

6/6/24 Thursday

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US-Made Munitions Used in Deadly Strike on UN School in Gaza - Report

Following the IDF's offensive in Rafah last month, the central region has become home to a growing population of displaced Palestinians.

At least [40 people](#) were killed including 14 children and nine women in a strike on a UN school in the central Gaza Strip on [Thursday](#), said the Gaza Health Ministry. The munitions used by Israeli fighter jets appear to have been US-made, said three weapons experts who examined and verified footage, a [report](#) from The Washington Post claims.

The school, which is organized and operated by the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) is located in the Nuseirat refugee camp where some 6,000 civilians were sheltering after being displaced by the war, said UNRWA. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) claimed their aircraft attacked "three classrooms" with precision weapons while targeting a group of militants they say participated in the October 7 attacks.

"Attacks on displaced Palestinians are escalating every day and hospitals across Gaza are on the brink of collapse," said Fikr Shalltoot, Gaza director for the UK-based Medical Aid for Palestinians group. "At Al-Aqsa hospital there are not enough operating theaters, beds or equipment to deal with the influx of patients."

Debris footage following the attack showed the nose cone of a GBU-39 small diameter bomb which was used to penetrate the building's concrete structure, experts said. They add that the GBU-39s were US-made, and images of their cage code linked them to Woodward HRT, a weapons components manufacturer registered in Valencia, California.

"One of its benefits is that it can penetrate concrete, penetrate buildings, and take out floors exactly like this. So essentially what you're seeing is that solid nose cone left over after the blast," said Trevor Ball, a former explosive ordnance disposal technician for the US Army. Ball cautioned that in an area with a heavy presence of civilians, the calculations for using a small diameter bomb should change. And Wes J. Bryant, a former targeting professional in the US Air Force said that US military commanders most likely would not have greenlit a strike such as this.

"We would have categorized the facility as 'dual-use,' meaning that the facility has both a civilian and a military purpose," said Bryant. "This automatically places the target at the highest possible risk level for collateral damage and civilian casualties."

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a large-scale rocket attack against Israel and breached the border, attacking both civilian neighborhoods and military bases. Nearly 1,200 people in Israel were killed and some 240 others abducted during the attack. Over [36,500](#) people have been killed so far by Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip, according to local authorities. More than 100 hostages are still believed to be held by Hamas in Gaza.

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## Man Dies in Mexico From First Known Human Case of H5N2 Bird Flu

The WHO explains that other subtypes of the H5 avian flu have spread to humans, but evidence from previous events has suggested that the viruses are still unable to pass between humans.

A 59-year-old man in Mexico has died following an infection from a bird flu subtype - it is the first known case of the H5N2 strain infecting a human. There have been about [900](#) human cases of another strain, H5N1, since 1996 and about half of those people infected died.

Experts say that there is no threat to the wider public and that no one close to the 59-year-old has caught the virus, according to reports. The patient, who died in April, had been hospitalized in Mexico City after developing a fever, shortness of breath, diarrhea, nausea and general discomfort, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on [Wednesday](#).

"Although the source of exposure to the virus in this case is currently unknown, A(H5N2) viruses have been reported in poultry in Mexico," WHO said in a statement.

While both H5N1 and H5N2 affect farmed birds as well as wild birds, the patient in Mexico had no known exposure to poultry or other animals before he was formally diagnosed with the flu.

But he had been bedridden for weeks for other health reasons prior to the infection.

"Due to the constantly evolving nature of influenza viruses, WHO continues to stress the importance of global surveillance," WHO said in a statement, adding that the current risk to the general population is 'low'. "This case does not change the current WHO recommendations on public health measures and surveillance of influenza."

Researchers clarify that the case is unrelated to an outbreak of H5N1 - a different strain from the case in Mexico - in the US that has infected [dairy cow](#) herds with four human cases of avian flu having been reported in the US since April 1.

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## Some Dads Don't Pardon

The maximum sentence for the first son's most serious charge is 10 years in prison, but if he is convicted he would most likely face a lighter sentence.

US President Joe Biden said he would not pardon his son, Hunter Biden, if he is convicted in his criminal trial in [Delaware](#). The president sat down for an interview with [ABC News](#) in Normandy, France during a trip in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the WWII D-Day landings.

During the interview, the president was asked if he would accept the outcome of his son's trial in Wilmington, Delaware, to which he said, "Yes."

During the interview, Biden said that former President Donald Trump got a "fair trial" and said the "jury spoke".

The president also said he would not pardon his son if he is convicted, which he has reportedly been saying for months. Biden issued a personal statement on Monday offering support for his son and said he was a father as well as the president.

"I've been very clear — the president is not going to pardon his son," Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, told reporters in [December](#).

Former Republican presidential candidate, Vivek Ramaswamy, said on [social media](#) that Hunter Biden's trial is a "smoke screen", and is "designed to make the prosecution of Trump appear nonpartisan, yet the outcome of the Hunter trial doesn't matter" because the president "can and will pardon him."

The trial is on felony charges related to the first son's efforts to obtain a .38 revolver from a gun shop in 2018 while allegedly battling drug addiction. Prosecutors allege that in October 2018, the president's son visited StarQuest Shooters & Survival Supply in Wilmington to purchase the gun but say he lied about his drug addiction.

The younger Biden is now facing charges of false statement in purchasing of a firearm, false statement related to information required to be kept by a federal firearms licensed dealer, and possession of a firearm by a person who is an unlawful user of or addicted to a controlled substance.

This is the first time that the son of a sitting president has faced a criminal trial.

On [Thursday](#), the widow of Hunter Biden's late brother, Hallie Biden, testified. Following Beau Biden's death in 2015, Hunter began an affair with Hallie Biden who said she "panicked" when she found a Colt Cobra revolver in Hunter's vehicle on October 23, 2018. She said she threw it away in a trash can as a result.

Hallie claims that Hunter smoked crack on a "daily" basis or "frequently" during her testimony. However, she told the jury that she did not see Hunter Biden abusing drugs or alcohol for most of the month of October.

Prosecutors said that they will rest their case on Friday and that they have two more witnesses - a DEA drug specialist and an FBI chemist. Meanwhile, the defense counsel said they would call two or three witnesses and would likely rest their case by the end of the day on Monday.

The trial comes on the heels of Trump's own criminal trial, the conclusion of which found the former president guilty of 34 felonies, making him the first president in US history to be criminally convicted.

Hours before leaving office, Trump himself pardoned 70 people and commuted the sentences of 73 others.

Of the [143 people](#) he excused, his former chief strategist Steve Bannon and his former top fundraiser Elliott Broidy, were on the list. Others he pardoned included those committed of fraud schemes, the illegal use of a disadvantage business enterprise to receive government-funded construction contracts, a Google engineer sentenced for stealing a trade secret, bank fraud over the 2009 collapse of a mortgage company, and the ex-husband of a Fox News host.

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Russia Has Become 'Economic Role Model' to Rest of the World – Analyst

Russia's ability to achieve impressive growth under Western coercive measures has led countries around the globe to seek guidance and partnership with the country. In recent decades, sanctions have become a policy tool of choice for Western leaders seeking to undermine global adversaries. With anti-war sentiment on the rise among conflict weary Americans, the United States, in particular, has relied on economic restrictions and penalties to leverage its influence internationally.

Two-thirds of global sanctions since the 1990s have been imposed by the US, estimates academic Manu Karuka, and one-third of that number have been [imposed](#) by President Joe Biden alone. Some one-fourth of the world's nations are now [sanctioned](#) by the UN or Western countries, claims economist Francisco Rodríguez.

Although sanctions are frequently proposed as an alternative to armed conflict, the policy is not without controversy. “Sanctions may significantly worsen the situation of the civilian population,” writes researcher Joy Gordon, preventing access to food, medicines, and other essentials. While scholars question the degree to which these measures effectively force political change, their often dire consequences for ordinary people are difficult to deny.

The emergence of the Russian Federation from a recent set of severe US-led sanctions largely unscathed, then, is seen as a landmark moment by Global South nations seeking to resist a tactic often employed by the West.

Moscow has not only survived the economic aggression but has thrived, surpassing Germany and Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy, notes security analyst Mark Sleboda. The international relations expert joined [Sputnik's The Critical Hour program Wednesday](#) to discuss why countries around the world increasingly see Russia as an economic model and partner.

