

7/5/24 Friday

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Hurricane Beryl Slams Into Cayman Islands After Leaving a Path of Destruction in Jamaica

On Wednesday, authorities confirmed that one man was swept into a storm water drain while another woman died after a house collapsed on her as a result of the brutal storm.

Hurricane Beryl has rammed into the Cayman Islands after leaving a path of death and destruction in Jamaica. Beryl, which became a category 3 hurricane with wind speeds near to 120 miles per hour (193km/h) has been wreaking havoc in the Caribbean since Monday, nearly destroying parts of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada.

The storm has also damaged or destroyed about 95% of homes in Mayreau and Union Island in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, this past [week](#).

Earlier on Thursday, meteorologists said Beryl was 50 miles south-west of Grand Cayman but moving away from the island. Hurricane Beryl weakened to a Category 2 storm as it sailed over open water toward Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on Thursday where Mexico's tourist centers of Cancún lie.

The storm's center was roughly 215 miles (345 kilometers) east-southeast of Tulum, Mexico as of Thursday afternoon with maximum sustained winds of 110 mph (175km/h) and moving west-northwest at 20 mph (31km/h), [AP News reported](#).

Out of fear that the storm may bring more destruction with it, Cancún's airport filled with tourists hoping to board the last flights out before the arrival of the storm. Mexico's defense ministry also opened about 120 storm shelters and shared warnings and instructions on evacuation and other measures.

Beryl, the first hurricane of the 2024 Atlantic season, reached its peak earlier this week as the earliest category 5 storm on record. The storm reportedly left at least 11 people dead after ramming through St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Venezuela, Grenada and Jamaica, [CNN reported](#).

After the storm touched down in Jamaica on Wednesday it forced airports to close and sent nearly 1,000 people into shelters provided for by the government. The storm managed to uplift roofs, electric poles and trees as well as caused widespread flooding, [The Guardian](#) reported. The storm also left many without water and at least 60% of people without electricity.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro told state media that three people had died as a result of the storm and four more were missing. More than 8,000 homes had also been damaged by Beryl.

[Laura Velázquez](#), the head of Mexico's civil defense agency said on Thursday that Beryl is expected to shrink down to a Category 1 hurricane before it reaches an unpopulated area south of Tulum on Friday. However, the storm could rebuild to hurricane strength before hitting the Mexico-US border at Matamoros, she warned.

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## France Set to Deploy 30,000 Police Ahead of Parliamentary Election

The National Rally finished first in last Sunday's first-round election with 33% of the vote, followed by the New Popular Front (NFP) alliance with 28%.

France plans to deploy about 30,000 police across their country late on Sunday following the second round of a parliamentary election, according to the Minister of the Interior of France [Gérald Darmanin](#).

The interior minister added that 5,000 police would be on duty in Paris and the surrounding area so that the "radical right and radical left do not take advantage of the situation to cause mayhem".

The announcement comes after a growing number of political candidates and activists in France have been targeted by violent or verbal attacks. On Wednesday evening, a group of youths were arrested after Prisca Thevenot, the government spokesperson, said she and her deputy and a party activist were attacked while putting up campaign posters in Meudon.

"I don't say this only as spokesperson of the government, but more as the daughter of immigrants and mother of mixed-race children," [Thevenot](#) told French broadcaster TF1, citing repeated and intensified racist attacks. "They no longer do it anonymously, but with uncovered faces and even with a certain pride."

But National Rally candidates have also come under attack, with European Parliament Member Marie Dauchy saying she was "violently assaulted" while campaigning at a market in La Rochette near Grenoble.

Conservative candidate Nicolas Conquer also complained that he and a female colleague had been pelted with eggs following an incident the month prior, when another National Rally candidate had to be treated in the hospital after he was attacked for handing out pamphlets. Sunday's voting is expected to lean heavily in the favor of the National Rally and it may allow them to become the biggest party in parliament, even if they are unable to reach the 289 seats needed to form the next government, [The Guardian reported](#). And Le Pen on Thursday claimed her party could reach a majority if the voter turnout is high.

"I think there is still the capacity to have an absolute majority with the electorate turning out in a final effort to get what they want," Le Pen told BFM TV. "I say turn out to vote, as it's a really important moment to get a change in politics in all the areas that are making you suffer right now."

However, more than 200 candidates across France's political spectrum have withdrawn their candidacies as a way to allow whatever party would be best equipped to defeat the National Rally a clearer path. The latest [polling](#) also suggests the National Rally will win 210-240 seats - just short of the 289 needed to form a government.

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## NASA Telescope Releases New Image of Celestial Fireworks Surrounding Star

The image was taken with Webb's MIRI (Mid-Infrared Instrument), and shows a "central protostar growing in the neck of what appears to be an hourglass shape, NASA said. NASA has released a new image from the James Webb Space Telescope as a way to celebrate July 4. The image is of a young object becoming a star, and shows a fiery hourglass made up of a molecular cloud harboring a protostar.

The protostar is about 100,000 years old, which is relatively young for the object. The image shows the protostar gathering mass from its parent molecular cloud L1526 which is located in the constellation Taurus, about 460 light-years from Earth.

In the image, diffuse blue light and the filamentary structures in the image come from organic compounds known as "polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)" while the red at the center of the structure is an "energized, thick layer of gasses and dust that surrounds the protostar", NASA explained. "The region in between, which shows up in white, is a mixture of PAHs, ionized gas, and other molecules."

The outflows which are emitted in opposite directions along the protostar's rotation axis as the object consumes gas and dust from the surrounding cloud, NASA explained. The outflows "take the form of bow shocks to the surrounding molecular cloud, which appear as filamentary structures throughout".

"They are also responsible for carving the bright hourglass structure within the molecular cloud as they energize, or excite, the surrounding matter and cause the regions above and below it to glow."

NASA had previously released their first image of the fledgling star from Webb's Near-Infrared Camera which showed clear details of the celestial stunner. Looking at analyses of both near-infrared and mid-infrared data, NASA can surmise the overall behavior of the system including how the central protostar affects the surrounding region.

"As the protostar continues to age and release energetic jets, it'll consume, destroy, and push away much of this molecular cloud, and many of the structures we see here will begin to fade," the administration explained. "Eventually, once it finishes gathering mass, this impressive display will end, and the star itself will become more apparent, even to our visible-light telescopes."

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## Five Journalists Killed By Israeli Forces Within 24 Hours - Gaza's Government Media Office

The conflict in Gaza has been considered the deadliest conflict for journalists and media workers in the world, according to an Al Jazeera report.

At least three journalists in the Nuseirat refugee camp and two in Gaza City have been killed by separate Israeli strikes, said Gaza's Government Media Office. The three killed in Nuseirat included: Amjad Jahjough and Rizq Abu Ashkian, both from the Palestine Media Agency, and Wafa Abu Dabaan from the Islamic University Radio in Gaza, [Al Jazeera](#) reported.

At least 10 people were killed during the strike on Nuseirat, including Abu Dabaan and Jahjouh's shared children.

On Friday, Palestinian journalists Saadi Madoukh and Ahmed Sukkar were also killed following an Israeli raid. The total number of media workers killed since the conflict first began has risen to at least 158.

As of July 5, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists found the number of media workers killed was at 108 since the war first started, making that the deadliest period since the group first began collecting data in 1992.

It was also [reported](#) on Saturday that at least 16 were killed in an Israeli attack on a school run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. A majority of those who were injured during the attack were children.

Saturday's attack brings the 24-hour death toll to 29 people, including the five journalists who were killed. Gaza's Ministry of Health said on Saturday that 87 people were killed across the enclave in the past 48 hours, bringing the number of those killed in the enclave to 38,098 in just nine months of war time. Nearly 88,000 people have also been injured during that same period, the ministry said.

