustment contract, the release added.

Work on the contracts will be carried out in 15 different US states over the next four and a half years with a June 30, 2028, performance completion date, the release said.

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US Awards Lockheed Martin \$176Mln for Over 60 Anti-Ship Missiles - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - Lockheed Martin won a more than \$176 million US Air Force contract for over 60 long-range anti-ship missiles, the Defense Department said in a press release.

"Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control, Orlando, Florida, has been awarded a \$176,198,704 firm-fixed-price contract modification... for an additional 61 Lot 8 Long Range Anti-Ship Missiles," the release said on Wednesday.

The modification brings the total cumulative face value of the contract to \$621,381,541, the Defense Department noted.

Work will be performed at Orlando, Florida and Troy, Alabama and is expected to be completed by July 18, 2027, the release added.

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US to Ensure Russian APEC Participation 'Appropriate,' In Line With Sanctions - State Dept

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration will try to ensure Russia's delegation has an appropriate amount of participation at the APEC Summit in San Francisco later this month in accordance with US law and sanctions, a State Department spokesperson told Sputnik.

"We will, of course, work towards having appropriate participation of all APEC economies - including from Russia... We don't have any updates on Leaders'-level attendees," the spokesperson said on Wednesday. "We have been clear that participating in APEC 2023 will be in accordance with US law and regulations, including with respect to sanctions."

The US is hosting the APEC Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in San Francisco on November 14-15 as part of APEC Economic Leaders' Week.

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Global Military Products, Northrop Grumman to Compete on \$490Mln Ammo Deals - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - Global Military Products, Northrop Grumman Systems and Blane International Group will compete for each order of the US Army's \$490 million contract for procurement of special ammunition and weapons systems, the Department of Defense announced in a press release.

"Global Military Products [of] Tampa, Florida, Northrop Grumman Systems Corporation [of], Radford, Virginia and Blane International Group Inc. [of] Cumming, Georgia will compete for each order of the \$490 million ...contract for procurement of special ammunitions and weapons systems," the release said on Wednesday.

Work locations and funding will be determined with each order over the next five years with an estimated completion date of October 31, 2028, the Defense Department said.

The Army Contracting Command in Newark, New Jersey is the contracting activity that will oversee the project, the Defense Department said.

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Blinken to Lead US Delegation to Tokyo For G7 Summit, Seoul, New Delhi - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken over the coming days will lead a US delegation on visits to Israel, Jordan, South Korea and India, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a press release.

"Secretary Blinken will then lead US delegations to Tokyo, Seoul, and New Delhi to advance collaborative efforts to support a free and open Indo-Pacific region that is prosperous, secure, connected, and resilient," Miller said on Wednesday. "In Tokyo, the Secretary will participate in the second G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting of 2023."

However, according to Miller, Blinken will start his trip with visits to Israel and Jordan for discussions with governments officials pertaining to the conflict in Gaza.

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US President, First Lady to Visit Maine in Wake of Recent Tragic Shooting - White House

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden and the First Lady are scheduled to visit Lewiston, Maine on Friday, in response to a recent shooting that claimed the lives of 18 individuals and left countless persons injured.

"President Joe Biden and the First Lady are set to travel to Lewiston, Maine, on Friday, November 3. This visit comes in the wake of a tragic shooting that occurred last week, resulting in the loss of 18 lives and numerous injuries," the White House said on Wednesday in an Advisory.

Furthermore, during their visit, President Biden and the First Lady, will extend their condolences to the victims' families and the affected community.

"...As well as meet with first responders, nurses, and others on the front lines of the response," the White House added.

Last week, 40-year-old Robert Card attacked a restaurant and a bowling alley in Lewiston, Maine. Eighteen people have been reported killed in the attack and numerous others injured.

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US Air Force Says Terminated Minuteman III ICBM During Test Launch Due to Anomaly

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - The US Air Force said in a press release that it recently terminated a minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile during a test launch after it had an anomaly mid-flight.

"Space Launch Delta 30 safely terminated an unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile over the Pacific Ocean at 12:06 a.m. Pacific Time November 1, due to an anomaly during a test launch from Vandenberg Space Force Base, California," the release said on Wednesday.

According to the release, a launch analysis group will investigate the cause of the launch mishap.

The launch analysis group will include representatives from Air Force Global Strike Command, the 377th Test and Evaluation Group, the 576th Flight Test Squadron, Space Launch Delta 30 Safety Office and Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, among other organizations.

The Air Force noted that the LGM-35A Sentinel will replace the Minuteman III ICBM by the mid-2030s, but until then, the Air Force is committed to ensuring Minuteman III remains a viable deterrent.

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Biden Administration Launches First-Ever US Anti-Islamophobia Strategy - White House

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration is launching the United States' first-ever national strategy to counter Islamophobia, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

"Today, [US President Joe Biden] and Vice President [Kamala] Harris are announcing that their Administration will develop the first-ever US National Strategy to Counter Islamophobia in the United States," the statement said on Wednesday.

Muslims in the US and other groups that are sometimes perceived to be Muslim, such as Sikhs, have faced a disproportionate number of "hate-fueled" attacks and other discrimination, the statement said. The Biden administration will work with community leaders, advocates and lawmakers to develop the strategy, which will be led by the Domestic Policy Council and National Security Council, the statement said.

11/1/2023 6:14:53 PM -04:00

Fraternal Order of Police Says 325 Officers Shot in Line of Duty in US in 2023

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - A total of 325 police officers have been shot in the line of duty in the United States so far in 2023, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) said in a statement.

“The National Fraternal Order of Police reports that as of midnight on 31 October, there have been 325 officers shot in the line of duty so far in 2023 ,” the statement said on Wednesday. The figure is up 16% year-to-date from 2021 and up by 27% since 2020, the statement said. Forty of the 325 officers died as a result of gunfire, down 23% since 2021, the statement said. Police in the US have been targeted in 102 “ambush-style” attacks on officers so far in 2023, the statement said. Such attacks resulted in 122 officers shot and 22 killed, the statement added.

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Biden Doubts Netanyahu Can Last Long as Israeli Prime Minister – Reports

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden doubts that Benjamin Netanyahu has a good chance of remaining the Prime Minister of Israel amid the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and believes that his days as a political figure are numbered, Politico reported, citing senior US administration officials.

Biden discussed Netanyahu's political survival with his aides in recent White House meetings, including following his trip to Israel where he had a chance to meet with the Israeli Prime Minister in person, the report said on Wednesday.

Moreover, the report claims that Biden even told Netanyahu to think about the lessons he had learned and how he could pass them on to his successor.

The officials believe Netanyahu has several months left as the prime minister or until the conclusion of the early phase of Israel's military operation in Gaza.

One of the administration officials quoted noted that discussions of the situation in the Middle East always take into account Netanyahu's shaky power position in Israel and the fact that he is also losing public support after the Hamas attack took Tel Aviv by surprise, as well as amid growing protest sentiments around the world against the brutality of the Israeli army towards Palestinian civilians.

On Sunday, Netanyahu posted a message on X, in which he blasted Israel's defense and intelligence services, saying that he was not warned about Hamas' plans before the October 7 attack. Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid said Netanyahu had "crossed a red line" by blaming the country's army and security services for the failures that led to the deadly attack on Israel. Several hours later, the prime minister removed the post and apologized for it, as it caused a wave of harsh criticism from various sides.

On October 7, Hamas launched a surprise large-scale rocket attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip and breached the border, killing and abducting people in neighboring Israeli communities. Israel launched retaliatory strikes and ordered a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip, home to more than 2 million people, cutting off supplies of water, food, and fuel. The escalation of the conflict has resulted in thousands of people killed and injured on both sides.