“I don't think we're quite at a multipolar world yet, but we definitely see it envisioned and it's birth taking place, even if the US-led Western global hegemon is trying to strangle that birth and prevent it from taking place,” said Sleboda, agreeing with the premise of [analysis on the website Orinoco Tribute](#) that examined participation in this year's St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

The article posits the creation of “new growth centers” as a building block for such an order, with Global South countries strengthening bilateral relations to build power independent from the Western-led economic system. The article notes efforts to strengthen ties in areas such as pharmaceuticals, energy production, education, security, and space programs.

“Isolation” was “the buzz word of 2022,” Sleboda noted, with observers predicting Russia’s economic demise in the face of denunciations from the West over its special military operation in the Donbass. But “out of 192 countries, plus or minus, in the world, 136 of them are going to have participants at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum,” the analyst noted, “including several heads of state.”

“In terms of GDP adjusted for purchasing power parity, during this time period of the existential economic war of sanctions on Russia by the West, Russia’s economy has leapfrogged from sixth place to jump Germany for fifth place,” he added. “And now, in recent months – the World Bank has announced the new numbers – Russia has jumped Japan as well to reach the fourth-largest economy in the world... despite the West’s best and most heated efforts to destroy Russia’s economy.”

“Boom. That is the sound of the US-led Western global hegemony cracking. That is amazing,” the analyst added.

“Everyone wants to know how did Russia become the Teflon Don of global geoeconomics,” Sleboda explained. “Because they don’t know when they might be put in the same position. Now there’s a train coming and Russia is directing that train.”

The international relations expert noted that African countries, in particular, are seeking cooperation with Russia as they look to break away from patterns of dependency established after their independence from Western colonial rule in the 20th century.

“[\[Sergey Lavrov\] is being welcomed by the Africans](#) and there are a number of Africans that he is visiting who also have representatives, of course, at [the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum](#),” he reported. “And all of those countries right now are seeing the performance of Russian weapons on the battlefield against the vaunted wonder weapons of the West. And, let me tell you, there is a queue right now for when this special military operation ends.”

“And that’s why Lavrov is being greeted as almost a conquering hero as a representative of the Russian government and the foreign minister of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russia is an inspiration because the countries of Africa have long been very much suffering under the heel of US-led Western global hegemony... They’ve suffered enough that they’re looking for an inspiration and a model that works. And a partner in how to get out from under that jackboot.”

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US Uses Aid Pier to Roll Out New Military Tech for Testing in Gaza

New analysis by the Libertarian Institute takes a look at how the United States is unloading new anti-drone weapons via Gaza’s aid pier to test the technology for use in the Russo-Ukraine conflict.

“The US has deployed a new combat vehicle to Gaza with the aim of field testing the weapon for use in Ukraine, as the Pentagon hopes it will help repel Russian drone attacks,” [reports](#) the

Libertarian Institute via the newspaper The Telegraph. “The Defense Department stationed two Mobile-Low, Slow, Small-Unmanned Aircraft Integrated Defeat Systems (M-LIDS) in Gaza starting in May.”

“When the US Army sailed some of its coastal landing ships to Gaza as part of the US military’s humanitarian flotilla, the ships carried – along with a floating pier for food aid – one of the initial M-LIDS vehicle sets,” the British media outlet noted.

“As the humanitarian pier took shape in early May, at least one M-LIDS vehicle rolled down the pier and took up station at the edge of the beach alongside a heavylift truck packing a radar-guided 20-millimeter auto-cannon – a land-based version of the US Navy’s main anti-missile gun.”

The report confirmed speculation by observers that US President Joe Biden’s aid pier may serve a military purpose in addition to its purported humanitarian justification. Regis Tremblay, an American filmmaker living in Crimea, joined Sputnik’s The Critical Hour program Wednesday to offer insight on the development.

“When we look at this, what we see is \$320 million for the pier – one of the things which, of course, is falling apart, right?” noted host Garland Nixon. “They said it was \$320 million for the pier, but buying weapons was part of the \$320 million. So that’s the whole neoliberal fraud. Part of what we’re seeing here in the Ukraine conflict is Russia has nationalized a good part of their military industrial complex so they can make things that work, and they’re not really expensive to make.”

“They cost what they cost,” he continued. “We keep seeing with neoliberalism, with the US – whether it’s the F-35 or whatever, these boondoggles – it doesn’t work. It costs a fortune and a bunch of crooks fill their pockets – and the big guy always gets his 10%, of course. And that’s one of the reasons that the whole militarism can’t work, because it’s all just a self-serving racket.”

Analysts have [noted](#) the rapid privatization of the US defense industry after World War II, with private contractors increasingly responsible for much of the country’s military production. Critics allege the dynamic has damaged the country’s military effectiveness, with significant waste built into the system.

“I agree with you completely,” said Tremblay. “Most of the Russian military industrial complex is nationalized. They are able to produce weapons, missiles, artillery shells – you name it, whatever – for a fraction of the cost that it costs for the United States and their military industrial complex, which is bloated, which is overrun with cost overruns everywhere you look.”

“And what Russia is spending on the same things, it’s just a fraction of the cost because they have nationalized their military industrial complex.”

Russia has become ‘economic role model’ to rest of the world – analyst

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Biden, Zelenskyy Commit to Meet Again at Upcoming G7 Summit in Italy - White House

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden and Volodymyr Zelenskyy agreed to hold a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the upcoming G7 Summit in Italy on June 13-15, the White House said in a readout of their talks in Paris on Friday.

"The leaders committed to meet again at the upcoming G7 Summit in Italy to continue their discussions," the White House readout said.

Biden and Zelenskyy discussed the state of the conflict, the latest \$225 million military aid package for Ukraine and the upcoming peace summit to be held in Switzerland on June 15-16, the White House added.

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### Canada Adds 27,000 Jobs in May, Unemployment Rose to 6.2% - Statistics Agency

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - Canada added 27,000 jobs in May and unemployment rose to 6.2%, marking a 0.1 percentage point increase from the previous month, the country's statistics agency said on Friday.

"Employment was little changed in May (+27,000; +0.1%) and the employment rate fell 0.1 percentage points to 61.3%," Statistics Canada (StatCan) said in its latest Labor Force Survey. Employment is down from 62.4% in January and February 2023, StatCan said. This marks the seventh consecutive decrease over the past eight months. The reduction is mainly attributed to the population growth outpacing that of employment, it added.

In May, the number of unemployed individuals rose to 6.1% marking a slight 0.1% increase, StatCan said. A total of 1.4 million Canadians were jobless as of last month, up 28,000 from April.

The proportion of Canadians continuously unemployed for over 27 weeks stood at 18.2%, up from 13.2% in August, according to StatCan.

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### Gaza Temporary Pier 'Successfully Reestablished' - US CENTCOM

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) – The temporary pier built off the coast of Gaza has been successfully reestablished, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) said on Friday.

"At approximately 2:15 p.m. (local Gaza time) on June 7, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) successfully reestablished the temporary pier in Gaza, enabling - part of the U.S. military's Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore (JLOTS) capability - in Gaza," CENTCOM said via the X platform.

In late May, the US military pier attached to the Gaza coastline to facilitate deliveries of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian enclave was damaged by bad weather only two weeks after it began operating. CENTCOM had to temporarily dismantle it to conduct repairs.

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### CIA Says Netanyahu Believes He Can Fend off US Pressure for Post-War Plan – Reports

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) – A June 3 CIA assessment found that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu likely believes he can withstand US pressure to articulate a clear post-war plan, CNN reported on Friday.

The CIA report said that Netanyahu is likely counting on keeping the support of his security officials by continuing to be vague about Gaza's future.

It noted that this stance aligned with Netanyahu's public statements that he will only seriously discuss post-war plans until meeting major security benchmarks, which are also deliberately vague. It also found Israel's cabinet is deeply divided over postwar governance and reconstruction in Gaza.

The CIA report comes as the Biden administration is making a renewed show of helping Israel and Hamas reach a deal.

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US Adds 272,000 Jobs In May versus 165,000 In April, Cooling Rate Cut Bets

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - The United States added 272,000 jobs in May, the Labor Department said in its latest monthly non-farm payrolls report that cooled expectations for a quicker Federal Reserve interest rate cut.

Economists on Wall Street had forecast an addition of 180,000 jobs for May. The growth in total non-farm payroll employment for April was revised down by 10,000 to 165,000.