"It's a scene that we've been seeing over and over for the past nine months, crying parents over the bodies of their children," said an Al Jazeera reporter. "It's heartbreaking and it's becoming the daily norm for people here."

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#### Plague Case Confirmed in US State of Colorado

While the plague can be treated with antibiotics, symptoms usually include a severe headache, fever and chills, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting and swollen lymph nodes, said the WHO. The fatality rate drops below 5% if treated, but if left untreated the fatality rate is 30 to 60%.

Health officials are investigating a human case of plague confirmed in Pueblo County, Colorado. Although, no information about who contracted the disease, nor how or when, has been provided. The Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment (PDPHE) is working with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to investigate, a [press release](#) said. "We advise all individuals to protect themselves and their pets from plague," said Alicia Solis, program manager of the Office of Communicable Disease and Emergency Preparedness at PDPHE.

Plague is a disease that affects humans and other mammals and is caused by the bacterium, *Yersinia pestis*, according to the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#). An average of seven people in the US each year contract the plague, which is spread when an infected rodent flea bites a human or a person handles an infected animal - in some cases it can also be passed through [inhalation](#).

"The more common risk of exposure in the U.S. is from pets, rodents and fleas," said Erica Susky, a certified infection control practitioner based in Canada. Susky adds that hunting, including skinning animals, is also a risk. Overall, the best prevention is to avoid rodents and fleas whenever possible, as well as dead rodents.

"One way to do this is to ensure the home is rodent-proof by eliminating places where rodents may enter and hide," said Susky. "If spending time outdoors where one may be bitten by fleas and other insects, repellent should be applied to minimize potential bites, which are a portal of entry for the bacterium if one is bitten by an infected flea."

The plague is found on all continents except Oceania, though most human cases since the 1990s have occurred in Africa, according to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#). It naturally occurs in areas of the western US, as well as certain regions of Africa and Asia, but can be cured with antibiotics if treatment is quickly given.

According to the organization, about 1,000 to 2,000 cases of plague are reported to them each year across the globe with nearly 600 deaths occurring between 2010 and 2015.

The disease is notorious for having caused the Black Death, a devastating global epidemic that is estimated to have killed roughly [50 million](#) Europeans in the mid-1300s.

Modern sanitation and public-health practices have helped slow the impact of the disease but it has not been eliminated. The bacterium was first introduced in North America around 1900 from rats on ships that came from South Asia, estimates Timothy Brewer, M.D., professor of medicine and epidemiology at UCLA.

"Since its introduction 120 years ago, it has become endemic in ground squirrels and rodents in the rural Southwestern U.S.," said Brewer.

"The reason why it hasn't been eliminated is because there's an animal reservoir," adds [Dr. Dan Barouch](#), director of the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. "The bacteria can infect animals, and because we can't treat all animals in the wild, it persists in nature and thus occasionally causes a limited number of human cases."

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#### Heat-Related Deaths in America's Fifth Largest City Have Nearly Doubled Since Last Year

In Arizona, a 10-year-old boy died on Tuesday after experiencing a heat-related emergency while hiking with his family in a park and preservation area, the Phoenix Police Department said. Heat-related deaths in Phoenix, Arizona have nearly doubled compared to the same period last year, [The Guardian](#) reported, citing the [Maricopa](#) county medical examiner. As of June 29, the number of possible heat-related deaths for the city stood at 175 - jumping 84% since the same period last year. At least 13 of those heat deaths have been confirmed while the other 162 deaths are under investigation.

This year in Phoenix, the average temperature for the month of June was the hottest ever recorded in the city, with low temperatures at night staying in the 90s Fahrenheit (higher than 32 degrees Celsius). For instance, the nightly low for June 27 was 95F (35C) which broke the record for the warmest overnight low in June - in 1990 that record was set at 93F (33.8C). Deaths related to heat in Phoenix have been increasing every year by a staggering rate, despite efforts by the city and the state to address heat mortality and morbidity. So far this year, paramedics have responded to over 400 heat-related emergency calls, the Phoenix fire department said.

And sadly, this most recent milestone is just the beginning for Phoenix, as temperatures are expected to top 115F (46.11C) over the next few days, with a heat dome forecasted to continue to linger over Maricopa county as well as the south-west US.

And more than 150 million Americans across more than 20 states will face record breaking heat this weekend. The National Weather Service in San Francisco warned of [temperatures](#) in California ranging between 100 to 120 F (38 to 49C). Heat advisories fell into affect on Friday for the states of Washington, Oregon, Arizona and Nevada.

"It cannot be stressed enough that this is an exceptionally dangerous and lethal situation," the NWS in San Francisco said. "It may not seem so if you live near the coast, but an event of this scale, magnitude, and longevity will likely rival anything we've seen in the last 18 years for inland areas."

Last summer, over 400 people died during a horrendous heat wave in metro Phoenix during a heat wave that saw [temperatures](#) of 110 F (43.3 C) or higher and that did not ease for over 30 days. A recent report confirmed 645 heat-related deaths for the whole year in Maricopa County - which is more than 50% higher than 2022 and a 700% rise over the past decade.

The preliminary report by the Maricopa County Department of Public Health said that two-thirds of the county's heat-related deaths in 2023 were those aged 50 years or older, and 71% occurred on days when the National Weather Service issued an excessive heat warning.

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#### Machángara River's Rights Have Been Violated by Pollution - Court Ruling

Ecuador is one of the few countries that recognize the rights of natural features not to be degraded or polluted.

A court in [Ecuador](#) ruled on Sunday that pollution has violated the rights of a river running through the capital of Quito. An article of Ecuador's constitution recognizes the rights of natural features, including the Machángara River, which served as the basis for the ruling.

The complaint, on the river's behalf, was brought by the group Kitu Kara. The Ecuadorian government has appealed the ruling, but in the meantime they will have to come up with a plan to clean the river.

"This is historic because the river runs right through Quito, and because of its influence, people live very close to it," said Darío Iza, who is from the group Kitu Kara.

According to the report, the city is responsible for dumping various liquid waste and sewage into the Machángara and then encounters a "near-total lack of treatment of the wastewater that is dumped into it". It also has average levels of 2% oxygen, making it difficult for aquatic life to thrive.

"The river carries away tons of garbage that comes down from gullies and hillsides," said Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature.

A similar suit was reported in late [June](#), when prosecutors in the US state of Arizona released a memo outlining homicide charges against big oil companies for the deaths that occurred during last summer's heat wave. The consumer advocacy non-profit Public Citizen said that the state could pursue reckless manslaughter or second-degree murder claims for the heat wave.

Also in June, the state of Hawaii and a group of 13 young Hawaiians came to an historic settlement two years after the young Hawaiians sued the state Department of Transportation for failing to protect their “constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment.”

The total number of climate cases such as these has more than doubled in the last five years and is expected to continue to surge, says a UN Environment Program and Columbia University's Sabin Center for Climate Change Law report from last year.

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French People on Both Sides of Political Spectrum 'Deeply Dissatisfied With Macron's Presidency'

The situation in France - where unrest was sparked by the results of the recent election - highlights the fact that “no one is happy (...) except a small minority of privileged people,” says Emmanuel Leroy, president of the Institut 1717 think tank and former adviser to Marine Le Pen. “Both the French who call themselves left-wing and those who call themselves right-wing are deeply dissatisfied with Mr. Macron's presidency,” Leroy explains.

The three main political powers in France – the [left-wing coalition](#) led by Jean-Luc Melenchon, the right-wing National Rally and Macron's central-right Renaissance party – now find themselves at an impasse as each of them now has comparable clout but is reluctant to form an alliance with one another, Leroy notes.

“How will this unfold in the coming weeks and months? This is the great unknown today,” he muses. “At the moment, no one can speak of a prime minister, since no head is emerging in the camp of the majority or the left. And in any case, the situation will be extremely difficult to maintain.”