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PREVIEW - US House Plans to Consider Standalone \$14.3Bln Israel Aid Bill Despite Biden's Veto Threat

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - The US House of Representatives is planning to consider a standalone emergency aid package for Israel valued at \$14.3 billion, following House Republicans' decision to split the assistance from a larger supplemental funding request by the Biden administration.

House Republicans say they plan to move forward on the Israel aid bill on Thursday, despite pushback from the Biden administration and some congressional Democrats.

The White House said earlier this week that US President Joe Biden would veto the standalone aid package. The proposal turns Israel into a "pawn" of US domestic politics, the White House said, adding that the legislation would send a "terrible message" to Russia by discluding Ukraine aid.

The Biden administration initially requested \$106 billion from the US Congress in an emergency supplemental funding request, which also included more than \$61 billion in aid for Ukraine.

The House Republican proposal also attempts to offset the \$14.3 billion in aid by rescinding an equal amount of funds set aside to bolster the Internal Revenue Service. However, a Congressional Budget Office estimate said that the bill could still add nearly \$12.5 billion to the deficit over the next decade.

"The House GOP released a partisan package with no humanitarian aid for Gaza, no aid to Ukraine, and poison pills that increase the deficit and help tax cheats avoid paying their fair share," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said that he is "conceptually" in the same place as Schumer. Both Senate leaders view the conflicts in Israel and Ukraine as connected, McConnell said.

Newly elected House Speaker Mike Johnson said earlier this week that House Republicans are united behind the bill, but Congressman Thomas Massie and Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene have said that they will not back the legislation.

The Israeli aid request comes following the launch of a surprise attack on Israel by Palestinian Hamas militants on October 7, which prompted a state of war in the country. Israel has since conducted a number of strikes on Gaza and initiated some ground operations in the area. Thousands of Israelis and Palestinians have been killed and tens of thousands more injured so far as a result of the conflict.

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Biden Announces \$2Bln Investment to Aid Farmers and Combat Climate Change

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden announced a \$2 billion investment plan aimed at assisting farmers in adopting climate-friendly practices and increasing their income.

"Today I'm announcing we're investing in \$2 billion to help more farmers, adopt practices to fight climate change and earn new income," Biden said on Wednesday during his remarks on Investing in Rural America.

Furthermore, Biden announced an extra \$145 million that will be allocated to support farmers and rural communities in the installation of clean energy technologies, such as solar panels, with the goal of reducing electricity costs.

Biden visited Dutch Creek Farms in Northfield, Minnesota earlier in the day, the White House said, as part of his Investing in Rural America Event Series, highlighting over \$5 billion in investments from his agenda to promote rural prosperity and economic development.

In addition, Biden will be traveling the country for two weeks as part of the Investing in Rural America Event Series, explaining how the Biden-Harris Administration's investments are growing farm revenue, stimulating economic growth in rural areas, and creating more opportunities nationwide.

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Fed Almost Done With Rate Hikes Though Not Sure If They're High Enough - Powell

(Changes headline, lede and updates throughout with additional comments, background and context)

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) - The Federal Reserve is not sure if US interest rates are high enough to bring inflation back to its target of 2% per year, Chairman Jerome Powell said Wednesday, indicating that the central bank might impose another rate hike as early as its next policy meeting in December.

But the Fed is also "close to the end of the cycle" on rate hikes, Powell said, though it may have to do more to bring things its way.

"We are not confident policy is sufficiently restrictive," Powell said after the Fed, at its November policy meeting on Wednesday, opted to leave rates unchanged in a range of 5.25-5.5%. The central bank has another policy meeting in December where it could raise rates one more time before the end of this year. The current range for rates is already the highest since 2001.

Those high rates have helped the Fed close in on its target of reining inflation back to the maximum 2% per annum level it had maintained for years before the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020.

The pandemic, and resultant trillions of dollars in federal spending required to fight it, brought a whole new era of inflation to the United States, overwhelming policy makers on the Fed's Federal Open Market Committee, or FOMC, with price pressures that reached four-decade highs of more than 9% per annum at one point.

The committee responded to the runaway inflation pressure by raising interest rates 11 times

between March 2022 and July 2023.

Powell said those hikes had brought the Fed “very far” in its fight against inflation. But the central bank might have to go further to achieve its target, he said.

“In light of the uncertainties and risks, and how far we have come, the committee is proceeding carefully,” he said. “We will continue to make our decisions meeting by meeting, based on the totality of the incoming data and the implications for the outlook and economic activity and inflation, as well as the balance of risks.”

Over the past year, the Fed had repeatedly pointed to an overheated labor market and wage growth — aside from soaring energy prices — as reasons for inflation remaining well above its 2% per year target.

The Fed has a particularly tough job in trying to balance job growth with inflation since ensuring maximum employment is also one of its mandates.

While policy-makers the world over typically celebrate on seeing good jobs numbers, the Fed is in a different predicament. The central bank wishes to see an easing of conditions that are a little “too good” now for the economy’s own good — in this case, unemployment at more than 50-year lows and monthly wages that have grown at annual rates of 4% to 5% since July 2021.

Such job security and earnings have cushioned many Americans from the worst price pressures since the 1980s and encouraged them to continue spending, further feeding inflation.

The Fed’s mandate for maximum employment means an unemployment rate below 4%. That has been achieved since January 2022, with last month’s rate remaining at 3.8%. The central bank’s goal for inflation remains elusive though.

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UNRWA Chief Says Calls For Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza 'Falling On Deaf Ears,'

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - UNRWA Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini said in a statement on Wednesday that calls for a humanitarian ceasefire in the Gaza Strip are being ignored, a situation that will inevitably lead to more casualties.

“Our calls are falling on deaf ears. A humanitarian ceasefire is long overdue,” Lazzarini stated. “Without it, more people will be killed, those who are alive will endure further losses, and the once vibrant society will be in grief, forever.”

Lazzarini's comments come after his visit to the southern part of the Gaza Strip earlier in the day.

“This is the first time I have been allowed in since the beginning of this horrific war, almost four weeks ago. The scale of the tragedy is unprecedented,” he said. “It was one of the saddest days in my humanitarian work.”

Lazzarini said that during his visit to the enclave he met with displaced Palestinians sheltered in one of UNRWA's schools in Rafah.

"The place was overcrowded. The levels of distress and the unsanitary living conditions were beyond comprehension. Everyone was just asking for water and food. Instead of being at school, learning, children were asking for a sip of water and a piece of bread. It was heart

wrenching. Above all, people were asking for a ceasefire," he said. "They want this tragedy to end."

Lazzarini said UNRWA has become the last remaining lifeline for the survival of Gazans, who face empty markets and a lack of water, food, medicine and fuel.

"We will continue to stand with Palestine Refugees and the rest of the Palestinian communities," he said. "The current humanitarian response is by far not enough, nor does it match the huge needs of people in Gaza. More than ever, we need a meaningful humanitarian response to prevent people dying because of the siege. I call once again for urgent fuel deliveries."

Earlier on Wednesday, UNRWA said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, that when Lazzarini visited Gaza on Wednesday, he also emphasized that the UN agency's personnel will remain in Gaza, despite the fact that 70 of its staff have been killed in the territory since the October 7 outbreak of hostilities.

On October 7, Hamas launched a surprise large-scale rocket attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip and breached the border, killing and abducting people in neighboring Israeli communities. Israel launched retaliatory strikes and later began ground operations in Gaza. It also ordered a complete blockade of the territory, cutting off supplies of water, food and fuel.