The stronger-than-expected employment growth, despite the jobless rate itself rising marginally to 4% from April 3.9%, gave fewer incentives for the Fed to hasten rate cuts, analysts. Money market bets for a rate cut by September fell to 55% after the jobs data, from a prior 70%.

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New \$225Mln Aid for Kiev Includes Air Defense Interceptors, Artillery Systems - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - The Pentagon announced on Friday that a new military aid package for Ukraine worth \$225 million includes air defense interceptors, artillery systems, munitions, and anti-tank weapons.

"This Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA) package, which has an estimated value of \$225 million, will provide Ukraine additional capabilities to meet its most urgent battlefield needs, such as: air defense interceptors; artillery systems and munitions; armored vehicles; and anti-tank weapons," the Pentagon said in a statement.

The package includes missiles for HAWK air defense systems; Stinger anti-aircraft missiles; ammunition for HIMARS; M113 Armored Personnel Carriers; trailers to transport heavy equipment; coastal and riverine patrol boats; Tube-Launched, Optically-Tracked, Wire-Guided (TOW) missiles; Javelin and AT-4 anti-armor systems; small arms ammunition and grenades; demolitions munitions; night vision devices; as well as spare parts, maintenance, and other ancillary equipment.

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Biden Announces \$225Mln in New Ukraine Aid

(Adds clarification from White House press pool in para 4, background in para 5-6)

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden on Friday announced \$225 million in additional aid for Ukraine.

"Today I'm also signing an additional package for \$225 million to help you reconstruct your electric grid," Biden said during a meeting with Volodymyr Zelenskyy in France.

He also reiterated that the US would "not walk away" from Ukraine and apologized for a monthslong holdup in US military assistance.

The White House press pool later said that it was told the \$225 million in new support was for air defenses that could, among other things, defend the electric grid.

Western countries have provided hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of aid to Ukraine since the start of Russia's special military operation in February 2022. Military aid shipments began in 2022 with artillery munitions and training and have escalated to include tanks, advanced air-defense systems, missiles and cluster munitions.

The Kremlin has consistently warned against the West's continued arms deliveries to Ukraine, saying that they only prolong the conflict.

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US Wants to Weaken Zelenskyy by Forcing Him to Conscript 18-Year-Olds - Ex-CIA Analyst

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - US pressure on Volodymyr Zelenskyy to extend national military conscription to 18-years-old Ukrainians is likely a maneuver to make him so unpopular

that he can be replaced by another figure who can negotiate a settlement with Russia, Council for the National Interest Chair and veteran CIA analyst Phil Giraldi told Sputnik.

"I suspect that the Biden people have finally figured out that the war is lost and they see Zelenskyy as an impediment to coming up with some kind of resolution of the conflict that will not look like total defeat and will permit some kind of dialogue leading to a territorial compromise," Giraldi said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the Biden administration is pressing Zelenskyy to extend universal conscription to 18-year-olds. But that move is certain to be widely unpopular given Ukraine's enormous losses in its failed frontal attacks against Russian forces since last summer.

Even if the Zelenskyy yielded to US pressure and introduced extended conscription, it could not have any significant impact on the battlefields until next year, Giraldi said.

"Drafting 18-years-olds is a political move rather than a genuine military initiative as the new soldiers would still have to be processed through the new system and trained," Giraldi said.

All of that would take at least a year or more for the new young troops to be effective at all, even if they could be adequately armed and competently commanded, he said.

"And nearly everyone knows that the war will certainly be over by then," Giraldi added.

On May 28, Putin told journalists he believed the current "masters of Ukraine," an apparent reference to the United States and its allies, wanted to push the burden for the unpopular conscription measure on Zelenskyy to weaken and discredit him.

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Engineers Find 2 New Helium Leaks on Boeing Starliner During First Crew Mission - NASA

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - US space agency engineers found two new helium leaks in addition to its old continuing one during its first crewed mission to the International Space Station (ISS) carrying veteran astronauts Barry "Butch" Gilmore and Sunita "Suni" Williams, NASA Commercial Crew Program Manager Steve Stich told a press conference at Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida.

"We noticed a little bit of an increase in the [old] helium leak [in] P2D2 flange. [It] was still 24 PSI (pounds per square inch). The leak was the same," Stich said on Thursday. "[However] what we found was two other leaks in port manifold one that were a little larger than the one we'd seen before."

The new leaks were at 395PSI per minute and 42 PSI per minute and flight engineers closed those manifolds overnight during the Starliner's trajectory to the ISS, Stich said.

"We knew we had 90 hours of mission ahead and we knew we had 140 to 170 hours of human capability so we knew we had far more margin than we needed" until the Starliner completes its mission and brings the astronauts home, Stich said.

The new helium leaks were unconnected to the separate problems the Starliner experienced with temporary failures of five of its 28 maneuvering thrusters, four of which were successfully brought back online, Stich said.

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Five of Boeing Starliner's 28 Thrusters Fail Before First Crewed Docking at ISS -NASA

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - The Boeing Starliner made a delayed crewed docking with the International Space Station (ISS) because five of its 28 thrusters failed, NASA Commercial Crew Program Manager Steve Stich told reporters at a press conference.

"We ended up losing a total of five thrusters," Stich said on Thursday. "We recovered four of those five thrusters. ...One thruster B1A3 looks very strange. We don't understand...We will have to take more time to figure out what to do about the thrusters."

The Starliner had plenty of redundancy in its thrusters and maneuvering systems, Stich stated. "We should have plenty of margin. We'll go look at the numbers and figure out what to do about the manifolds," he said.

As a result of the problems with the thrusters, the Starliner missed its first docking opportunity with the ISS and had to dock at its port later than planned, and then US astronauts Barry "Butch" Gilmore and Sunita "Sunni" Williams entered the space station, Stich acknowledged.

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Trump Says Would Consider Using Tariffs to Combat Illegal Migration on US Southern Border

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - Former President Donald Trump said during a town hall in the US state of Arizona that he would consider imposing tariffs on China and others that are key countries of origin of migrants surging to the US southern border.

"If China or some other country is behaving badly, we have tariffs that are so severe... If a country is not going to behave, we're going to tariff the hell out of that country," Trump said on Thursday when asked how he would stop illegal migrants surging to the US southern border from China and the Middle East.

Trump also reiterated that he would seek to carry out mass deportations of migrants who unlawfully reside in the United States.

Illegal migration on the US southern border has gone through three consecutive record-breaking years since Biden became president, totaling nearly 8 million illegal encounters during that period, according to publicly available US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) data.

Since October 2023, an estimated 1.5 million migrants have been apprehended for illegally crossing into the United States on the southern border, CBP data shows.

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US Decision to Allow Strikes Into Russia Could Theoretically Draw US Into Conflict - Biden

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden said in an interview with ABC News that his decision to allow Ukraine to use US-supplied weapons to strike targets inside Russia could theoretically bring the United States into the conflict but believes that it unlikely.

"Theoretically could but it's not likely," Biden said on Thursday when asked about the risk of the United States being dragged into the war with Russia because of his policy.

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Biden to Meet with Zelenskyy in Bilateral Meeting on Friday-White House

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) — US President Joe Biden will participate in a bilateral meeting with Volodymyr Zelenskyy on June 7, the White House said in a statement.

According to the statement, the bilateral meeting at the InterContinental Paris Le Grand Hotel will feature an out-of-town pool spray.

Biden and the First Lady are in France from June 5-9, 2024, where they will take part in anniversary events marking the landing of allied troops in Normandy.

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US Will Unveil More Assertive Nuclear Weapons Strategy at Arms Control Event - Reports

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - The United States is set to unveil its plans to implement a more assertive nuclear weapons strategy, Semafor reported on Friday, citing a senior Biden administration official.

The United States will adopt "a more competitive approach" to nonproliferation and arms control, as well as make "certain adjustments" to its posture and capabilities, the report quoted the official as saying on Thursday.

The new approach is set to be outlined on Friday by the White House National Security Council's Senior Director for Arms Control and Nonproliferation, Pranay Vaddi, at an arms control conference, the report said.

The United States seeks to bring adversaries to the negotiating table on the issues, but will demonstrate that there are consequences for rejecting talks, the official reportedly said.

Russia and China will face a diminished security environment if they decline to engage with the United States, the official added.