“It is possible that [Mr. Macron](#) will bet on a technical government that is as less politicized as possible, in order to have a kind of general consensus for at least a year and at the end of this year, to make sure that he can dissolve the National Assembly again and make the country go back to the polls for new legislative elections,” he adds. “Let's hope that this time, a majority can get out of it.”

Leroy also argues that whatever violent protests broke out in the wake of the election “are the work of small groups of political agitators, often in connivance with the government in place and who are intended to create an atmosphere of unease, an atmosphere of chaos.”

“Today, almost certainly, none of the political parties that have national representation in Parliament has really incited the riots or misbehaviors that have been observed since last night,” he states.

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## Israel Accused of Purposely Delaying Gaza Ceasefire Proposal

Despite accepting a recent proposal to a ceasefire, Israel is now presenting new demands to Hamas. And with the Israeli leader's popularity tumbling following the October 7 attack, he is now being accused of purposefully dragging out the war so he can retain power.

After initially accepting a US-backed ceasefire proposal, Israel is now being accused of attempting to sabotage the deal after presenting new demands to Hamas, Israeli news outlets reported on [Sunday](#).

Egyptian officials and Hamas representatives said that the Palestinian militant group surrendered their key demand for Israel to commit to a permanent end to the war before any ceasefire were to take place. Hopes that a ceasefire would be more easily achieved were then renewed following nine months of war.

But, David Barnea, the chief of the Mossad foreign intelligence service, reportedly presented mediators with a list of new conditions. The demands could delay negotiations by at least three weeks, and Hamas may not even agree to those plans, Arab News reported citing Haaretz.

"Hamas has already agreed to the latest position presented by Israel," the source told Haaretz. "But in Friday's meeting, Israel presented some new points it demands that Hamas accept."

Yet again, Israeli citizens, opposition parties, the media and families of Israeli hostages are criticizing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of putting his own political survival before that of the hostages or other civilians. During an [interview in June](#), US President Joe Biden admitted that his Israeli counterpart may be allowing the war to drag out so he can continue to cling to power.

"We appeal to the heads of the security agencies and the negotiating team – all eyes are on you. Do not let Netanyahu sabotage the deal again. We must rescue all the hostages," family members of Israeli hostages said at a news conference near the defense ministry in Tel Aviv on [Saturday](#).

[The Times of Israel](#) reported on Sunday that thousands of "anti-government protesters" marched to the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem as one of many demonstrations taking place in a full day of anti-government protests across Israel. Those leading the march of this particular protest were shouting, "We won't agree to the abandonment of the hostages!" The prime minister's popularity plummeted following the October 7 attack from Hamas, and most political observers believe Netanyahu would lose elections were they to be held today, [The Guardian](#) reported. Over 38,000 people have been killed and nearly 88,000 have been injured in the Gaza Strip since the conflict first began in October, according to Gaza's Ministry of Health.

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Anti-Establishment Surge in UK Election Driven by Pro-Palestine, Anti-Immigration Sentiment

Nigel Farage challenged the UK's Conservative Party from the right while the Green Party and various independent candidates challenged Labour from the left.

Independent and minor party candidates performed strongly in UK parliamentary elections Thursday amid a surge of anti-establishment political sentiment.

The trend was perhaps best exemplified by the strong performance of Nigel Farage's Reform UK party on a pledge to reduce net migration to the United Kingdom.

The populist party, originally formed to advocate a no-deal Brexit from the European Union, [garnered](#) almost 15% of the popular vote throughout the country and five seats in the House of Commons. In several constituencies Reform UK relegated the Conservative Party to third place. Some observers have [criticized](#) the party as an electoral spoiler, splitting the right-of-center vote and enabling the Labour Party to more easily take power. Indeed, the combined vote share of Reform UK and the Tories surpassed that of the Labour Party, which became Westminster's largest party in Thursday's election.

Former US President Donald Trump congratulated Reform UK leader Nigel Farage Thursday on his entry into parliament from the Clacton electoral constituency.

"Congratulations to Nigel Farage on his big WIN of a Parliament Seat Amid Reform UK Election Success," Trump [wrote](#) on his Truth Social platform. "Nigel is a man who truly loves his Country!" Trump and Farage have remained strong political allies since Farage's successful advocacy for the UK to vote to leave the European Union in 2016.

Meanwhile independent candidates enjoyed unprecedented success, picking up six seats. Firebrand leftist MP George Galloway was narrowly defeated in Rochdale, but five more candidates entered parliament on a pro-Palestine platform, unseating members of the Labour Party.

"Looking at the results across the country, including in Ilford North, it is very clear that Gaza has been a real issue for the Labour Party at this election," said Labour MP Wes Streeting, who [eked out](#) a victory over a pro-Palestine independent challenger by just 500 votes.

Labour leader Keir Starmer has been broadly criticized for his public stance on Israel's deadly military campaign in the Gaza Strip, which has killed over 38,000. Starmer [claimed](#) Israel "has the right" to withhold food, water, and electricity from the Palestinian enclave while also insisting the country has a "right to defend itself" against Palestinian resistance. The intentional starvation of a civilian population is considered a war crime under international law, while United Nations resolutions have affirmed Palestinians' right to violently resist their occupation by the [ethno-supremacist Israeli state](#).

Former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn won reelection in Greater London's Islington North constituency, easily beating back a challenge from a Labour Party candidate after Starmer expelled Corbyn from the party for his pro-Palestine advocacy.

"The Labour Party has won a very large majority but on a considerably lower vote than was achieved in previous elections," noted Corbyn, responding to [criticism](#) of Thursday's election as the UK's most distorted in history. "It does call into question the first past the post system and that no doubt is going to be a debate."

"If the Labour Party is going to be the inclusive organization it ought to be then it's going to have to loosen up a bit, and open up a bit; otherwise this idea of imposed candidates and removal of democracy within the party is not good for the future and not very good for democracy."

The UK's Green Party expanded its representation in the House of Commons from one to five seats and the Liberal Democrats expanded their representation to 71 seats, their best performance since 1923. The liberal party has struggled in the polls since forming a coalition government with Conservative Party leader David Cameron in 2010.

Irish nationalists enjoyed significant success, with Sinn Féin becoming the largest party in Northern Ireland. The party's MPs refuse to take their seats in Westminster in rejection of continued British colonization of Ireland's northern counties.

Scottish nationalists experienced a difficult night, however, with the pro-independence Scottish Nationalist Party losing 38 seats after winning 48 in 2019.

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American Exceptionalism: US Foreign Policy Advisors Urge Resumption of Nuclear Testing

As of 2024 the United States is still the only country to have deployed nuclear weapons in a military setting, killing over 150,000 people in nuclear attacks in Japan as the country was on the brink of surrender amid an looming Russian attack.

Prominent figures in the United States national security establishment are pushing a resumption of nuclear weapons testing as the country continues to move towards weakening international arms control frameworks.

Former US national security advisor Robert O'Brien and George W. Bush State Department adviser Christian Whiton are among the foreign policy luminaries pushing the policy.

The Heritage Foundation think tank is also urging immediate nuclear testing if former President Donald Trump wins the White House this fall; the organization [urged](#) a remediation of "former Manhattan Project and Cold War nuclear material sites" in a recent policy blueprint, demonstrating the continued influence of neoconservative foreign policy advocacy in Republican Party politics.

The think tank also backed the development of "new nuclear weapons and naval nuclear reactors." Spent fuel from US reactors has been used in depleted uranium weaponry that the United States has repeatedly deployed in theaters of war such as Iraq and NATO aggression in Serbia. Human rights groups have [called](#) for the weapons to be banned, noting their depraved use on civilian populations in Belgrand and Fallujah has continued to result in elevated rates of cancer and birth defects.