The escalation of the conflict has resulted in thousands of people killed and injured on both sides.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, November 2 (Sputnik) –
MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

* President Joe Biden on Wednesday emphasized that Israel has the right and responsibility to defend its citizens from acts of terror, underlining the need for adherence to international humanitarian law and prioritizing civilian protection.

* The Israeli forces struck a "terrorist cell" in Lebanon in response to the launch of anti-tank missiles on Wednesday, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said.

* The Israeli ground forces on Wednesday broke through the first defense line of Hamas fighters in the north of the Gaza Strip, the IDF spokesman Daniel Hagari said.

* UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the killing of civilians after the Israeli attacks on the Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza, according to a statement read by UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric.

* Jordan is immediately recalling its ambassador to Israel, the Foreign Ministry said.

US ECONOMY

* The Federal Reserve left US interest rates unchanged at its November policy meeting on Wednesday, for the second straight time since September, after 11 prior rate hikes restrained inflation that stood at four-decade highs last year.

* The Federal Reserve is not sure if US interest rates are high enough to bring inflation back to

its target of 2% per year, Chairman Jerome Powell said on Wednesday, after the Fed opted to leave rates unchanged in a range of 5.25-5.5%.

* The Federal Reserve staff during a meeting earlier in the day did not put risk of a recession back into its baseline forecast of the US economy, Powell said.

CHINA'S PRESIDENCY AT UN SECURITY COUNCIL

* China on Wednesday emphasized the necessity of comprehensive reform, highlighting that merely adding new members would not resolve the UN's challenges, China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Zhang Jun said.

* China is disappointed by the current deadlock at the UN Security Council regarding the Israel-Gaza conflict but will not give up on efforts to tackle the issue during its presidency for the month of November, Zhang Jun said.

* The Chinese presidency of the UN Security Council will focus on addressing the Israel-Gaza conflict, Zhang Jun said.

BLINKEN INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

* US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to Israel and Jordan on Friday to receive an update on ongoing military operations in Gaza and discuss humanitarian issues with top government officials, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Wednesday.

* Blinken will visit Turkey on November 5, a source in the Turkish Foreign Ministry told Sputnik.

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

* Russia repelled two attacks and Ukraine has lost up to 245 soldiers in the Kupyansk direction in the past 24 hours, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Wednesday.

* The lower house of the Belarusian parliament voted for a bill to terminate the agreement between Belarus and Ukraine on the organization of joint control at checkpoints on the state border, a Sputnik correspondent reported.

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China Agrees To Nuclear Arms-Control Talks With US - Reports

WASHINGTON. November 1 (Sputnik) - China has agreed to hold discussions with Washington on nuclear arms control, and the first meeting is expected to take place in Washington DC on Monday, US media reported on Wednesday.

The first such meeting since the Obama Administration will reportedly focus on ways to reduce the risk of miscalculation, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing US officials.

In addition, the reports went on to say, the meeting next week will provide US officials with an opportunity to probe their Chinese counterparts about China's nuclear doctrine and its nuclear arsenal buildup. Washington also hopes to launch "a conversation on what a framework after New Start could look like," the magazine added, citing a senior administration official.

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Biden Says Israel Has The Right to Defend Citizens, Within International Law

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden on Wednesday emphasized that Israel has the right and responsibility to defend its citizens from acts of terror, underlining the need for adherence to international humanitarian law and prioritizing civilian protection.

"We're going to continue to affirm that Israel has the right to respond and [the] responsibility to defend its citizens from terror, and it [Israel] needs to do so in a manner that is consistent with [the] international humanitarian law that prioritises protection of citizens," Biden said during his remarks on Investing in Rural America.

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Infant Mortality Rate in US Rises For First Time in 20 Years - CDC

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States saw an increase in the mortality rate among infants for the first time last year, a CDC report revealed on Wednesday.

"The infant mortality rate for the United States rose 3% from 2021 to 2022, the first year-to-year increase in the rate since 2001 to 2002," the summary of the reports said, noting that from 2002 to 2021, the infant mortality rate dropped 22%. "From 2021 to 2022, increases in mortality rates were observed for neonatal and postneonatal infant deaths, infants born to American Indian and Alaska Native and White women, and infants born to women ages 25–29."

"The provisional infant mortality rate for the United States in 2022 was 5.60 infant deaths per 1,000 live births as compared to 5.44 in 2021," according to the report.

"The total number of infant deaths for 2022 was 20,538. This was a 3% increase over 2021 which had 19,928 infant deaths," it said.

The report went on to say that mortality rates also increased for infants born preterm, male infants, as well as for infants in four states, including Georgia, Iowa, Missouri, and Texas.

"Mortality rates increased significantly for 2 of the 10 leading causes of death: maternal complications and bacterial sepsis," the findings showed. "Although not statistically significant, rates generally increased for most other race and Hispanic origin, maternal age, and gestational age groups, as well as for female infants, in a majority of states, and for 3 of the 10 leading causes of death: maternal complications and bacterial sepsis."

The analysis of the report used all linked birth/infant death records received and processed by National Center for Health Statistics for calendar year 2022 as of July 27, 2023, while the data from birth certificates and death certificates have been collected through the National Vital Statistics System, according to the document.

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US VP Harris, Sunak Discuss Gaza, Support For Ukraine in London Meeting - White House

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - US Vice President Kamala Harris and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak have spoken about the latest developments in the Middle East and the support for Ukraine among other matters during the meeting in London, the White House said in a press release on Wednesday.

"The leaders reaffirmed Israel's right to defend itself following the appalling Hamas terrorist attack on October 7. They discussed the latest developments in Gaza including progress made today to allow foreign nationals to leave Gaza, which they welcomed," the release said. "The Vice President and Prime Minister Sunak discussed the importance of the protection of civilians in Gaza, the law of war and increasing the pace and scale of humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians in Gaza."

The two leaders also discussed cooperation on security and economic support to Ukraine, the release added.

In advance of the Global Summit on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Safety, to be held at Bletchley Park, UK, on November 2, the two leaders reiterated their shared commitment to ensuring that the rules of the road for AI reflect democratic values and technology and equitably improves people's lives, the release said.

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US Charges 2 Russians on Charges Related to Export Control Scheme -Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States charged two Russian nationals from St. Petersburg and one resident of New York on charges related to their alleged role in an export control scheme, the US Justice Department said on Wednesday.

"In a four-count indictment unsealed today in the Eastern District of New York, Nikita Arkhipov, 39, and Artem Oloviannikov, 37, both of St. Petersburg, Russia; and Nikolay Grigorev, 36, of Brooklyn; are charged with conspiracy and other offenses related to an export control scheme to benefit companies affiliated with the Russian military, including SMT-iLogic, a sanctioned Russian entity that has been identified as part of the supply chain for producing Russian military drones used in Russia's war against Ukraine," the Justice Department said in a press release.

Grigorev was arrested on Wednesday, but Arkhipov and Oloviannikov remain at large, according to the release.

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Schools in Canada's Ontario Closed as Police Investigate Bomb Threats – Reports

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – The French Catholic school board in Canada's Ontario province said on Wednesday it closed schools due to overnight bomb threats now being investigated by law enforcement, CBC News reported on Wednesday.

The school board, which represents 10 schools in nine communities of northwest Ontario, said it had closed its schools and sent students home after receiving overnight bomb threats, the report said, adding that the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) was investigating the matter.

Over the course of the day, the OPP received similar reports coming from the northern and eastern parts of the province, as well as in the Ottawa region, the report said. The threats forced several other academic institutions to close.