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ANALYSIS - Trump May Ride Wave of Rejection Against Democrats in November US Election

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - Democrats may lose control of the US Senate and face a landslide victory for Donald Trump in the November elections, offering Trump the negotiating

power to deliver on agendas he had long promised to his voter base, or face a situation in which the political system remains deadlocked, analysts told Sputnik.

Trump received a huge apparent setback when a New York court found him guilty on 34 charges relating to his alleged payment of hush money to pornography actress Stormy Daniels. However, supporters and others flocked to the former president with millions of dollars in donations for his campaign after the legal verdict.

On Saturday, US Senator Joe Manchin announced he was leaving the Democratic Party and declaring himself as an Independent for the remainder of his term. Manchin's move spurred speculations that the control of the Senate might soon revert back to the Republicans, giving Trump and his campaign a significant boost.

#### TRUMP, MANCHIN DEVELOPMENTS TO ENERGIZE PROTEST VOTE

Political commentator and former hedge fund manager Charles Ortel said Manchin's announcement was another sign that the Democratic Party will be hit by a tidal wave of protest vote in the November general election.

"Because the Biden administration initiatives are wildly and manifestly unsuccessful, the Democrat Party is now headed for stunning losses that cannot be concealed by poll-rigging as the gap is far too large," Ortel said.

The Democratic Party has been captured by the hard left who also control key elements in academia, media, multinational entities, charities, the justice system and the administrative state, it speaks for fewer than a fifth of the US electorate, he said.

Manchin understands he will have far more leverage as an independent than he may have staying inside the Democrat Party, but his departure could accentuate the party's implosion if it sticks to its anti-capitalist and anti-Constitutional underpinnings, Ortel said.

The lack of popular support for President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris outside their relatively small core constituencies is now obvious, but the Democrats are expected to maintain control of the Senate through early 2025 because of their aggressive tactics, he said.

"Biden is mounting a more unserious effort than during 2020 race while interfering in Trump's ability to hold traditional rallies. The public understands this and what I see is a daily surging in support for reelection of President Trump," Ortel said.

The result of this situation was an accelerating movement of Democrats stepping down from Congress or even abandoning their old party, he said.

"Unless outside events intervene, I question how much longer Democrats will risk their future by continuing to insist that Biden and Harris have any realistic hopes of winning in November 5 election," Ortel said.

#### BIDEN, DEMOCRATS MAIN SUPPORTERS OF CONTINUED FIGHTING IN UKRAINE, GAZA

In addition, Biden and the Democrats were now the main supporters of keeping Ukraine fighting Russia even at the cost of hundreds of thousands of dead and of Israel bombarding Gaza, causing tens of thousands of civilian casualties, he said.

"Historians will fairly wonder when the uniparty [consisting of Democrats and the warhawk Republicans] became addicted to perpetual war, in service to defense contractors. May a semblance of sanity return after November 5, and may we safely survive until then," Ortel said.

Independent Institute Center on Peace and Liberty Director Ivan Eland said he expects nothing to really change in Congress at least until the election is held in November, but views the Manchin move as a possible diversionary tactic.

"[Senate Majority Leader] Chuck Schumer has been begging Manchin to go independent and have a better chance of winning in West Virginia. Manchin going independent could merely be an election ploy," Eland said.

Manchin could even be reelected as an Independent in West Virginia where he would have lost as a Democrat and provide crucial support for his old party in the next Congress, Eland said.

"I don't think it would have much effect on the presidential race but could be good for the Democrats if Manchin was to run and win. I don't think the Democrats would lose control before the election unless Manchin, as an independent, refused to continue to caucus with the Democrats," Eland said.

In any case, congressional majorities supporting Ukraine and Israel would remain securely in place and Manchin would not seek to change them, Eland added.

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UN General Assembly Elects Ex-Cameroon PM Philemon Yang as New President -  
Correspondent

UNITED NATIONS, June 7 (Sputnik) - The United Nations General Assembly elected the former Prime Minister of Cameroon, Philemon Yang, as its new President, a Sputnik correspondent reported.

Yang will become the next President for its seventy-ninth session, which kicks off in September. The theme and his main message for the upcoming General Assembly will be "unity in diversity, for the advancement of peace, sustainable development, and human dignity for everyone everywhere."

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US Anti-Russia Remarks in Normandy Show 'Despair' Over Failure to Impose Its Will-Antonov

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) - The anti-Russia statements made by the US Administration in Normandy demonstrated the despair due to the realization of the inability to impose its will on other countries, Russian Ambassador Anatoly Antonov on Thursday.

"I am sure that the participants of the heroic achievements were perplexed when they heard outright insults against great Russia and its leadership. They didn't understand why the Soviet Union was not mentioned among the victors, why throw mud at their brothers-in-arms," Antonov told reporters. "The 'barking of Tabagui' coming from the US capital speaks of one thing - despair due to the realization of the impossibility to continue imposing one's own will on other nations."

Antonov also underscored that at the same time, Russian President Vladimir Putin, despite the seriousness of the international situation, never stoops to statements of this nature.

"The United States does not want to recognize the growing role of countries seeking independence from the West, including not only Russia but also many other states, including in

Europe," he said. "They continue to pose as the leader of the 'free world' while simultaneously waving the 'sanctions baton.' They advertise supposedly grandiose achievements in the economic sphere while failing to protect the institution of the 'American Dream' at home."

Antonov went on to say that it seems that the calmer the tone of statements made by Russia's leadership when explaining its foreign policy approaches, military doctrine, and the root causes of the Special Military Operation, the more hysterical the attacks of the Western leaders become.

"Russophobes are doing everything to promote their own invented philosophy of the danger allegedly emanating from Russia, although, as President Putin clearly expressed, our actions are precisely a reaction to the steps of the United States and its satellites," he stated.

On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said during a meeting with the heads of the world's leading news agencies that it is impossible to commemorate D-Day with those who put neo-Nazis on a pedestal, in reference to an invitation issued to Ukrainian officials to attend the ceremony.

Putin recalled the incident when Volodymyr Zelensky gave a standing ovation to Nazi veteran Yaroslav Hunka alongside the entire Canadian legislature. The president stressed that the Soviet Union lost 27 million lives in its fight against Nazi Germany, 70% of them were from Soviet Russia, and Russia was not invited to partake in the D-Day ceremony.

The Normandy landings of US, UK, and Canadian forces took place on June 6, 1944. It was the largest naval, air, and land operation in history, in which nearly 7,000 allied naval vessels and an estimated 156,000 troops from the US, the UK and Canada landed in France's Normandy. Total allied casualties are estimated at 10,000.

For comparison, over 1 million Soviet soldiers fought, and hundreds of thousands were killed in the 1943 Battle of Kursk, which is commonly recognized as the turning point of World War II that determined Nazi Germany's defeat.

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Hamas Leader Sinwar Tells Negotiators Group Will Not Surrender Guns - Reports

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar told Arab negotiators that he is ready to proceed with the proposed deal if Israel agrees to a permanent ceasefire but will not lay down their weapons, the Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday, citing top US officials.

On Friday, US President Joe Biden said that Israel had offered the Palestinian movement Hamas a new three-phase proposal with a road map that would lead to an enduring cessation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip and the release of the remaining hostages.

The first phase includes a complete ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Gaza population centers, and the release of some of the hostages held by Hamas, including the wounded, the elderly, and women, as well as the release of detained Palestinians from Israeli prisons.

The second phase involves an indefinite cessation of hostilities in exchange for releasing the remaining hostages. The third phase is to begin the reconstruction of the war-torn Gaza.

"Hamas will not surrender its guns or sign a proposal that asks for that," the report quoted Arab

negotiators as saying what Sinwar told them regarding the proposed agreement.

Earlier this week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was ready to accept a temporary ceasefire in Gaza for 42 days in exchange for freeing the hostages held by Hamas.

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#### SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, June 7 (Sputnik) –

##### MIDDLE EAST

\* UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemns the recent Israeli airstrike on a school of the UN Palestine agency (UNRWA) in the Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza, spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Thursday.

\* The United States has asked Israel for more information about an Israeli strike on a school in Gaza that killed civilians, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

\* The United States continues to wait for a response from Hamas on Israel's latest ceasefire proposal and hopes it will receive an update as soon as possible, Miller said.

\* The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is ready to significantly increase humanitarian assistance in the Gaza Strip as soon as curbs at crucial crossing points are lifted, the head of the ICRC regional delegation for Russia and Belarus told Sputnik.