"Since 1992, the U.S. has refrained from explosive nuclear testing and opted for other techniques, including expert appraisals and sophisticated modeling generated by supercomputers, to calculate the efficacy of its long-term stockpile and its newer weapons," wrote analyst Zeeshan Aleem.

"That policy has helped nudge other countries away from pursuing live testing," he added.

The resumption of live testing could actually worsen US national security, some experts have claimed, because it would allow adversaries to directly observe the country's nuclear capabilities during real-world trials.

"Resuming U.S. nuclear testing is technically and militarily unnecessary," according to Daryl Kimball, the executive director of the Arms Control Association. "Moreover, it would lead to a global chain reaction of nuclear testing, raise global tensions, and blow apart global nonproliferation efforts at a time of heightened nuclear danger."

The United States has frequently weakened international arms control efforts and has moved to end long standing agreements between the US and Russia in particular. The George W. Bush

administration ended the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002, while the Obama administration moved to install missile interception facilities in Romania.

The offensive NATO military alliance continued to expand during the Democratic president's administration, absorbing Albania and Croatia in 2009. The reality is the United States has commandeered NATO in the European Union as a proxy army, and a slave economic force, and made Europe to be puppets and pawns of American foreign policy," noted former US Army psychological warfare officer and US State Department counterterrorism analyst Scott Bennett. "The American government's agenda – and specifically the banks, globalists and military-industrial complex, and the CIA have – all pursued an agenda to drive the break-up of Russia and the theft of its resources since 1990."

Bennett noted that the United States' shredding of arms control treaties has forced Moscow to prepare for the possibility of a nuclear war launched by an increasingly irrational and Russophobic West.

"It is precisely because the United States has become so untrustworthy and unstable and indeed deceitful in everything it says and does, and in every document it claims to sign and promise, it has forced President Putin to act in certain ways," said the analyst.

"In order to preserve and protect Russia Putin understands he must have the flexibility and maneuverability to guarantee the West does not attempt to secretly undermine or exploit the vulnerabilities that Russia might have as a result of its futile hope in the United States being honorable."

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UK PM Starmer Committed to Maintaining Western Hegemony With British Nukes

The Labour Party leader also signaled he will maintain Conservative Party policies on Ukraine and NATO, suggesting that Britons' votes matter little when it comes to determining their country's foreign policy.

Newly minted British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has revealed he will continue the foreign policy of the outgoing Conservative Party government, including the UK's implicit doctrine of an offensive "first use" nuclear strike on its adversaries.

"Questioned on 3 June at a campaign hustings in the marginal town of Bury, Starmer said: 'Of course I would be prepared to use' nuclear weapons," reported journalist Richard Norton-Taylor for the website Declassified UK. "Surrounded by candidates who were armed forces veterans, the Labour leader doubled down: 'It's a vital part of our defence. And of course, that means we have to be prepared to use it.'"

But British military doctrine, with the purported rationale of "the defence of NATO," explicitly permits the country to initiate a nuclear exchange.

"The UK does not have a policy of 'no-first use,'" [notes](#) the official government House of Commons Library, meaning the country permits the use of nuclear weapons against adversaries who do not represent a nuclear threat.

"The 2021 Integrated Review announced that the 2010 [nuclear disarmament] commitments could no longer be met due to the current security environment," the document continues,

without defining the circumstances it puts forward as an excuse to announce the [expansion](#) of its nuclear stockpile by 40%.

“As such, it announced that the cap on the nuclear stockpile will now be raised and that information on operational stockpile, deployed missiles and deployed warheads would no longer be made available.”

“[Starmer’s] rhetoric reinforces his key message: the Labour Party has ‘changed,’” Norton-Taylor writes, explaining the new party leader’s efforts to distinguish himself from previous leader Jeremy Corbyn. Corbyn drew the ire of the British ruling class for his criticism of Western militarism, criticizing the Israeli colonization of Palestine and the UK’s support for the US war on Iraq.

The London minister of parliament once [clarified](#) former Prime Minister Tony Blair should stand trial on war crimes charges if found guilty of violating international law during the UK’s deployment across the Middle East. [A study by Brown University](#) has found at least 4.5 million people have died as a result of the US-led War on Terror.

Nevertheless, the UK remains committed to expanding its nuclear stockpile, threatening to drive the global death toll even higher.

“Each Trident submarine carries eight missiles with a maximum of 40 warheads, containing more firepower than all the bombs dropped in World War II, including those in Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” writes Norton-Taylor, describing the capabilities of the UK’s nuclear “deterrence” system.

The author suggests the maintenance of the country’s stockpile may actually threaten to undermine its national security as the UK pours hundreds of billions of dollars into the program while the quality of life of Britons [declines](#). The Atlantic magazine recently [noted](#) the UK has become “one of the poorest countries in Western Europe,” raising the prospect of internal destabilization and political collapse as working-class citizens realize their government works against their interests.

The nuclear program also undermines British sovereignty as the country relies on US nuclear technology. “Britain’s dependency on the US has been repeatedly enshrined,” Norton-Taylor writes, describing a secret UK government agreement to establish a bomber base on British colonial territory in the Indian Ocean.

The United States has continued to work to subvert British politics, ensuring the UK itself remains a colonial territory of the US security state.

“We won’t wait for [Jeremy Corbyn] to do those things to begin to push back,” [said](#) former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in a leaked recording of comments made to pro-Israel leaders during a trip to the UK.

“We will do our level best. It’s too risky and too important and too hard once it’s already happened,” he continued, suggesting the former CIA director would work behind the scenes to prevent Corbyn’s election.

The depth of Pompeo’s interference remains to be revealed, although evidence suggests British intelligence [played a substantial role](#) in working to defeat Corbyn and [boosting the political fortunes](#) of new Labour leader Keir Starmer.

Starmer has returned the favor by loyally pledging to unleash nuclear annihilation on any perceived enemy of Western hegemony at his MI6 handlers’ request.

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### House Oversight Committee Seeks to Interview Biden Doctor Over Corruption Claims

The White House physician received a check for \$200,000 from the president's brother James Biden, it has been revealed.

The Republican-led House Oversight Committee [sought](#) to question White House physician Dr. Kevin O'Connor Sunday, questioning his independence in light of financial ties to US President Joe Biden's family.

"After a concerning debate performance by President Biden against former President Donald Trump on June 27, journalists have rushed to report on what Americans have seen plainly for years: the President appears unwell," begins the [letter](#) from committee chair James Comer.

"Americans question President Biden's ability to lead the country, and the Committee on Oversight and Accountability is investigating circumstances surrounding your assessment in February of this year that 'President Biden is a healthy, active, robust 81-year-old-male, who remains fit to successfully execute the duties of the Presidency.'"

Comer notes reports that the doctor has recommended against a formal cognitive test for the president, questioning whether his business connections to the Biden family impinge on his ability to serve his role as White House physician.

[The letter](#) includes an image of a check for \$200,000 made out to Dr. O'Connor from the funds of the company Americore Health, with the payout to the physician made even as the rural healthcare provider was facing impending bankruptcy. The funds were provided through a transfer of up to \$400,000 from the company to President Biden's brother, James Biden.

Americore Health made the payment to James Biden "based upon representations that his last name, 'Biden,' could 'open doors' and that he could obtain a large investment from the Middle East based on his political connections," the letter alleges.

"You have repeatedly refused most interview requests from the media, and the Committee now turns to you to provide answers regarding your independence because of the mixed and confused messaging coming from the White House regarding the President's ability to perform his job," Comer writes. "Given your connections with the Biden family, the Committee also seeks to understand if you are in a position to provide accurate and independent reviews of the President's fitness to serve."

"To understand the extent of your involvement in the Biden family's financial activity, we request that you produce all documents and communications in your possession regarding Americore and James Biden. Additionally, the Committee requests you make yourself available for a transcribed interview with Committee counsel."