Multiple school boards, particularly French ones, have been targeted by bomb threats and ransoms have been requested, the report said, citing the Spokesperson for the OPP Bill Dickson. However, no evidence of explosives has been found.

OPP's local officers and cybercrime units are investigating the threats, the report said.

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China Says 'Moral and Legal Duty' for UNSC to Take Action on Gaza War

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) - The UN Security Council has both a moral and legal duty to adopt a meaningful resolution with regard to the Israel-Gaza conflict, Chinese Ambassador to the United Nations Zhang Jun said on Wednesday.

"That's also a question I'm asking my colleagues in the council, you know, it is our general belief among council members that we have to take action and that's not only our moral duty. That's our legal duty. That's why we are here," Zhang told a press conference when asked about the likelihood of the UN Security Council approving a resolution on issues like ceasefire and humanitarian pauses in Gaza.

Zhang acknowledged the existing differences among members. He also emphasized the importance of not only adopting measures but ensuring their meaningful impact.

"When we say meaningful, it means we have to send a very strong message to the relevant parties to really cease fire, to really abide by international law and international humanitarian law," Zhang added.

On October 7, Hamas launched a surprise large-scale rocket attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip and breached the border, killing and abducting people in neighboring Israeli communities. Israel launched retaliatory strikes and later began ground operations in Gaza. It also ordered a complete blockade of the exclave, cutting off supplies of water, food, and fuel.

The escalation of the conflict has resulted in thousands of people killed and injured on both sides.

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US Group Says Changing Names of Dozens of Birds With Links to Racism, Slavery

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The American Ornithological Society (AOS) said in a press release on Wednesday that it is changing the names of dozens of birds in its jurisdiction that have names linked to slavery and racism.

"As scientists, we work to eliminate bias in science. But there has been historic bias in how birds are named, and who might have a bird named in their honor. Exclusionary naming conventions developed in the 1800s, clouded by racism and misogyny, don't work for us today, and the time has come for us to transform this process and redirect the focus to the birds, where it belongs," AOS Executive Director Judith Scarl said in the release.

The organization's effort to change names of certain bird species will begin in 2024 and will focus initially on 70 to 80 bird species that are primarily in the United States and Canada.

The release points out as an example that in 2020, the AOS renamed a small prairie songbird found on the Great Plains to "Thick-billed Longspur" after its original name, honoring John P. McCown, an amateur naturalist who later became a general in the Confederate Army during the US Civil War, was perceived linked to slavery and racism.

According to the release, ornithologists have long grappled with historical and contemporary practices that contribute to the exclusion of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, including how birds are named.

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Lockheed Tests Hybrid 5G Network For Joint Domain Operations - Statement

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - Lockheed Martin has successfully demonstrated its new Hybrid 5G-Tactical Mesh Network live for the first time, the company announced in a press release on Wednesday.

"For the first time, Lockheed Martin demonstrated its Hybrid 5G-Tactical Mesh Network live in a multi-domain environment. This is a significant step toward ensuring the Department of Defense (DOD) has seamless access to critical information," the release said.

The hybrid network for land, air and space domains demonstrated system capabilities, performance and operations, making it a fully functional prototype model, the release added.

Working with leading commercial technology companies, Lockheed Martin proved the integration of existing technologies with enhanced capabilities that provide superior advanced communications operations and management tools for military applications, the release said.

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US Defense Chief Discusses Security Ties With Saudi Counterpart - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met with Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman to discuss security ties between the two countries,

Pentagon Press Secretary Pat Ryder said on Wednesday.

"The Secretary met today with the Saudi Minister of Defense, His Royal Highness Prince Khalid bin Salman to discuss the importance of the enduring US security partnership with Saudi Arabia. Secretary Austin emphasized US commitment to the territorial defense of the Kingdom, and to reinforcing and expanding a strong, bilateral defense partnership.," Ryder said in a statement on the meeting.

Austin underscored Saudi Arabia's role in regional security and stability, the statement said. Austin and bin Salman agreed to cooperate to prevent regional escalation of conflict, amid the ongoing fight between Israelis and Palestinians, the statement said.

Austin thanked bin Salman for his leadership on sustaining peace in Yemen and commended him for Saudi Arabia's humanitarian aid to Ukraine, the statement said.

Austin also reiterated the United States' commitment to working with Saudi Arabia to promote greater integration on air defense and maritime security, the statement said.

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Arms Trade Treaty Has Lowest Ever Compliance Reporting Rate on Weapons Sales - Report

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The 2014 international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) had its lowest ever rate of compliance in governments reporting their weapons sales, the Stimson Center said in a report on the measure's effectiveness released on Wednesday.

"The 2022 reports had the lowest on-time compliance rate and reporting compliance remains frustratingly low," the report said. "The submission of private reports - which represent more than a quarter of the 2022 reports submitted to date - also continues to serve as a significant impediment to arms trade transparency."

The current rate of compliance was not only at a record low but it continued a discouraging year-to-year pattern, Stimson Center report co-author Rachel Stohl told a podcast press conference. In addition, several States Parties continued to omit or aggregate key information in ways that severely limited the insights their reports should have produced, the report noted.

"The war in Ukraine also gave rise to new transparency challenges over the past year. In at least one case, a State Party was delayed in submitting its ATT annual report due to constraints imposed by additional national reporting requirements surrounding its arms transfers to Ukraine," the report said.

In other cases, sensitivities around the release of Ukraine-related transfer data contributed to States Parties withholding information or reporting privately, in some cases for the first time.

Of 113 signatories only 38 submitted their reports on time, Stohl said.

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UNSC Will Continue to Pay Attention to Ukraine Crisis in November - President

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) - The UN Security Council will continue to monitor the situation in Ukraine during China's presidency for the month of November, Chinese Permanent Representative to the United Nations Zhang Jun said on Wednesday.

"The council ... will continue to pay attention to the situation in Ukraine, and it has been on the agenda in the past, more than a year and a half's time. And we will watch it very closely if any council member requests the council to take action," Zhang said during a press conference.

Zhang added that the UNSC had been informed of such a request during its morning discussions. The council's presidency will fulfill its duty by making suitable arrangements, he added.

Since Russia launched its military operation in Ukraine in February 2022, Western countries have been supplying military aid to Kiev. This assistance has progressed from artillery munitions and training in 2022 to more substantial weapons such as tanks, cluster munitions and long-range missiles, a move that the Kremlin has consistently cautioned against.

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US Space Force Awards \$2.5Bln in Contracts to SpaceX, ULA for 21 Launches - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The US Space Force awarded \$2.5 billion in rocket contracts to SpaceX and United Launch Alliance (ULA) for 21 launches, CNBC reported on Wednesday.

ULA has been contracted for 11 launches valued at \$1.3 billion while SpaceX has been contracted for 10 launches valued at \$1.23 billion, according to the report.

The launches are scheduled to take place over the next two to three years, the report said.

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Guterres Should Not Be Blamed for UN System's Performance Issues - Chinese Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres should not be blamed for the organization's lack of performance, Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jun said on Wednesday.

"While the performance of the United Nations is not the one we expected to see... let's not simply blame the Secretary-General, or blame the United Nations," Zhang Jun said during the UN Press Conference.

The organization does not exist in vacuum, he added.

China, as the United Nations Security Council president for November, will convene a meeting on Israel-Gaza later this month and other meetings are to follow based on developments.

The Security Council went through several unsuccessful attempts to vote on a resolution calling for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. There were, as of now, four attempts and a fifth resolution is on the way which is drafted by the ten non-permanent members.