##### WESTERN SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

\* Paris will transfer Mirage 2000-5 fighter jets to Kiev and train Ukrainian pilots, President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday.

\* Russia sees statements made by the collective West on supplying more weapons to Ukraine and is ready to react, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

\* Hungary disapproves of the initiative to send French military instructors to Ukraine, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said.

##### CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

\* It is obvious that the West will make steps to get rid of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and his future will be unrelated to the presidential work, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said.

\* The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has no intention to downgrade its presence in the areas of the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine amid intensifying fighting in the Kharkov (also known as Kharkiv) region, the head of the ICRC Regional Delegation for Russia, Boris Michel, told Sputnik.

\* Russia will be carefully monitoring the upcoming Ukraine peace summit hosted by Switzerland, Peskov said.

\* Ukraine is redeploying some military units from the Zaporizhzhia direction to the Kharkiv Region, Zaporizhzhia Region Governor Yevgeny Balitsky told Sputnik.

##### ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM

\* The St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) retains its international status despite Western sanctions, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday.

\* Oman hopes to draw on Russian expertise in space exploration to position itself as a regional

gateway to space, the official speaker for the Omani delegation to Russia told Sputnik.

#### GLOBAL ENERGY

\* The OPEC+ countries are seeking to return to a decrease of only 5% of quotas as part of the voluntary oil production cuts, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said on Thursday.

\* The global oil demand will grow by 1.5 to 2 million barrels per day in 2024 and by 1.5 million barrels per day in 2025, Novak said.

\* BRICS support is important for the restoration of Venezuela's energy sector, Venezuelan Vice President Jose Felix Rivas Alvarado told Sputnik.

#### ECB DECISION TO LOWER INTEREST RATE

\* The European Central Bank (ECB) has decided on Thursday to lower the base interest rate to 4.25% per annum for the first time since 2016.

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US Team Involved in Gaza Hostage Talks Unaware of Biden Plan to Announce Proposal - Hersh

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The US team of diplomats involved in Gaza ceasefire talks was unaware of President Joe Biden's plans to announce a new Israeli proposal for a peace agreement in Gaza, Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh reported on Thursday, citing a US official familiar with the matter.

Hersh's source told him that one analyst on the US negotiating team, led by CIA Director Burns, raised the issue in a cable to Washington, stating that they were never told about the proposal and heard about it first from the Qatari government.

The CIA did not immediately respond to Sputnik's request for comment on the matter.

After Biden's announcement, Burns and his team met with delegations from Egypt and Qatar in Doha to discuss mechanisms for resuming truce talks for a Gaza ceasefire deal.

According to Hersh, Biden's announcement was pure political nonsense and there was no breakthrough offer or a "comprehensive new proposal" from the Israeli leadership, which was also caught off guard by it.

The US official told Hersh that Biden's speech on the proposal was more of a signal that the White House was in panic mode as it sought to gain some political leverage on this issue amid backlash for the United States being passive aggressive toward Israel's killing of tens of thousands of civilians in Gaza.

The US official, Hersh said, believes that Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu has no interest in ending the war for political reasons, since most of the Israeli public supports continuing the military operation.

Biden recently told Time magazine that there is every reason for people to think Netanyahu is prolonging the Gaza conflict for his own political goals, but later backtracked on his statement.

Last Friday, Biden said that Israel had offered the Palestinian movement Hamas a new three-phase proposal with a road map that would lead to an enduring cessation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip and the release of all hostages.

The first phase includes a complete ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Gaza population centers and the release of some of the hostages held by Hamas, including the wounded, the elderly, and women, as well as the release of detained Palestinians from prisons. The second phase involves an indefinite cessation of hostilities in exchange for the release of the remaining hostages. The third phase of the initiative is to begin reconstruction of the war-torn Gaza.

On Monday, Netanyahu said the Jewish state was ready to accept a temporary ceasefire in the Gaza Strip for 42 days in exchange for freeing hostages.

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US to Closely Watch Russian Naval Ships as They Arrive to Cuba Later in June – White House

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) – The United States will be closely monitoring Russian naval ships that are set to arrive in Cuba next week, but Washington does not view the visit as a national security threat, White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said on Thursday.

“We are gonna watch it closely, of course, like we do with all Russian naval exercises in the Caribbean. This isn't the first time they've done this. They've done it several years past almost every couple of years or so they do this. So, we'll watch it closely, but we're not anticipating any significant national security threat as a result of these exercises,” Kirby said in an interview for CNN.

On Thursday, the Cuban Foreign Ministry said that a detachment of four Russian naval vessels, including the Admiral Gorshkov frigate and the Kazan nuclear submarine, will arrive at Havana on an official visit from June 12–17.

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Ukrainian Government Unsatisfied With Biden's D-Day Speech - Reports

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The Ukrainian government is unsatisfied with US President Joe Biden's speech at a D-day speech in France, Politico reported on Thursday.

“[Biden's] D-day speech doesn't matter,” a source with connections to officials in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office reportedly said.

Ukrainian officials viewed the speech as empty rhetoric, the source said.

During the speech, Biden spoke out against so-called isolationism and warned that Europe will be endangered if Ukraine loses in its conflict with Russia.

A senior Biden administration official reportedly said that criticisms of the president's speech are “nonsense” and that Biden has helped to form a massive pro-Ukraine coalition of countries.

Although Biden recently authorized Ukraine to use US-provided weapons to strike Russia, the limited range for such strikes is not enough to ensure a Ukrainian victory, deputy chair of the Ukrainian parliament's National Security Committee, Yehor Cherniev, reportedly said.

On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia's response to the provision of long-range weapons to Ukraine may be asymmetrical. Russia reserves the right to act if it sees other countries engaging in warfare against it, Putin said.

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Ecuadoran President on Latest OFAC Sanctions: 'US Backs Our Fight on Terrorism'

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) – Ecuadoran President Daniel Noboa said on Thursday that, following sanctions imposed by the United States Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) on a drug-trafficking gang, Washington supports Quito's fight against terrorism.

"The United States backs our fight against terrorism. For years terrorists got used to doing whatever they wanted to do, today the story is different. Today they have a government that confronts them and continues to gather allies in the struggle," Noboa said via the X platform. "This is a long-winded war, one that we will win."

Earlier on Thursday, OFAC sanctioned the Ecuador-based drug-trafficking organization known as Los Lobos (The Wolves) and its leader Wilmer Geovanny Chavarria Barre, who remains at large, for contributing to violence and instability in Ecuador.

The sanctions built on the February 7 designation of Ecuadorian drug gang Los Choneros. The sanctions came in response to Ecuadorian criminal organizations, backed by Mexican cartels, driving violence and instability in the country.

Los Lobos originated as a group of hitmen working under Los Choneros, now a rival gang. Los Lobos have been involved in drug trafficking, murder-for-hire, and illegal gold mining.

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UN Chief Condemns Israeli Strike on UNRWA School in Nuseirat Refugee Camp - Statement

UNITED NATIONS, June 6 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemns the recent Israeli airstrike on a school of the UN Palestine agency (UNRWA) in the Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza, spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Thursday.

"The Secretary-General condemns the Israeli airstrike overnight on an UNRWA school in Nuseirat Refugee Camp, sheltering some 6,000 IDPs. Reportedly, more than 30 people were killed in the attack, including 14 children, with many others injured," the statement said.

The UN premises must be "inviolable" during all times, it added.

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US Senators Request Information From Biden Admin. on Termination of Asylum Cases - Letter

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - US Senators John Thune and JD Vance on Thursday sent a letter to the Biden administration requesting information about its reported cancellation of more than 350,000 migrant asylum cases.

"We believe that this amounts to a de facto policy of mass amnesty that not only flouts federal immigration law, but may serve as yet another 'pull factor' that continues to energize illegal immigration across our borders and fuel the humanitarian and national security crisis that continues to unfold under your watch," the letter said.

The letter was addressed to Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and US Attorney General Merrick Garland.

Terminating hundreds of thousands of asylum cases sends a signal to migrants that the asylum program is so dysfunctional that merely filing an asylum claim – regardless of whether it is legitimate or not - could allow them to remain in the United States, the letter said.

The letter requests information from the Biden administration about the termination of cases, including their vetting process, within 14 days.

The United States has experienced three consecutive record-breaking years of illegal migration across its southern border under the Biden administration.