One former Biden aide recently [told](#) the website Axios that the president had "lost all independence" in his official duties as "a protective bubble" is formed around him. Another claimed the US leader requires help remembering acquaintances "he has known for a long time."

President Biden is [the oldest president in US history](#), taking office in 2021 at 78 years old – one year older than the previous oldest President Ronald Regan was when he left the White House at the age of 77.

The president's performance at a televised debate with former President Donald Trump on June 27 led to widespread concern over his mental acuity, from some Democrats as well as Republicans. An overwhelming 86% of Americans [tell pollsters](#) they believe Biden is too old to serve a second term as US president.

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#### Israel Deliberately Killed Own Citizens on October 7 – Report

Reporting in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz offers the most significant evidence to date that Israel killed its own citizens in an effort to prevent Hamas fighters from returning to Gaza after the Palestinian group's armed operation.

A report in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz has [claimed](#) the IDF invoked the controversial Hannibal directive during Hamas' October 7 attack last year, deliberately killing Israelis to prevent them from being taken hostage by Palestinian fighters.

"Documents and testimonies obtained by Haaretz reveal the Hannibal operational order, which directs the use of force to prevent soldiers being taken into captivity, was employed at three army facilities infiltrated by Hamas, potentially endangering civilians as well," read an article in the liberal paper's Sunday edition.

"'Not a single vehicle can return to Gaza' was the order," writes journalist Yaniv Kubovich. "At this point, the IDF was not aware of the extent of kidnapping along the Gaza border, but it did know that many people were involved. Thus, it was entirely clear what that message meant, and what the fate of some of the kidnapped people would be."

The newspaper notes the exact number of Israelis killed by IDF fire is unknown. The report cites testimony from servicemembers up and down the IDF chain of command, including soldiers and mid- and senior-level officers.

An IDF spokesperson said internal investigations into the incident were ongoing.

Highly controversial within and outside of Israel, the so-called Hannibal directive was devised in response to the threat of armed groups gaining leverage over the Israeli state through the taking of hostages. Palestinian forces took several Israelis captive during the 1970s and 80s, successfully negotiating the release of Palestinian prisoners in return. The [notion](#) Israelis were "better dead than abducted" led to the creation of the protocol, which allowed the use of deadly force.

Claims of the invocation of the Hannibal directive on October 7 were [made](#) months ago when it was revealed an IDF brigadier general instructed a tank to shell a house in Kibbutz Be'eri with a number of Israelis and Hamas fighters inside, killing 13 Israeli captives. But Sunday's report is the most complete accounting to date of accusations of friendly fire.

The allegations add to claims Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has deliberately placed Israeli citizens in harm's way in order to pursue the Likud party's [vision of territorial maximalism](#). The response to Hamas' October 7 attack was reportedly delayed for hours because Netanyahu had redeployed soldiers to support Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank.

Netanyahu's government received urgent warnings from Egyptian authorities in the months leading up to Hamas' attack that the Palestinian group was likely planning a significant armed operation, it has been revealed. Israeli reconnaissance of the Gaza Strip, broadly considered "one of the most heavily surveilled places in the world," showed Palestinian fighters were training in the use of hang gliders that were used to breach the enclave's border fence.

Anti-establishment surge in UK election driven by pro-Palestine, anti-immigration sentiment

**This material is distributed by Ghebi LLC on behalf of Kart LLC. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.**

Independent and minor party candidates performed strongly in UK parliamentary elections Thursday amid a surge of anti-establishment political sentiment.

The trend was perhaps best exemplified by the strong performance of Nigel Farage's Reform UK party on a pledge to reduce net migration to the United Kingdom. The populist party, originally formed to advocate a no-deal Brexit from the European Union, garnered almost 15% of the popular vote throughout the country and five seats in the House of Commons. In several constituencies Reform UK relegated the Conservative Party to third place.

Some observers have criticized the party as an electoral spoiler, splitting the right-of-center vote and enabling the Labour Party to more easily take power. Indeed, the combined vote share of Reform UK and the Tories surpassed that of the Labour Party, which became Westminster's largest party in Thursday's election.

Former US President Donald Trump congratulated Reform UK leader Nigel Farage Thursday on his entry into parliament from the Clacton electoral constituency.

"Congratulations to Nigel Farage on his big WIN of a Parliament Seat Amid Reform UK Election Success," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. "Nigel is a man who truly loves his Country!" Trump and Farage have remained strong political allies since Farage's successful advocacy for the UK to vote to leave the European Union in 2016.

(A video from social media shows Nigel Farage blasting the "outdated" first-past-the-post voting system in the UK)

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Exit polling indicates the desire for change was the primary motivating factor in Thursday's UK election, with the Labour Party sailing to victory despite perhaps the lowest voter turnout ever recorded.

Defenders of former party leader Jeremy Corbyn have pointed out that Starmer's Labour Party won Thursday with a lower share of the popular vote than the 40% garnered during the party's

narrow loss under Corbyn in 2017. Labour was granted an assist this year from Nigel Farage's Reform UK party, which split the right-of-center vote. The populist party surprised observers with its better than expected performance, pushing the Conservative Party into third place in many constituencies.

"The public deserves answers about the UK's new opposition leader and his relationship with the British national security establishment, including the MI5 and the Times newspaper," wrote journalist Matt Kennard in 2020, criticizing Starmer's links to British intelligence services. Corbyn ran for reelection Thursday against Labour Party candidate Praful Nargund, a venture capitalist veteran of the UK's private healthcare industry recruited to unseat the leftist MP.

Starmer's allies have signaled the party will promote neoliberal policy during his time as prime minister, with MP Rachel Reeves claiming the UK will be a "safe haven" for wealthy investors.

"Starmer has promised to work with business to stimulate growth, with an agenda that includes planning reform and state investment in green technology," reported the Financial Times.

"Labour will also pursue a traditional agenda of reforms to worker rights," the newspaper added, without elaborating.

Results indicate Corbyn will win reelection in his Islington North constituency, maintaining a platform in parliament to criticize Labour's establishment-oriented leader and his support for Israel's deadly military operation in Gaza.

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(A video from social media shows Nigel Farage blasting the "outdated" first-past-the-post voting system in the UK)

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Meanwhile, independent candidates enjoyed unprecedented success, picking up six seats. Firebrand leftist MP George Galloway was narrowly defeated in Rochdale, but five more candidates entered parliament on a pro-Palestine platform, unseating members of the Labour Party.

“Looking at the results across the country, including in Ilford North, it is very clear that Gaza has been a real issue for the Labour Party at this election,” said Labour MP Wes Streeting, who eked out a victory over a pro-Palestine independent challenger by just 500 votes.

Labour leader Keir Starmer has been broadly criticized for his public stance on Israel’s deadly military campaign in the Gaza Strip, which has killed over 38,000. Starmer claimed Israel “has the right” to withhold food, water, and electricity from the Palestinian enclave while also insisting the country has a “right to defend itself” against Palestinian resistance. The intentional starvation of a civilian population is considered a war crime under international law, while United Nations resolutions have affirmed Palestinians’ right to violently resist their occupation by the Israeli state.

Former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn won reelection in Greater London’s Islington North constituency, easily beating back a challenge from a Labour candidate after Starmer expelled Corbyn from the party for his pro-Palestine advocacy.

“The Labour Party has won a very large majority but on a considerably lower vote than was achieved in previous elections,” noted Corbyn, responding to criticism of Thursday’s election as the UK’s “most distorted in history.”

“It does call into question the first past the post system and that no doubt is going to be a debate.”

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American exceptionalism: US foreign policy advisors urge resumption of nuclear testing

Christian Whiton, a former State Department adviser to President George W. Bush and Trump, told The New York Times that “it would be negligent to field nuclear weapons of novel designs that we have never tested in the real world.”