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Federal Reserve Staff Didn't Put Recession Back Into Baseline Forecast - Chairman

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The Federal Reserve staff during a meeting earlier in the day did not put risk of a recession back into its baseline forecast of the US economy, Chairman Jerome Powell said on Wednesday.

"The staff did not put a recession back in," Powell said during a press conference.

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Fed Not Sure That US Rates High Enough to Fight Inflation - Powell

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The Federal Reserve is not sure if US interest rates are high enough to bring inflation back to its target of 2% per year, Chairman Jerome Powell said on Wednesday, after the Fed opted to leave rates unchanged in a range of 5.25-5.5%.

"We are not confident policy is sufficiently restrictive," Powell said.

The central bank had raised rates 11 times between March 2022 and July 2023.

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Further Tightening of US Monetary Policy Could Be Warranted - Federal Reserve

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - Further tightening of US monetary policy could be warranted if a tightness in the labor market is no longer easing, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said on Wednesday.

"We are attentive to recent data showing the resilience of economic growth and demand for labor," Powell said during a press conference. "Evidence of growth persistently above potential or that tightness in the labor market is no longer easing, could put further progress on inflation at risk and could warrant further tightening of monetary policy."

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with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.

US Defense Intelligence Chief Says Believes in Need for Cyber Intelligence Center

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States needs an intelligence center focused on cyber-related needs, US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Director Scott Berrier said on Wednesday.

“We need to get our act together on intelligence support to cyber operations,” Berrier said during an interview with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “Should there be an intelligence center that supports cyber? I think the answer to that is yes.”

DIA is discussing the issue with US Cyber Command, the National Security Agency and lawmakers, Berrier said.

DIA leads the US’ defense and military intelligence enterprise. DIA is in the process of moving the US’ existing military intelligence system into a new cloud-based system with artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities, Berrier said.

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US Could Have Prevented Snowden, Manning Leaks With ‘Right Controls’ - Defense Intel Chief

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States could have prevented intelligence leaks from whistleblowers including Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning with proper controls in place, US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Director Scott Berrier said on Wednesday.

“In my time in the intelligence community, I’ve lived through Snowden, I’ve lived through Manning, and now this one as well,” Berrier said during an interview with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “All of those could have been prevented with the right controls in place, including this latest one.”

The latest leaks to which Berrier referred allegedly involved Massachusetts Air National Guard airman Jack Teixeira, whom authorities accuse of leaking classified intelligence documents.

The US intelligence community is working to implement improved technologies to bolster “checks and balances” on sensitive information, Berrier said.

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Trudeau Appoints Former British Columbia Premier as Ambassador to Germany

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – Former British Columbia premier John Horgan has been appointed as Canadian Ambassador to Germany, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Wednesday.

"Just announced: @JHorgan is Canada's next Ambassador to Germany. With his proven track record of dedicated public service, I'm confident he'll continue to serve Canadians well – and help advance our countries' common interests and shared priorities," Trudeau said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

In a separate statement, the Canadian government credited Horgan with navigating the provincial government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and advancing clean economic growth to create jobs.

Horgan will also be well positioned to provide "strategic advice" to Trudeau as Canada and Germany continue to enhance ties, particularly in clean energy, the statement added.

The government also expressed hope that the two nations will continue to "work side-by-side" in the face of global challenges, ranging from food and energy insecurity to "attacks on the rules-based international order."

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Russian Holy Sites in Israel May Stay Empty of Pilgrims For Another Year - Mission Chief

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - Russian holy Orthodox sites in Israel may stay empty of pilgrims for another year due to the ongoing violence in Gaza, head of the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR) mission in the Holy Land archimandrite Roman (Krassovsky) said on Wednesday.

"Our olive harvest has begun, but the holy sites are empty of pilgrims, probably for another year," Father Roman said in a message to the clergy and flock.

He pointed out that the mission needs augmented support from church people worldwide.

"Please help our monastics as they pray for peace and the salvation of Christian souls," he said.

The monk informed that air-raid sirens were heard in Israel during the last three days. However, no bombs landed near Russian convents in the area, he added.

"It has been relatively calm but very strained at our 3 monasteries, which are in Palestinian areas. There has been unrest outside the gates of the Mt. of Olives Convent. Tear gas wafts over the walls and into the monastery grounds, even into the church," Father Roman said.

On October 7, Palestinian group Hamas launched a surprise large-scale rocket attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip and breached the border, killing and abducting people in neighboring Israeli communities. Israel launched retaliatory strikes and ordered a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip, home to more than 2 million people, cutting off supplies of water, food, and fuel.

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Federal Reserve Leaves US Interest Rates Unchanged at 22-Year High

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The Federal Reserve left US interest rates unchanged at its November policy meeting on Wednesday, for the second straight time since September, after 11 prior rate hikes restrained inflation that stood at four-decade highs last year.

"The committee seeks to achieve maximum employment and inflation at the rate of 2 percent over the longer run," the Fed said in a statement, referring to its policy-making Federal Open Market Committee. "In support of these goals, the Committee decided to maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 5-1/4 to 5-1/2 percent."

The 5.25%-5.5% range, in place since July, is the highest in terms of lending rates the United States has practiced since 2001, records show.

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White House Says Biden-Xi Meeting Has Been Agreed to in Principle, Planning Ongoing

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States and China have agreed in principle to hold a meeting between President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the margins of the APEC Summit in San Francisco later this month, White House Deputy Press Secretary Emilie Simons said on Wednesday.

"We have agreed to a meeting in principle, we are working closely with the Chinese to put those plans together," Simons told reporters.

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Adding Members to UN Won't Solve Issues, Comprehensive Reform Needed - China's UN Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) - China on Wednesday emphasized the necessity of comprehensive reform, highlighting that merely adding new members would not resolve the UN's challenges, China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Zhang Jun said.

The envoy cited the Security Council as an illustrative example, identifying the fundamental issue as the imbalanced structure of the UN Security Council's membership.

"You cannot solve the problems simply by adding a few members, you have to have a comprehensive reform, in particular, to have more countries from the developing world to be represented in the Security Council to have an equal say," Zhang Jun said during UN Press Conference.

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Blinken to Travel to Israel, Jordan on Friday for Update on Gaza Conflict - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to Israel and Jordan on Friday to receive an update on ongoing military operations in Gaza and discuss humanitarian issues with top government officials, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Wednesday.

"Secretary Blinken will travel to Israel and Jordan on Friday. The Secretary will meet with Prime Minister Netanyahu and other leaders of the Israeli government to receive an update on their military objectives, and their plans for meeting those objectives. He will reiterate US support for Israel's right to defend itself in accordance with international humanitarian law and discuss the need to take all precautions to minimize civilian casualties, as well as our work to deliver humanitarian aid," Miller said during a press briefing.

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UPDATE - China's UNSC Presidency to Focus on Israel-Gaza Conflict, Ceasefire Top Priority - Envoy

(Adds details in paras 3-4, rewords lede)

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) - China will make the Israel-Palestine issue the primary focus of its presidency of the United Nations Security Council this month, China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Zhang Jun said on Wednesday.

"The top priority for our presidency and also for the security council as a whole currently is to tackle the Israel-Palestinian question, namely the Gaza conflict, which is going along in the Middle East," Zhang Jun said during a UN press conference.

Jun underscored the importance of closely monitoring and preventing the spillover of tensions and instability to neighboring countries and regions. He also emphasized that the primary focus initially should be maintaining control over the situation in Gaza.