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Boeing Starliner Docks at With Space Station With Gilmore, Williams on Board - NASA

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The Boeing Starliner made its first crewed docking with the International Space Station (ISS) with US astronauts Barry Gilmore and Sunita Williams on board at 1:56 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) about 250 miles above the earth on Wednesday.

"Docking complete at 1:56 p.m.," Gilmore reported to Houston mission control.

"Butch and Suni, nicely done," Houston Control replied.

Earlier, the Starliner's technical capture by the ISS was confirmed at 1:34 pm EDT.

The Starliner had previously made successful automatic uncrewed docking and departure from the ISS in 2022.

The space craft, meant to be a companion to Space X's successful DragonX, made the mission after repeated delays, a continuing helium leak, being three years behind schedule and more than a billion dollars over budget.

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US Asked Israel For More Info About Fatal Israeli Strike on Gaza School - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The United States has asked Israel for more information about an Israeli strike on a school in Gaza that killed civilians, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Thursday.

"We just asked for more information about what happened, they came back to us and said we

were targeting 20 to 30 militants ... There ought to be full transparency, which is what we have called for in other cases," Miller said in a press briefing. "We think they should make public any further details."

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Biden Says Will Accept Outcome of Son Hunter's Trial, Will Not Pardon Him

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said on Thursday that he will accept the outcome of a trial involving his son Hunter Biden and will not pardon him if he were convicted.

Hunter Biden is currently on trial for allegedly lying about his drug use on a firearm purchase form.

"Yes," Joe Biden said in an interview with ABC News, when asked whether he will accept the outcome of the trial.

Joe Biden also affirmed that he will not pardon his son. Hunter Biden faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted.

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US asked Israel for more info about what happened in israeli strike that killed civilians in Gaza school - state dept.

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US to Impose Visa Restrictions on Georgia Officials Over Foreign Agents Law - State Dept

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The United States is taking steps to impose visa restrictions on dozens of Georgian individuals in connection with the "foreign agents" legislation, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Thursday.

"We [the US] are taking steps to impose visa restrictions on dozens of Georgian individuals," Miller said during a press briefing.

The first tranche of visa restrictions comprises members of the Georgian Dream Party, parliament members, law enforcement, and private citizens.

Miller stated that it remains the US's hope for Georgia's leaders to reconsider their actions and take steps toward their democratic and Euro-Atlantic aspirations, but if they do not, the United States is prepared to take additional actions.

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US Hopes for Response From Hamas on Ceasefire Proposal as Soon as Possible - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The United States continues to wait for a response from Hamas on Israel's latest ceasefire proposal and hopes it will receive an update as soon as possible, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Thursday.

"We have not yet received an official response to the proposal that's on the table," Miller said. "I don't have an update on that. We have wanted to see a response as soon as possible. We think this should be an urgent priority to get this ceasefire over the line."

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us taking steps to impose visa restrictions on dozens of individuals in georgia - state dept.

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PREVIEW - Will May Jobs Report Change US Fed's Heart on Rates?

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - Following one disappointment after another in getting US interest rates down from two-decade highs, Wall Street is on a new wager that the Federal Reserve will be inclined to make a cut after the May jobs report released on Friday.

Yet, those counting on the Fed to do the deed will likely succeed only if the so-called non-farm payrolls report shows a substantial — albeit, meaningful — decline in growth for last month compared with April.

The central bank has made clear that besides outright readings on inflation, jobs, wage and consumer spending numbers would be key determinants for rate decisions. A few Fed decision makers have even suggested a wait until 2025 for a rate cut.

Still, many on Wall Street seem hopeful for a change, in as little as three months.

"Really, the game changer will be that non-farm payrolls on Friday," Angeline Ong, analyst at IG, said in an outlook on the US economy and interest rates issued by the brokerage and trading advisory.

As of Thursday, Wall Street's expectation was for the Labor Department to report that non-farm payrolls grew by 185,000 in May from April's 175,000.

While that itself would be 40% below the March-to-April payroll growth of 315,000, some are betting on an even bigger decline based on recent US labor market indicators.

"The Fed clings to its data-dependent approach and the headline NFP print, combined with these other data, could drive the market pricing of the Fed's next policy action," Eren Sengezer of FXStreet said in an analysis posted Thursday on the markets' commentary portal.

But he also pointed to the volatility sometimes in payrolls data and how that could prod the Fed to await signs of a trend before proceedings.

In February, payrolls initially showed a 275,000 growth, surpassing market expectations for 200,000. That came after January's increase of 335,000 got revised down later to 229,000.

"More importantly, underlying details of the jobs report, such as wage inflation, as measured by

the Average Hourly Earnings, and the Labor Force Participation rate, could be having an impact" too on the Fed, Sengezer wrote.

Recent labor market data has boosted Wall Street's hopes for a rate pivot.

Private-sector jobs numbers from earlier this week showed an addition of 152,000 workers, versus forecasts for 173,000 and April's growth of 188,000.

Separately, a report on job openings for April stood at a three-year low.

The odds for a rate change have remarkably shifted since New York Fed President John Williams — one of the 12 regional heads of the central bank — said on May 21 that the 2% per annum inflation target desired would not likely be met until 2026. That indicated to many that the earliest rate cut would likely be in 2025 — especially if inflation got out of hand again.

Now, about 65% of rate-cut watchers now expect the Fed to institute a cut by September, according to the FedWatch Tool.

Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, hit a four-decade high in the aftermath of the 2020 coronavirus breakout, growing as much as 9.1% a year by June 2022.

The Fed, responding to runaway price growth, hiked interest rates 11 times since March 2022.

The current range for rates, at between 5.25% and 5.5%, are at their highest since 2002. They compare with the pre-pandemic range of between zero and 0.25%.

The Fed has an opportunity to revise this at the conclusion of its next policy meeting on June 12.

Should it pass on that, the central bank has four more opportunities to make a change before the year ends: July 31, September 18, November 7 and December 18.

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Bannon Says Will Prevail at US Supreme Court, After Judges Orders Him to Prison by July 1  
(Updates with more details in para 5; corrects date in lede)

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - Former Trump adviser Steve Bannon said on Thursday that he will successfully appeal his conviction to the US Supreme Court for ignoring a congressional subpoena, after US District Court Judge Carl Nichols ordered him to report to prison by July 1.

"We're going to win at the Supreme Court," Bannon said during remarks after the court hearing.

In July 2022, Bannon was convicted on contempt of Congress charges for refusing to comply with a subpoena from the US House of Representatives' January 6 Select Committee. Bannon received a four-month prison sentence for the charges.

Bannon said a weaponized US Justice Department is attempting to suppress former President Donald Trump and his supporters ahead of the 2024 US presidential election.

However, Bannon said there is nothing that will silence him. Trump will win in a "landslide" on Election Day and Republicans will end up with control over both chambers of Congress, Bannon added.

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### Bannon Says Will Prevail at US Supreme Court After Judge Orders Him to Prison by July 1

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### US Urges Israel to Avoid 'Limited War' in Lebanon, Warns of Iran Response - Reports

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration is urging Israel to avoid a limited war in Lebanon and cautioning against provoking Iran to intervene whereby the crisis may spin out of control, Axios reported on Thursday.

The exchange of fire between the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Hezbollah has escalated in the last two weeks, prompting some IDF and cabinet officials to call for expanding the conflict, the report said.

The United States has brought up to Israel the potential scenario in which Lebanon could be joined by pro-Iranian militias in Syria, Iraq and Yemen who would want to participate in the conflict and pose a threat to Israel.

The IDF and Hezbollah, which supports Palestine in the conflict with Israel, have regularly exchanged fire since the Palestinian movement Hamas attacked Israel on October 7 and Israel started its military operations in the Gaza Strip. Most recently, Israel used incendiary munitions on Wednesday over residential areas in southern Lebanon.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned that Israel is ready to take very intense action in the north of the country to restore security "one way or another."

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### US Senator Calls for 'Real Consequences' on Cuba if It Hosts Russian Submarines in Region

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - US Senator Marco Rubio on Thursday suggested the US government is prepared to impose consequences on Cuba if it hosts Russian nuclear-capable submarines.

"We haven't had a Russian submarine carrying nuclear-capable missiles operating in the

Caribbean in over 30 years," Rubio said in a statement on X. "So if the regime in Cuba decides to allow one to make a port call just 90 miles from our shores, the Biden administration must impose real consequences on them."