Prominent figures in the United States national security establishment are pushing a resumption of nuclear weapons testing as the country continues to move towards weakening international arms control frameworks.

“Washington must test new nuclear weapons for reliability and safety in the real world for the first time since 199,” former US national security advisor Robert O’Brien insisted.

The Heritage Foundation think tank is also urging immediate nuclear testing if former President Donald Trump wins the White House this fall; the organization urged a remediation of “former Manhattan Project and Cold War nuclear material sites” in a recent policy blueprint, demonstrating the continued influence of neoconservative foreign policy advocacy in Republican Party politics.

“The reality is the United States has commandeered NATO in the European Union as a proxy army, and a slave economic force, and made Europe to be puppets and pawns of American foreign policy,” noted former US Army psychological warfare officer and US State Department counterterrorism analyst Scott Bennett. “The American government’s agenda – and specifically the banks, globalists and military-industrial complex, and the CIA have – all pursued an agenda to drive the break-up of Russia and the theft of its resources since 1990.”

The resumption of live testing could actually worsen US national security, some experts have claimed, because it would allow adversaries to directly observe the country’s nuclear capabilities during real-world trials.

“Resuming U.S. nuclear testing is technically and militarily unnecessary,” according to Daryl Kimball, the executive director of the Arms Control Association. “Moreover, it would lead to a global chain reaction of nuclear testing, raise global tensions, and blow apart global nonproliferation efforts at a time of heightened nuclear danger.”

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UK PM Keir Starmer committed to maintaining Western hegemony with British nukes

Newly minted British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has revealed he will continue the foreign policy of the outgoing Conservative Party government, including the UK’s implicit doctrine of an offensive “first use” nuclear strike on its adversaries.


“Questioned on 3 June at a campaign hustings in the marginal town of Bury, Starmer said: ‘Of course I would be prepared to use’ nuclear weapons,” reported journalist Richard Norton-Taylor for the website Declassified UK. “Surrounded by candidates who were armed forces veterans, the Labour leader doubled down: ‘It’s a vital part of our defence. And of course, that means we have to be prepared to use it.’”

But British military doctrine, with the purported rationale of “the defence of NATO,” explicitly permits the country to initiate a nuclear exchange.

“The UK does not have a policy of ‘no-first use,’” notes the official government House of Commons Library, meaning the country permits the use of nuclear weapons against adversaries who do not represent a nuclear threat.

“The 2021 Integrated Review announced that the 2010 [nuclear disarmament] commitments could no longer be met due to the current security environment,” the document continues, without defining the alleged circumstances it puts forward as an excuse to announce the expansion of its nuclear stockpile by 40%. “As such, it announced that the cap on the nuclear stockpile will now be raised and that information on operational stockpile, deployed missiles and deployed warheads would no longer be made available.”

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 Spin doctor? House Oversight Committee seeks to interview Biden doctor over corruption claims

The Republican-led House Oversight Committee sought to question White House physician Dr. Kevin O’Connor, challenging his independence in light of financial ties to US President Joe Biden’s family.

“Americans question President Biden’s ability to lead the country, and the Committee on Oversight and Accountability is investigating circumstances surrounding your assessment in February of this year that ‘President Biden is a healthy, active, robust 81-year-old-male, who remains fit to successfully execute the duties of the Presidency,’” writes committee chair James Comer.

Comer’s letter includes an image of a check for \$200,000 made out to Dr. O’Connor from the funds of the company Americore Health, with the payout to the physician made even as the rural healthcare provider was facing impending bankruptcy. The funds were provided through a transfer of up to \$400,000 from the company to President Biden’s brother, James Biden.

Americore Health made the payment to James Biden "based upon representations that his last name, 'Biden,' could 'open doors' and that he could obtain a large investment from the Middle East based on his political connections," the letter alleges.

"During his transcribed interview, James Biden confirmed Dr. O'Connor provided him counsel in connection with the alleged work he was performing for Americore," the statement read.

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US Completes Troop Withdrawal From Air Base in Niger - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, July 8 (Sputnik) – The United States has completed the withdrawal of its forces and assets from Air Base 101 in Niger, the Pentagon said on Monday.

"The U.S. Department of Defense and the Nigerien Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Niger wish to announce that the withdrawal of U.S. forces and assets from Air Base 101 in Niamey is complete," the statement said.

The transition lasted almost two months and ended on July 7 ahead of schedule and without any complications during a turnover ceremony with the Joint Disengagement Commission following the final departure of a US Air Force C-17 Globemaster III from Air Base 101, it added.

"With the closure of the U.S. compound on Air Base 101, U.S. forces will now focus on completing the withdrawal from Air Base 201 in Agadez. Both U.S. and Nigerien officials are dedicated to completing a safe, orderly, and responsible withdrawal by September 15, 2024. They emphasize their commitment to the protection and security of American forces during this process," the statement said.

The US military withdrawal was initiated in March after a Nigerien military spokesperson said the country's transitional government, which took power in a coup in July 2023, had terminated the military agreement with the United States with immediate effect, citing the interests of the Nigerien people.

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US to Announce Future of Sentinel Program As Early as Tuesday Amid Soaring Costs  
-Pentagon

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - The US Defense Department will announce potential changes to the future of the Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile program as early as Tuesday, a Pentagon spokesperson told Sputnik on Saturday.

"The Department will announce its decision about the future of the Sentinel program once the process is complete and we have fulfilled our obligation to Congress. We expect the decision to be made on or about July 9, 2024," the spokesperson said.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense launched a review to determine whether to certify the continuation of the Sentinel program after the Air Force notified Congress in January that the

program had exceeded its baseline cost projections, resulting in a "critical breach" under the Nunn-McCurdy statute, a law designed to prevent major cost overruns for weapons systems.

The price tag for Air Force's Sentinel program to replace aging Minuteman III nuclear missiles has grown to \$160 billion from \$95.8 billion, according to media reports.

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Congressional Candidate Says US Border Crisis Worse Than Media Portray It

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - The crisis on the US southern border is worse than it's portrayed by the media, US congressional candidate Daniel Butierez told Sputnik.

"Yes, border security is a huge one [issue]," Butierez said. "I've actually been at two congressional hearings here in Arizona over the border. I've been on every inch of our border and if you're watching just the media, you have no idea how bad it actually is."

Butierez, a Republican, is running for election to the US House to represent Arizona's 7th congressional district, which includes a large portion of the US-Mexico border in Arizona.

Arizona's border with Mexico has become a hot spot for illegal migration in recent months.

Butierez said that drug and human smugglers have been operating freely along the Arizona-Mexico border for years without much consequence.

"Drugs are a serious problem especially as the problem is a billion dollar industry and the cure is rather inexpensive. The answer to the problem is part of my plans to address the homeless crisis," he added.

The United States has experienced three consecutive record-breaking years of illegal crossings at its southern border since US President Joe Biden took office, according to US Customs and Border Protection data.

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Кризис на границе в США хуже, чем его показывают в СМИ - кандидат в конгресс

ВАШИНГТОН, 6 июл - РИА Новости. Кризис на южной границе США хуже, чем его показывают в СМИ, заявил РИА Новости кандидат в конгресс США от Республиканской партии Дэниел Бутьерес.

"Да, безопасность границ - это огромная (проблема)", - сказал Бутьерес.

Он утверждает, что ситуация хуже, чем ее показывают в СМИ.

"На самом деле я присутствовал на двух слушаниях по границе в конгрессе здесь, в Аризоне. Я был на каждом дюйме нашей границы, и если вы смотрите только СМИ, то вы понятия не имеете, насколько все на самом деле плохо", - отметил он.

Бутьерес баллотируется на выборах в палату представителей США, чтобы представлять седьмой избирательный округ Аризоны, где на границе с Мексикой в последние месяцы существенно выросло количество нелегальных пересечений.