"So that's why we [China] have called for immediate ceasefire and in my statement to the Security Council, I have made a ceasefire, the top priority for all our efforts inside and outside the Security Council," Jun said.

China has assumed the rotating presidency of the Security Council for the month of November.

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US Expects to Get All Americans Out of Gaza, Will Take A Few Days - White House

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States expects to evacuate all Americans out of the Gaza enclave, but it will take a few days, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on Wednesday.

"We do expect to be able to get all our Americans out, but it'll take a few days," Kirby told reporters.

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UNRWA Chief Visited Southern Part of Gaza, Entered and Exited Via Rafah - UN Spokesperson

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) - Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, visited the southern part of the Gaza Strip where he entered through Rafah, the UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Wednesday

"He was in the southern part [of Gaza], not too far from Rafah," Dujarric said, adding that he went into and out of the enclave through the Rafah crossing.

Earlier on Wednesday, UNRWA said via Twitter message that Lazzarini visited Gaza on Wednesday and also it stressed that its personnel will remain in Gaza.

The Agency said Lazarini visited Gaza today to meet Palestinian communities and UNRWA colleagues, and stressed that 70 UNRWA colleagues have been killed in Gaza since October 7.

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UN Chief Condemns Civilian Killings in Gaza, Urges All Parties to Abide Law - Spokesperson

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urges all parties to the conflict in Gaza to respect the international humanitarian law and condemns killings of civilians, Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Wednesday.

"The Secretary-General reiterates that all parties must abide by international humanitarian law including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. He condemns in the strongest terms and killings of any civilians," Dujarric told a briefing.

Earlier today, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said Russia is working with the authorities of Israel, Egypt and representatives of Palestine in order to ensure that Russian citizens can leave the territory of the Gaza Strip through the Rafah border checkpoint.

On Tuesday, the former director in the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Craig Mokhiber sent a letter to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk, which was made public, in which it is explained that the UN high-ranking diplomat resigned over the Organization's stance on the war between Israel and Hamas.

On October 7, Hamas launched a surprise large-scale rocket attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip and breached the border, killing and abducting people in neighboring Israeli communities. Israel launched retaliatory strikes and ordered a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip, home to more than 2 million people, cutting off supplies of water, food, and fuel.

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White House Says No Decisions Yet With Regard to Post-Conflict Gaza

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on Wednesday that there are no decisions made at present regarding plans for governing Gaza once the current conflict ends.

"We are talking to our partners about what post-conflict Gaza should look like, and clearly, you know that if that means some sort of international presence, then that's something we're talking about, but there's been no decisions about that," Kirby told reporters.

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US Sent Message to Israel That Settler Violence in West Bank Unacceptable – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – The United States has sent a "very clear message" to Israel that settler violence in the West Bank is unacceptable and those responsible for it should be held accountable, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Wednesday.

"We have made quite clear to the Government of Israel that we are very concerned about settler violence in the West Bank. We find it incredibly destabilizing, counterproductive to Israel's long-term security," Miller said during a press briefing. "We have sent a very clear message to them that it's unacceptable, it needs to stop, and those responsible for it need to be held accountable."

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White House Says No Plans to Place US Troops in Gaza Now or In Future

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States has no plans to place US troops on the ground in Gaza now or in the future, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on Wednesday.

"There's no plans or intention to put US military troops on the ground," Kirby told reporters.

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US Still Interested in Pursuing Saudi-Israel Normalization, Riyadh Still Willing - Kirby

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States is still interested in pursuing a deal to normalize relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, and Riyadh has indicated it is willing to as well, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby told reporters on Wednesday.

"We're still interested in pursuing this normalization arrangement between Israel and Saudi Arabia...Saudi Arabians have indicated a willingness to continue in that regard," Kirby said. Kirby said the United States still believes that an integrated Israel is good for the Middle East region and will not give up on that goal.

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US Working to Ensure Israel Minimizes Civilian Casualties, But No Ceasefire - Kirby

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United States is working very hard to press Israel on minimizing civilian casualties in Gaza but a ceasefire is not the solution to the conflict right now, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on Wednesday.

"We're working very, very hard to continue to make sure that our Israeli friends are prosecuting these operations with as much due care to minimizing civilian casualties as possible," Kirby told reporters. "A ceasefire right now, a general broad ceasefire right now is not is not the right answer."

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China Says Determined to Break UNSC Deadlock on Gaza During UNSC Presidency

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) - China is disappointed by the current deadlock at the UN Security Council regarding the Israel-Gaza conflict but will not give up on efforts to tackle the issue during its presidency for the month of November, Ambassador Zhang Jun said on Wednesday.

"I know that the current deadlock ... is disappointing but for the Chinese Presidency, we have no intention to give up," Zhang told reporters.

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Jack Lew Will be Sworn in As US Envoy to Israel on Thursday - White House

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - Jack Lew, who was recently confirmed to be the next US Ambassador to Israel, will be sworn in on Thursday, White House Deputy Press Secretary Emilie Simons said on Wednesday.

"The President officially appointed Jack Lew last night and tomorrow there will be a small informal swearing in ceremony in DC so that he can immediately get to work," Simons told reporters.

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Handful of Americans Expected to Depart Gaza Wednesday, More Expected Soon - Kirby

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - A handful of Americans are expected to depart the Gaza Strip later on Wednesday and more are anticipated soon, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby told reporters.

"A handful of Americans are expected to depart today and we expect to get more to come in future days," Kirby said.

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UNSC to Have Meeting on Israel-Gaza Later This Month Under Chinese Presidency - Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) - China as the President of the United Nations Security Council will hold a meeting on Israel-Gaza later this month, Ambassador Zhang Jun said on Wednesday.

"We will have a meeting later this month, but I'm sure that definitely this meeting will not be the only one on the Middle East - on the Israeli Palestinian question," Jun told reporters during the Chinese briefing for their Security Council Presidency for November.

Earlier today, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said that Russia is working with the authorities of Israel, Egypt and representatives of Palestine in order to ensure that Russian citizens can leave the territory of the Gaza Strip through the Rafah border checkpoint.

The Security Council went through several unsuccessful attempts to vote on a resolution calling for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. There were, as of now, four attempts and a fifth resolution is on the way which is drafted by the ten non-permanent members.

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American Nationals Expected to Exit Gaza Today, More in Coming Days – Biden

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – Several American nationals are set to exit Gaza today and more are expected to leave in the coming days, US President Joe Biden said on Wednesday.

Earlier in the day, media reported that Egypt had announced the opening of the Rafah checkpoint terminal in order to allow about 90 wounded Palestinians and around 450 foreigners and dual nationals to pass through.

The list reportedly includes nationals of Japan, Austria, Bulgaria, Indonesia, Jordan, Australia and the Czech Republic, as well as workers from the International Committee of the Red Cross and several non-governmental organizations from Western countries as well as from Africa and Asia.

“Today, thanks to American leadership, we secured safe passage for wounded Palestinians and for foreign nationals to exit Gaza,” Biden said via X (formerly Twitter). “We expect American citizens to exit today, and we expect to see more depart over the coming days.”

The President added that he would not cease his efforts to get Americans out of Gaza.

On October 7, Palestinian group Hamas launched a surprise large-scale rocket attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip and breached the border, killing and abducting people in neighboring Israeli communities. Israel launched retaliatory strikes and ordered a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip, home to more than 2 million people, cutting off supplies of water, food, and fuel.

On October 27, Israel launched a large-scale ground incursion inside the Gaza Strip to eliminate Hamas fighters and rescue the hostages. The escalation of the conflict has resulted in the deaths of around 1,400 people in Israel and over 8,000 in the Gaza Strip.