US media, citing unnamed officials, reported on Wednesday that Russia was allegedly preparing to conduct military drills in the Caribbean in the coming weeks, which will include Russian submarines capable of carrying nuclear missiles.

There have been no official statements from Russia regarding the reported exercises of Russian ships in the Caribbean Sea.

However, the US official said the United States views Moscow's alleged deployment as a "messaging tactic" after President Joe Biden permitted Ukraine last week to use US-supplied weapons for limited strikes on Russian territory.

On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia's response to supplies of long-range weapons to Ukraine may be asymmetrical. Russia has the right to supply weapons of the same class to those regions of the world where attacks on sensitive facilities of the suppliers of Ukrainian weapons will be carried out, Putin said.

The Kremlin has consistently warned against continued arms deliveries to Kiev since the start of Russia's military operation in Ukraine in February 2022, saying it would lead to further escalation of the conflict. In April 2022, Russia sent a diplomatic note to all NATO countries on the issue of arms supplies to Ukraine. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has warned that any cargo containing weapons for Ukraine will become a legitimate target for Russian strikes.

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US Trade Deficit Hits 18-Month High in April - Commerce Dept.

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The US trade deficit hit an 18-month high in April amid a surge in imports that included motor vehicles, computers, telecom equipment and other supplies, Commerce Department data showed on Thursday.

Payment for goods and services hit \$74.6 billion in April, up \$6 billion, or 8.7%, from March - the highest since the October 2022 figure of \$75.3 billion, data released by the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis showed.

Imports rose \$8 billion versus the exports growth of \$2 billion, the Bureau of Economic Analysis said in a news release.

"Automotive vehicles, parts, and engines increased \$3.9 billion," the release said in breaking down the imports. "Passenger cars increased \$3.0 billion. Capital goods increased \$2.4 billion. Computer accessories increased \$1.0 billion. Telecommunications equipment increased \$0.7 billion."

The deficit surge was reminiscent of the woes brought on by the coronavirus pandemic which upended US exports severely at one time due to the breakdown in raw materials supply faced by manufacturers, economists at Wells Fargo said.

"Such large monthly swings in the deficit are not completely unusual, but the volatility has increased in the wake of the pandemic," the economists said. "Consider that the trade balance's average monthly change, in absolute value terms, was \$2.4 billion in the four years leading into

the pandemic. That nearly doubled in the past four years to an absolute average of \$4.6 billion. Monthly volatility leaves the data noisy, meaning it can take a few months before discernible trends appear."

Industrial supplies were a definite weak spot in the trade data, slipping for the third time in four months and marking the largest drop at \$1 billion of any major export category, according to the economists.

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#### UN General Assembly Elects 5 New Non-Permanent Members of Security Council

UNITED NATIONS, June 6 (Sputnik) - The UN General Assembly elected five new non-permanent members of the UN Security Council for the next two-year term, a Sputnik correspondent reported on Thursday.

The new non-permanent members are Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama and Somalia.

The new members will replace Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland.

The UN Security Council is the only legally binding body at the United Nations. It is comprised of five permanent members as well as non-permanent members that also contribute to its agenda and objectives.

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#### IMF Says Ukraine's Economy Shows Resilience, But Risks to Growth Very High

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The Ukrainian economy continues to show resilience, but risks to its growth are "very high," International Monetary Fund (IMF) spokesperson Julie Kozack said on Thursday.

"The Ukrainian economy continued to achieve resilient growth through the first quarter of 2024, although risks to growth are very high and are rising, and the outlook for the remainder of the year remains highly uncertain," Kozack told reporters.

The performance of the country's economy under the IMF program remains strong despite conflict-related challenges, Kozack said.

The IMF and the Ukrainian authorities reached a staff-level agreement for the fourth review of the four-year extended fund facility (EFF) arrangement on May 31.

"We do expect our Executive Board to consider Ukraine's review in the coming weeks," she added.

The IMF earlier said that the agreement reached by the fund and Ukraine would allow Kiev to gain access to about \$2.2 billion.

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Biden's Authorization of Strikes Inside Russia to Be 'Very Helpful' for Ukrainians –Austin

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) – President Joe Biden's decision to allow strikes inside Russian territory using US-supplied weapons would be "very, very helpful" to the Ukrainians amid their conflict with Russia, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said in an interview for CNN on Thursday.

Last Thursday, a US State Department spokesperson told Sputnik that Biden had greenlighted Ukrainian strikes using US-supplied weapons inside Russian territory for counter-fire purposes in the Kharkov (also known as Kharkiv) region, but has not authorized the use of long-range missiles, including ATACMS, inside Russia.

"[W]hat we have done is provided Ukraine the ability to counter fire, to fire back at those Russian troops that are firing at them and to be able to take out their artillery batteries as they're firing at the Ukrainians," the report cited Austin as saying.

On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia's response to supplies of long-range weapons to Ukraine may be asymmetrical. Russia has the right to supply our weapons of the same class to those regions of the world where attacks on sensitive facilities of the suppliers of Ukrainian weapons will be carried out, Putin said.

The Kremlin has consistently warned against continued arms deliveries to Kiev since the start of Russia's military operation in Ukraine in February 2022, saying it would lead to further escalation of the conflict. In April 2022, Russia sent a diplomatic note to all NATO countries on the issue of arms supplies to Ukraine. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has warned that any cargo containing weapons for Ukraine will become a legitimate target for Russian strikes.

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Trump Says Will Not Seek Retribution Against Political Foes, Despite Right to Do So

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump said that critics who claim that he would seek retribution on political rivals are wrong, but that he would be within his rights to do so.

"Number one, they're wrong," Trump said on Wednesday in an interview with Fox News, when asked whether he would go after political opponents if reelected in November.

However, Trump said that he would have "every right" to go after political opponents, based on their treatment of him.

Nevertheless, Trump said that he does not want to treat Democrats the way that they have treated Republicans.

There will not be much of a country left if so-called lawfare continues, Trump added.

Trump has repeatedly characterized the criminal cases against him as a form of election interference amid the 2024 US presidential race.

President Joe Biden has said that it is reckless and dangerous for Trump to claim that cases

against him are rigged.

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US Imposes Sanctions on Palestinian Militant Group 'Lions Den' - State Department

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) — The United States is imposing sanctions on “Lions Den,” a militant Palestinian group in the West Bank, the State Department said on Thursday.

"The Department of State is today imposing sanctions on “Lions’ Den,” a militant Palestinian group centered in Nablus’s Old City in the West Bank," the State Department said in a statement.

According to the statement, in September 2022, Lions’ Den fighters injured and killed Palestinian civilians during clashes with the Palestinian Authority Security Forces in Nablus, and in April 2024, targeted Israeli forces at a checkpoint.

Furthermore, the statement added that in October 2022, Lions’ Den claimed responsibility for several drive-by shootings in the Nablus area, targeting Israeli vehicles near Elon Moreh and Har Bracha.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a large-scale rocket attack against Israel and breached the border, attacking both civilian neighborhoods and military bases. Nearly 1,200 people in Israel were killed and some 240 others abducted during the attack. Israel launched retaliatory strikes, ordered a complete blockade of Gaza, and started a ground incursion into the Palestinian enclave with the declared goal of eliminating Hamas fighters and rescuing the hostages. Over 35,900 people have been killed so far by Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip, according to local authorities. More than 100 hostages are still believed to be held by Hamas in Gaza.

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US Believes Ukraine Will Not Forfeit Captured Territory to Russia – Deputy NSA

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) – US Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer said Thursday that Ukraine would not be willing to forfeit captured territory to Russia as part of a deal to end the conflict.

"All the data shows and common sense dictates that the Ukrainians are not going to be content to settle that outcome, so it is certainly not for the United States or any other outside country to contemplate some sort of deal that does not respect fundamentally the views and objectives of the government that is actually doing the fighting and on whose territory this war is being fought," Finer said at the CNAS Security Conference.

Finer described the prospect of forfeiting territory as a "non-starter" for both Ukraine’s government and people.

He added that the US did not see any indication that Russia was serious about ending the conflict on terms that would be acceptable to Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said on multiple occasions that Russia is prepared to continue negotiations with Ukraine based on agreements previously reached in Turkey and Belarus. Any potential talks on Ukraine also need to take into account Russia's security concerns and new territorial realities, Putin said.