Вопрос нелегальной миграции на южной границе США является одним из краеугольных

камней предстоящих президентских выборов в ноябре. Поскольку количество незаконных пересечений на южной границе США регулярно обновляет рекордные значения в последние три года, президент США Джо Байден подвергается критике со стороны оппонентов, в то время как избиратели, согласно опросам, недовольны тем, как его администрация работает решает кризис на границе.

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US Investor Rogers Sees No Value in Cryptocurrency, But Says Trade Should be Allowed

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - Renowned US investor Jim Rogers told Sputnik he does not see any real value in cryptocurrencies but believes that anyone who wants to trade them should be allowed to do so as long as they are not harming anyone.

"I don't see any economic value to cryptocurrencies, but a lot of people trade them and are having a lot of fun, and some of them are making a lot of money," Rogers said. "Many cryptocurrencies have already disappeared and gone to zero, but some of them are doing well now. And if people want to trade them, why not, as long as it's not hurting anybody. Let them do it."

Rogers said the US government would not allow cryptocurrency to become a new form of money.

"I know that one day the United States is not going to say, Okay, this is the new crypto money, but if you want to use their money, you can use their money. You don't have to use our money," he said. "That's not the way governments think. Governments want monopoly, governments want control."

For instance, he said, the US government will never allow citizens to pay their taxes in cryptocurrencies.

"I can tell you the US government is never going to say if you want to pay your taxes with crypto you can. You should use our money to pay your taxes. You cannot use their money," he said.

Rogers also shared that since he sees no real economic value to cryptocurrencies, he will not trade them.

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Политикам в США выгодно финансировать конфликты в Газе и на Украине - кандидат в Конгресс

ВАШИНГТОН, 6 июл - РИА Новости. Соединенные Штаты финансируют конфликты в секторе Газа и на Украине так как на этом наживаются американские политики, заявил РИА Новости кандидат в Конгресс США Дэниел Бутьерес.

"Я вижу, что это из себя представляет на самом деле: политики богатеют за счет уничтожения других", - сказал Бутьерес, добавив, что как демократы, так и республиканцы

в большинстве своем поддерживают поставку оружия Украине и Израилю.

Бутьерес, республиканец, баллотируется на выборах в Палату представителей США, чтобы представлять 7-й избирательный округ Аризоны.

После месяцев дискуссий, республиканцы и демократы в Конгрессе США в апреле смогли договориться о выделении 61 миллиарда долларов на нужды Украины, а также выделили Киеву партию оружия и боеприпасов из арсеналов Пентагона на 1 миллиард долларов и разместили заказы на новое военное имущество еще на 6 миллиардов долларов.

Российская сторона неоднократно заявляла, что поставки вооружений Украине мешают урегулированию, вовлекают страны НАТО в конфликт и являются "игрой с огнем". По словам Министра иностранных дел РФ Сергея Лаврова, США и НАТО напрямую участвуют в конфликте путем поставки оружия и подготовки кадров.

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US Funding Gaza, Ukraine Conflicts as Politicians Benefit From Them - Congress Candidate

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - The United States is funding the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, while US politicians are getting rich off their destruction, US congressional candidate Daniel Butierez told Sputnik.

"I see it for what it is, politicians getting rich off of the destruction of others," Butierez said, adding that both Democratic and Republican lawmakers support supplying weapons to Israel and Ukraine.

Butierez, a Republican, is running for election to the US House to represent Arizona's 7th congressional district.

In April, Congress passed a foreign aid bill that provides Ukraine with \$61 billion and another \$15 billion to support Israel.

Earlier this week, the Biden administration announced a \$2.3 billion security assistance package for Ukraine.

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Biden Says He's The Most Qualified Person to Be President

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden said in an interview with ABC News that he's the most qualified person in the presidential election to serve as US president.

"I don't think anybody's more qualified to be president or win this race than me," Biden said on Friday.

Biden further said he doesn't believe the poor approval ratings that are out about him.

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Biden Says in Interview No One Told Him to Get Full Cognitive Evaluation

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said during an interview with ABC News that no one told him he needs a full cognitive evaluation.

"I get a full neurological test every day," Biden said on whether he had a full neurological and cognitive evaluation. "I have had a full physical ... No one said I have to [get a full cognitive evaluation]."

Questioned whether he would be willing to undergo a full physical examination and release the results to the public, Biden answered by saying that he gets "cognitive test every single day."

On Friday night, ABC News aired its interview with Biden - the first one since his dismal debate performance with Trump last week.

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Biden on Polls Showing Trump Ahead: 'I Don't Buy That'

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden told ABC News that he doesn't rely on polls showing that his Republican rival Donald Trump is leading the race to the White House.

"I don't buy that," Biden said on Friday when asked about polls showing him trailing Trump.

Biden added that polling data isn't as accurate as it used to be.

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Biden Says He's Honest With Himself About Believing He Can Beat Trump in Election

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden told ABC News that he's being honest with himself about believing he can beat his Republican rival Donald Trump and serve another four years in the White House.

"Yes, I am," Biden said on Friday when asked if he's being honest about being able to serve another four years.

Biden also emphasized that he truly believes he can beat Trump in the November vote.

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Biden in ABC Interview Says He Is Same Man As When He Took Office

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden in his first television interview since his dismal debate said he is still the same man as when he took office.

"In terms of success? Yes," Biden responded when asked if he's still the same man as when he first became president.

Biden said he has not become more frail throughout his presidency.

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US Will Find Ample Supplies of Uranium Despite Ban on Russian Imports - Investor Rogers

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - There is an abundant supply of uranium in the world and Washington will have no trouble securing supplies following its ban on imports from Russia, renowned US investor Jim Rogers told Sputnik

"America produces uranium. It has friends like Canada who produce uranium. There is a lot of uranium in the world. America will find uranium," Rogers said. "Many people with uranium want to sell it, and America will be a good customer again for other people. Maybe they won't buy Russian uranium, but there's other uranium which they can and will buy."

The US sanctions against Russia's uranium will not change the market immediately, but there may be a delayed effect that will be visible in few years, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi said earlier in June.

In May, President Joe Biden signed the Prohibiting Russian Uranium Imports Act, which bans the imports of Russian uranium until 2040.

The bill envisages limiting the import of low-enriched uranium produced in Russia or Russian-based companies. At the same time, it authorizes the US secretary of energy, in coordination with the secretary of state and the head of the US Department of Commerce, to lift this ban if other sources of uranium supplies are unavailable or the import of Russian nuclear fuel is in the national interests of the US.

The US ban on Russian uranium imports is not critical for Russia's nuclear industry, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in May. The Kremlin described the move as unfair competition.

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Провальное выступление Байдена выставляет США "очень слабыми" - кандидат в конгресс

ВАШИНГТОН, 6 июл - РИА Новости. Неудачное выступление президента США Джо Байдена на дебатах выставили Соединенные Штаты Америки в глазах мировой общественности "очень слабыми", заявил РИА Новости кандидат в конгресс США от Республиканской партии Дэниел Бутьерес.

"Я даже не думал, что Байден сможет выстоять до конца (дебатов - ред)... Из-за этого Америка выглядела очень слабой с таким жалким образчиком человека, возглавляющего нашу страну", - сказал Бутьерес.

Бутьерес, который баллотируется на выборах в палату представителей США от седьмого избирательного округа Аризоны, добавил, что от выборов будет зависеть, "развалится ли

страна".

Американские СМИ сходятся во мнении, что Байден неудачно выступил на первых дебатах с экс-президентом США Дональдом Трампом, которые прошли в ночь на 28 июня в Атланте. Действующий лидер страны запинался и делал паузы, не всегда четко формулируя мысль, а после мероприятия в объектив телекамеры попал момент, когда супруга Байдена Джилл помогала ему спуститься с лестницы.