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UN Declines Comment on Possibility of Deploying Multinational Force to Gaza

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) – UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric on Wednesday declined to comment on media reports that the United States and Israel are considering deploying a multinational force to Gaza if Hamas is ousted.

"I am not going to speculate on what may or may not happen," Dujarric told reporters.

Bloomberg reported on Tuesday, citing sources, that the US and Israel are looking into various scenarios in Gaza after the war ends. These options may include placing the enclave under temporary United Nations oversight or deploying a multinational force to maintain security, it added.

The report said that a multinational presence in Gaza could include armed forces from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. However, it added, US President Joe Biden believes sending US troops to Gaza could be politically risky.

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China's UNSC Presidency to Focus on Israel-Gaza Conflict - Envoy to UN

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) - The Chinese presidency of the UN Security Council will focus on addressing the Israel-Gaza conflict, Permanent Representative to the United Nations Zhang Jun said on Wednesday.

"The top priority for our presidency and also for the Security Council as a whole currently is to tackle the Israel-Palestinian question, namely the Gaza conflict," Zhang told a press conference.

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US Justice Dept. Sees Rise in Threats to Some Groups, Working With Communities - Garland

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The US Justice Department has seen a rise in threats against certain religious and ethnic communities in the United States, Attorney General Merrick Garland said on Wednesday.

"As I see in my daily threat briefings, there has been a significant increase in the volume and frequency of threats against Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities across our country," Garland said during remarks

Garland said that he directed all US attorneys to reach out to religious and community leaders in their districts to reaffirm the Justice Department's commitment to protecting them and assess the need for any additional support.

The US attorneys and FBI field offices were also directed to work with other federal, state and local law enforcement partners to ensure community safety, Garland said.

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UNRWA Chief Says Sending 'Firm Message' Agency to Remain in Gaza as Staff Deaths Hit 70

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) will not leave the Gaza Strip amid its 70 personnel killed, Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said via Twitter on Wednesday.

"My firm message to all our staff and to the people in Gaza: @UNRWA is staying," Lazzarini said.

The Agency said that Lazarini visited earlier Gaza today to meet Palestinian communities and UNRWA colleagues, and stressed that 70 UNRWA colleagues have been killed in Gaza since

October 7.

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Guterres Aware of Top Official Resigning Over UN's Stance on Middle East War -Spokesperson

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has seen reports regarding the resignation of the director of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights Craig Mokhiber, but did not see his resignation letter, UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, the letter by Mokhiber to Volker Turk, High Commissioner for Human Rights, was made public, which explained that the UN high-ranking diplomat resigned over the Organization's stance on the war between Israel and Hamas.

When asked whether Guterres has seen the resignation letter, Dujarric said, "I dont know if the Secretary-General has seen it."

"I know he is aware of the press reports," he added. "And again, Mr. Mokhiber retired. He sent a letter to the High Commissioner. The views expressed in the letter, despite being on UN letterhead are the views of its authors and are not the views of the high commissioner's office or the organization."

On October 7, Hamas launched a surprise large-scale rocket attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip and breached the border, killing and abducting people in neighboring Israeli communities. Israel launched retaliatory strikes and ordered a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip, home to more than 2 million people, cutting off supplies of water, food, and fuel.

On October 27, Israel announced it is expanding ground operations in Gaza to eliminate Hamas fighters and rescue the hostages.

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Biden Risks Losing Support of Black Americans, Muslims Amid Gaza Conflict- Ex-UK Diplomat

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden's strong support for the Israeli military assault on Gaza has not only collapsed his remaining backing among Arab Americans but it is also alienating large numbers of African Americans too, former United Kingdom (UK) ambassador to Syria and veteran diplomat Peter Ford told Sputnik on Wednesday.

"Biden's problem is not just with Arab Americans," Ford said. "African Americans are also dismayed by his apparent indifference to the indescribable suffering of Palestinians."

Support for Biden among Arab Americans has fallen from 59% in 2020 to 17% now, according to an Arab American Institute (AAI) poll released Tuesday. Ford explained there were several reasons for the African-American reaction. "Many African Americans are of course are Muslim. But many non-Muslim African Americans also identify with the poor, the weak and the

under-privileged in this situation," he said.

"Biden may be hoping that there will be enough time for the Gaza horror to recede in voters' minds", Ford assessed. "He will not be helped, however, by Netanyahu, who has signaled his intention to wage a lengthy war on Gaza possibly stretching over several months," the diplomat pointed out.

Thanks to Biden, the Israeli prime minister can now count on \$14 billion of US aid coming his way to help him prolong Palestinian agony, Ford noted. "It's unlikely that African Americans and Arab Americans will look kindly on that," he said.

Biden may also be counting on his Republican adversary being unable to pick up the votes Biden is likely to forfeit, Ford acknowledged. However, the US president "overlooks at his peril the fact that it is him, not [former President Donald] Trump or any other Republican, who is taking the decisions that matter," he said.

Consequently, this backlash vote against Biden may dwarf other factors in motivating many previous supporters to vote against him, Ford pointed out. Many Democrat voters will hold their nose and vote for Biden's opponent, considering abstention an insufficient way to slake their thirst for justice against a man many consider complicit in what would be called genocide were the perpetrators anything other than Israeli.

"What goes around comes around, Joe," he said.

Less than one-quarter of Arab Americans, 23%, identify as Democrats, down 17% since April, the Arab American Institute report stated. The poll marks the first time in AAI's 26 years of polling Arab American voters that a majority of the group did not claim to prefer the Democratic Party, the report added.

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Guterres Condemns Killing Of Civilians After Israeli Attack On Jabalia Camp

UNITED NATIONS, November 1 (Sputnik) – UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the killing of civilians after the Israeli attacks on the Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza, according to a statement read by UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric on Wednesday.

"He condemns in strongest terms any killings of civilians," Guterres said in the statement, which Dujarric read during a press briefing.

Guterres also said in the statement that he was "appalled" by the escalating violence and called on all the parties to abide by international law.

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White House Slams House Oversight Claims About Biden Family Financial Schemes

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - White House spokesman for oversight and investigations Ian Sams on Wednesday in a series of X posts ridiculed and slammed House Oversight Committee chair James Comer's claims about corruption inside the Biden family.

Earlier on Wednesday, Comer said that the panel probing the Biden family's lucrative financial dealings uncovered another check to Joe Biden himself in 2017 for \$40,000 in allegedly laundered Chinese money from his brother James. Before that, Comer also claimed that Biden received a \$200,000 direct payment from his brother James Biden in March 2018 for his brokering of an investment from the Middle East.

"Comer's lies and conspiracy theories are getting more desperate by the day," Sams said in one of his posts.

Sams cited fact-checking reports by The Messenger, CNN, and MSNBC that in both cases Biden was getting his money back after he loaned it to his brother while he was a private citizen between 2016 and 2020.

Apparently, Comer disagrees with this portrayal as on the previous day he said in an interview that the committee's impeachment investigation is in the "downhill phase" and the panel is getting ready to bring all the people engaged in the financial dealings of the Biden family in for depositions or committee hearings.

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RPT - House Oversight Chair Comer Says Biden Received \$40k in Laundered Chinese Money in 2017

(Repeats to correct date in headline)

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - US House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer said on Wednesday that Joe Biden received a personal check for \$40,000 in allegedly laundered money from China involving Hunter Biden's companies.