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#### SpaceX Successfully Accomplishes 4th Starship Test Flight Objectives

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, Texas, June 6 (Sputnik) - SpaceX launched successfully its Starship rocket and accomplished the main goals of its fourth test flight, a Sputnik correspondent reported on Thursday.

"Despite the loss of many tiles and a damaged flap, Starship made it all the way to a soft landing in the ocean," SpaceX head Elon Musk said via his social media company X.

Musk said the flight accomplished one of the two main goals he had set for the company.

"Successful soft landing of the Starship Super Heavy Rocket booster," Musk said.

The primary goal of the test flight was to demonstrate a landing burn and a soft splashdown in the Gulf of Mexico with the super heavy booster while achieving a controlled entry of the Starship rocket.

During the reentry, the Starship was supposed to demonstrate its ability to go through the most extreme heating of reentry, with temperatures peaking at 1,430 degrees Celsius, while the rocket plunged into the atmosphere at more than 20 times the speed of sound.

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#### IMF Made Clear That Using Russian Assets for Ukraine Should Not Undermine Monetary System

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) – The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has made it clear that the West must ensure that using frozen Russian assets to aid Ukraine does not undermine global monetary system, IMF spokesperson Julie Kozack said on Thursday.

"We have made our position clear and public, which is that what is important for us for the IMF is that any actions taken have sufficient legal underpinnings and that they do not undermine the functioning of the international monetary system," Kozack told reporters.

She pointed out that the IMF expressed this position on many occasions.

The Kremlin has said that any attempts to confiscate Russian assets amount to theft and a violation of international law.

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## IMF Expects US Economy to Slow Down in 2024 Due to Decline in 1st Quarter Activity

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects that the US economy will slow down this year due to the decline in business activity during the first quarter, IMF spokesperson Julie Kozack said on Thursday.

"We do expect that there does need to be some slowing of the US economy in 2024," Kozack said, referring to the slowdown of activity during the first quarter.

Kozack pointed out that the US economy has been remarkably resilient and domestic demand remains strong despite the slowdown in activity.

"This gives us comfort that the economy is in good shape despite the fact that the first quarter number was on the low side," Kozack said.

Inflation has been higher in the first quarter than the IMF would like to see and the Federal Reserve must be cautious while taking additional steps to bring inflation back to the 2% per year target.

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## US Sanctions Ecuador-Based Drug Trafficking Group Los Lobos - Treasury

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The United States is sanctioning Ecuador-based drug trafficking organization Los Lobos and its leader for contributing to violence and instability in Ecuador, the US Treasury Department said on Thursday.

"Numbering thousands of members, Los Lobos has emerged as Ecuador's largest drug trafficking organization and contributes significantly to the violence gripping the country," the Treasury Department said in a statement.

The sanctions build on the February 7 designation of Ecuadorian drug gang Los Choneros, the statement said. The sanctions come in response to Ecuadorian criminal organizations, backed by Mexican cartels, driving violence and instability in the country, the statement said.

Los Lobos originated as a group of hitmen working under Los Choneros, which is now a rival gang, the statement said. Los Lobos has been involved in drug trafficking, murder-for-hire and illegal gold mining, the statement said.

The sanctions specifically target the top leader of Los Lobos, Wilmer Geovanny Chavarria Barre, who remains at large, the statement said.

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## US Does Not See Ukraine Being in 'Period of Strategic Peril' - Finer

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - The United States does not see Ukraine being in a period of strategic peril despite experiencing difficulties on the battlefield, US Deputy National Security

Advisor Jon Finer said on Thursday.

"I don't think we see this as a as a period of strategic peril, as difficult as things are currently on the battlefield," Finer said at the CNAS Security Conference.

Finer said there was an "undue degree of negativity and pessimism" about the Russian army recent territorial gains around the city of Kharkiv.

Finer described the Russia's gains as a "narrow strip of territory" along the border.

Neither the United States nor Ukraine view those gains as strategically consequential in the overall trajectory of the war, he said.

Finer emphasized it was important for the US-led collective West to ensure that resources flowed to Ukraine as quickly as possible.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned NATO states that they should be aware "what they are playing with" when they supply weapons and allow Ukraine to use them to strike Russian territory.

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Pentagon Can't Confirm Reports of New Ukraine Aid Package This Week, Still Being Worked on

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - A US Defense Department spokesperson on Thursday could not confirm reports of a new Ukraine aid package expected to be announced this week because security assistance packages are still being worked on and have not been approved yet.

"We can't confirm that as the packages are still being worked on and have not been approved yet," the spokesperson told Sputnik.

The United States is expected to announce a new \$225 million security assistance package for Ukraine this week, media reported on Wednesday.

In April, President Joe Biden signed a foreign aid bill that provided some \$60 billion for Ukraine, replenishing funding for additional security assistance that had run dry in December.

Western countries have provided hundreds of billions of dollars worth of aid to Ukraine since the start of Russia's special military operation in February 2022. Military aid shipments began in 2022 with artillery munitions and training and have escalated to include tanks, advanced air-defense systems, missiles and cluster munitions. The Kremlin has consistently warned against the West's continued arms deliveries to Ukraine, saying that they only prolong the conflict.

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Biden Exploits D-Day to Rally for Ukraine, Makes No Mention of Soviet Sacrifice

WASHINGTON, June 6 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden on Thursday used his speech during the D-Day anniversary commemoration ceremony to rally support for Ukraine and made no mention of the crucial role that the Soviet Union played in defeating Nazi Germany.

"We know the dark forces that these heroes [war veterans] fought against eighty years ago,

they never fade. Aggression and greed, the desire to dominate and control, to change borders by force ... Here in Europe, we see one stark example. Ukraine has been invaded by a tyrant bent on domination," Biden said.

Biden praised US war veterans and the allied war efforts. However, the president did not mention the role of the Soviet Union.

Russian representatives were not invited to the commemoration ceremony.

On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said during a meeting with the heads of the world's leading news agencies that it is impossible to commemorate D-Day with those who put neo-Nazis on a pedestal, in reference to an invitation issued to Ukrainian officials to attend the ceremony.

Putin recalled the incident when Volodymyr Zelensky gave a standing ovation to Nazi veteran Yaroslav Hunka alongside the entire Canadian legislature. The president stressed that the Soviet Union lost 27 million lives in its fight against Nazi Germany, 70% of them were from Soviet Russia, and Russia was not invited to partake in the D-Day ceremony.

The Normandy landings of US, UK and Canadian forces took place on June 6, 1944. It was the largest naval, air, and land operation in history when nearly 7,000 allied naval vessels and an estimated 156,000 troops from the US, the UK and Canada landed in France's Normandy. Total allied casualties are estimated at 10,000.

For comparison, over 1 million Soviet soldiers fought, and hundreds of thousands were killed in the 1943 Battle of Kursk, which is commonly recognized as a turning point of World War II that determined Nazi Germany's defeat.

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Biden Policy Changes on Border Will Worsen Humanitarian Crisis for Migrants - Rights Group

EL PASO, June 6 (Sputnik) - President Biden's new restrictions on migrants seeking asylum on the US southern border will only worsen the humanitarian crisis for vulnerable migrants, and legal challenge is expected to be taken to block his executive action, Hope Border Institute Executive Director Dylan Corbett told Sputnik.

"The administration's actions will deepen the humanitarian crisis for vulnerable migrants at the US-Mexico border," Corbett said on Wednesday.

Limiting the ability for migrants to access legal counsel will also significantly affect due process protections for migrants and will endanger them, Corbett added.

On Tuesday, Biden took executive action barring migrants who illegally cross the US southern border from claiming asylum in the United States. The new restrictions went into effect on Wednesday.

The suspension will be removed when daily illegal entries on the US southern border hit or fall below 1,500 for seven-consecutive days, but the suspension will snap back if daily illegal entries on the US southern border exceed 2,500 illegal crossings for seven straight days, according to the White House.

"These measures are a copy-paste of policies under the Trump administration; just as they were challenged and blocked in the courts then, we believe the courts will also intervene now,"

Corbett said.

Illegal migration on the US southern border has gone through three consecutive record-breaking years since Biden took over the White House in January 2021, totaling nearly 8 million illegal encounters during that period, according to publicly available US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) data.

Since October 2023, an estimated 1.5 million migrants have been apprehended for illegally crossing into the United States on the southern border, CBP data shows.