"House Committee on Oversight and Accountability Chairman James Comer (R-Ky.) today released a video and bank records memorandum revealing how Joe Biden received \$40,000 in laundered China money from the account of his brother, James Biden, and his sister-in-law, Sara Biden, in the form of a personal check," the committee said in a press release.

The committee traced the path of money from China to Joe Biden's account, starting in July 2017, when Hunter Biden began corresponding with his Chinese business partner Raymond Zhao demanding a capital payment of \$10 million, according to the release.

On August 8, 2017, Hudson West III, a joint venture established by Hunter Biden and CEFC (a Chinese energy company linked to the Chinese Communist Party) associate Gongwen Dong sent \$400,000 to Owasco, P.C., an entity owned and controlled by Hunter Biden, after it had received \$5 million from Northern International Capital, another Chinese company affiliated with CEFC, the release said.

On August 14, Hunter Biden transferred \$150,000 to Lion Hall Group, a company owned by President Biden's brother James and sister-in-law Sara Biden followed by a September 3 check from Sara Biden to Joe Biden for \$40,000 for a "loan payment."

Today's release is the latest episode in the committee's investigation into the financial frauds of the Biden family. Earlier in October, Comer said that the committee obtained evidence Joe Biden received a \$200,000 direct payment from his brother James Biden in March 2018 for his brokering of an investment from the Middle East.

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House Oversight Chair Comer Says Biden Received \$40k in Laundered Chinese Money in 2018

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"House Committee on Oversight and Accountability Chairman James Comer (R-Ky.) today released a video and bank records memorandum revealing how Joe Biden received \$40,000 in laundered China money from the account of his brother, James Biden, and his sister-in-law, Sara Biden, in the form of a personal check," the committee said in a press release.

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US Lawmakers Will Introduce Bill to Ban Government Purchases of Chinese Drones - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - US lawmakers will introduce a bill on Wednesday to ban the government from purchasing Chinese drones, the Financial Times reported, citing Rep. Mike Gallagher.

The bill will be introduced by Gallagher, the head of the House Committee on the Chinese

Communist Party, and Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi.

"The Chinese Communist party consistently weaponises its near monopoly on the drone market against the good guys; restricting drone exports to Ukraine while Hamas uses them to perpetrate brutal terrorist attacks," Gallagher told the Financial Times.

The bill is very similar to the legislation introduced earlier in the Senate. The bill does not name specific companies but it will take aim at DJI, a Shenzhen-based group that is the world's largest manufacturer of commercial drones, and will also affect Chinese entity Autel, the report added "This bill would prohibit the federal government from using American taxpayer dollars to purchase this equipment from countries like China, supporting the PRC's malign behavior and posing a serious national security threat to the US and our allies. It is imperative that Congress pass this bipartisan bill to protect US interests and our national security supply chain," Gallagher said.

The bill would also ban purchases of Chinese drones not only on the federal level but by local and state governments too, the report said.

DJI was barred from acquiring US technology without a special license under the Trump administration. Under President Joe Biden, the Department of the Treasury added it to its investment blacklist over alleged assistance to Chinese "surveillance" of Uyghurs.

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Arab World in Deep Political Crisis, Fears War Plunging Region Into Abyss - Ex-Advisor

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) - The Arab world is in the middle of a political crisis of unprecedented levels and there is fear the Israel-Gaza conflict may lead the region into further problems, former Palestinian peace advisor Hiba Hussein told Sputnik.

"The Arab world is in political crisis of unprecedented levels not seen since the Nakba days back in 1948," Hussein said. "The Arab regimes cannot yet formulate a position on the end game. However, there is a cohesive tone and message that this war may lead us into a deep black hole. The relations are very strained."

Hussein said immediate steps must be taken to resolve the Gaza conflict pending a longer term political settlement, including a ceasefire in exchange for the release of hostages, improved humanitarian conditions for Palestinians, and ending destruction to buildings, homes, places of worship, and especially hospitals and medical care facilities in Gaza.

Hussein also said Israel should stop the incursions by the Israeli special forces into the West Bank, settler violence in the West Bank, and psychological warfare against Palestinians.

On October 7, Hamas carried out a surprise large-scale attack on Israel. Soon after, Israel launched retaliatory strikes and ordered a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip. Last week, Israel began its ground invasion of Gaza in what the government called the "second phase" of the offensive against Hamas.

The death toll from Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip has topped 8,500 and over 21,000 people have been injured, the Palestinian Health Ministry said on Tuesday. The Israeli death toll has

exceeded 1,500.

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US Envoy Heads to Israel, Jordan, Turkey in Bid to Prevent Spread of Conflict - State Dept

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – US State Department Counselor Derek Chollet will travel to Israel, Jordan, and Turkey as part of efforts to prevent the Israel-Hamas conflict from spreading and help secure the release of hostages, spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Wednesday.

"Counselor of the Department of State Derek Chollet will travel to Israel today to reaffirm the United States' commitment to stand in solidarity with Israel and support its right to defend itself, consistent with international humanitarian law," Miller said in a statement. "He will engage with partners and allies to continue our work to prevent the conflict from spreading to other parts of the region, help secure the release of all hostages, including U.S. citizens."

Chollet will discuss the protection of civilians, including US citizens, and the provision of humanitarian assistance into Gaza, Miller added.

"Following his first stop in Israel, he will continue to Jordan and Türkiye. Additional stops may be added," the statement said.

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Biden Announces Kurt Campbell as Nominee for Deputy Secretary of State – White House

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden has nominated National Security Council Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific Kurt Campbell to become the next deputy secretary of state, the White House said on Wednesday.

"Today, President Joe Biden announced his intent to nominate Kurt Campbell to be Deputy Secretary of State, Department of State," the White House said in a press release.

Since July, Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland has served as acting Deputy Secretary of State after the departure of Wendy Sherman, who served in the position between April 2021 and July 2023.

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White House Plans to Announce Anti-Islamophobia National Strategy – Reports

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – The White House is planning to announce that it will develop an anti-Islamophobia national strategy, the Associated Press reported on Wednesday, citing three unnamed sources.

The report comes amid rising anger among Muslim Americans for the White House's steadfast support for Israel's war on Gaza that has according to the Palestinian Health Ministry killed at least 8,796 Palestinians, including 3,648 children, and injured at least 22,219 as of Wednesday in the name of retaliating against Hamas' October 7 attack.

The announcement was expected to follow US President Biden's meeting with Muslim leaders last week but was delayed because of the administration's lack of credibility with the Muslim American community, the sources said.

The actual development of the strategy is expected to take many months and follow a similar process as the national strategy to combat anti-Semitism that was announced in May.

Anti-Semitic and Islamophobic hate crimes have increased around the world since the conflict broke out on October 7, including the killing of a 6-year-old Palestinian American boy in Illinois.

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Over 60% of Canadians Dissatisfied With Trudeau Government – Poll

WASHINGTON, November 1 (Sputnik) – Over 60% of Canadians are dissatisfied with the government led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a Leger poll revealed on Wednesday.

"Less than one-third of Canadians are satisfied with Trudeau's government (30%), 3 points lower than our last Tracker in September," the poll said.

Another 24% are "somewhat dissatisfied" and 39% are "very dissatisfied," bringing their total share to 63%.

This perception of poor performance by the Liberals is also reflected in Canadians' voting intentions.

The opposition Conservative Party led by Pierre Poilievre continues to lead in voting intentions, with 40% support, 14 points ahead of Trudeau's Liberal Party.

Poilievre also has a comfortable lead over Trudeau when it comes to who would make the best Prime Minister (29% versus 18%).

The next Canadian federal elections are scheduled to happen on or before October 20, 2025.