Теперь политики и журналисты говорят о том, что демократы могут отказаться выдвигать Байдена и заменить его другим кандидатом. Теоретически такая возможность у партии будет на съезде в августе, однако на практике тяжело будет вывести из гонки победившего на предварительных выборах Байдена, если он сам не откажется от участия. При этом в штабе действующего президента говорят, что он не собирается сдаваться и выходить из гонки, хотя к этому публично призывают некоторые однопартийцы.

Вторые дебаты Байдена и Трампа запланированы на 10 сентября. Выборы президента США пройдут 5 ноября.

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Biden's Poor Debate Performance Made US Look 'Very Weak' - Congressional Candidate

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden's poor debate performance made the United States look very weak, US congressional Republican candidate Daniel Butierez told Sputnik.

"I actually didn't think Biden was going to be able to finish it," Butierez said. "It made America look very weak with such a pathetic specimen of a man leading our country."

Butierez, who is running for election to the US House to represent Arizona's 7th congressional district, added that the election would determine whether the country remains intact.

Many in the Democratic Party have raised concerns following the debate about whether Biden is fit to run for office, while others have called on him to pull out of the presidential race, including a few congressional Democrats.

Biden and his campaign admitted that he had a rough showing at the debate with Donald Trump in Atlanta but assured the public that he would not end his reelection bid.

Top Democratic donors remain anxious about Biden's condition in the wake of the debate last week and are looking for a replacement, with two preferred candidates already in place, the Financial Times reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the matter.

The two top candidates are Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and California Governor Gavin Newsom, the people told the newspaper, adding that US Vice President Kamala Harris is also being considered.

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## Democrat Lawmaker Quigley Says Biden Should Step Down to Secure Legacy, Prevent Catastrophe

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - Democratic Congressman Mike Quigley said in an interview with MSNBC that President Joe Biden should drop out of the US presidential election in order to secure his legacy and avert a catastrophe.

"I had a hard time processing getting to that point with him as I think anybody would who respects him so much," Quigley said on Friday. "I'd say, Mr. President, your legacy is set. We owe you the greatest debt of gratitude. The only thing that you can do now, to cement that for all time, and prevent utter catastrophe is to step down and let someone else do this."

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## ABC News Says Trump Declined Interview Amid Channel Holding One With Biden

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - Former presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has declined an interview request by ABC News amid the channel's interview with Joe Biden.

On Friday night, ABC News will air its interview with Biden - the first since his dismal debate performance with Trump last week.

"ABC News offered a similar interview opportunity to Trump but he declined," the media outlet said.

A transcript of the unedited interview, conducted in Wisconsin by ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos, will also be released on Friday.

The interview is widely viewed as an opportunity for Biden to publicly demonstrate that he is cognitively fit after a disastrous performance during the debate with Trump that reinforced the lingering concerns about Biden's ability to serve a second term at the age of 81.

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## Biden Says It Was Nobody's Fault But His That Debate Didn't Go Well

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden in an interview with ABC News said that he is the only one to blame for the way the debate with Donald Trump went.

"The whole way I prepared, it's nobody's fault but mine," Biden said on Friday.

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## Biden Says He Did Not Rewatch His Debate With Donald Trump

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) -US President Joe Biden said on Friday that he did not watch the debate with Donald Trump afterward.

"I don't think I did. No," Biden said in an interview with ABC News.

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Biden Says Was Exhausted During Recent Debate With Trump

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden said on Friday that he was exhausted during the first presidential debate with Donald Trump held in Atlanta, Georgia.

"It was a bad episode," Biden said in an interview with ABC News, when asked whether his performance at the debate was a bad episode or a sign of a more serious condition. "I was exhausted."

Biden also said he was sick and felt terrible during the debate.

The president pointed out that he asked a doctor to do a test to see whether he had acquired COVID-19 but the doctor determined there was no such infection after performing a test.

"He just said I had a really bad cold," Biden added.

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US Program to Replace Aging Nuclear Missiles More Than Doubles to \$160Bln - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - The price tag for a US Air Force program to replace the aging Minuteman III nuclear missiles has grown to \$160 billion from \$95.8 billion, Reuters reported, citing three people familiar with the matter.

The report said on Friday that the Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile program has risen by some \$65 billion since 2020.

The Sentinel program is managed by the US defense firm Northrop Grumman.

According to the report, this significant increase in cost could force the Defense Department to cut funding for other modernization plans.

The Air Force did not immediately respond to Sputnik's request for comment on this matter.

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Biden Says He Remains 'Only One' in Response to US Senator Warner's Call to End Campaign

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said that he is the only potential Democratic presidential candidate for the 2024 race, following reported calls by Democratic US Senator Mark Warner to end his campaign.

In response to a question about Warner's stance, Biden said on Friday that "he's the only one," according to a White House pool report.

Earlier on Friday, the Washington Post reported that Warner is rallying colleagues to urge Biden to end his campaign, after a lackluster debate performance against Republican challenger Donald Trump last week.

Biden's performance sparked concerns among some Democrats about his viability as a candidate. However, the Biden campaign has said that there have been no discussions about replacing Biden with an alternative candidate.

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Biden after senator warner call to step aside says 'he's the only one'

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#### SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, July 6 (Sputnik) -

##### RUSSIA-HUNGARY TALKS

\* Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday described the dialogue with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban as frank and useful.

\* Russia and Hungary continue their cooperation, including in the energy sector, with pragmatism and mutual benefit being the key principles, Putin said.

\* There is a decline in Russia's trade with Hungary, but there is also space to work on in this regard, Putin said.

\* Orban said that he will continue working with Russia and Ukraine on achieving peace given that their positions are too far from the other.

\* Cooperation between Hungary and Russia in the energy field serves Budapest's interests, and Hungary is interested in the prompt construction of new Paks nuclear power plant units, Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said.

##### US PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

\* US President Joe Biden said on Friday that he thinks he can still best his presumptive Republican challenger Donald Trump in the 2024 presidential election.

\* Top donors to the Biden presidential campaign are increasingly dissatisfied with his candidacy and are looking for a replacement, with two preferred candidates already in place, US media reported.

##### US-GEORGIA MILITARY EXERCISE

\* The United States has indefinitely delayed the military exercise "Noble Partner" in Georgia as part of a comprehensive review of the bilateral relationship, the Defense Department said on

Friday.

\* The Georgian Defense Ministry said it regrets the United States' decision to indefinitely postpone the military exercise and added that the countries will continue to cooperate.

#### ELECTIONS IN UK

\* UK Labor Party leader Keir Starmer officially became the 58th prime minister of the United Kingdom on Friday following an audience with King Charles III, UK broadcaster Sky News reported.

\* UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced on Friday that he will resign from the post leader of the Conservative Party after the defeat in the parliamentary elections.

\* Russia is not optimistic that the Labor Party's victory in the general election, as they are more inclined towards continuing London's current policy of refusing relations with Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

\* David Lammy has been appointed as the new foreign secretary of the United Kingdom in the cabinet led by Prime Minister Keir Starmer, while John Healey has been appointed as the defense secretary, the government said.

#### CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

\* Russia's army group South repelled 18 Ukrainian counterattacks and Ukraine lost up to 3,845 soldiers in the past week, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

\* Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday that he discussed with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban ways to resolve the Ukrainian conflict and that Orban had told him about the details of his visit to Kiev.

\* NATO does not need any "Minsk-3 agreements" but security guarantees for Kiev in the conflict, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

\* NATO will conduct an annual revision of military assistance provided to Kiev, Stoltenberg said.

#### NATO SUMMIT

\* NATO member states will make decisions during the upcoming summit next week to bolster collective defense, including by beefing up of the missile defense system, as well as to boost defense industrial cooperation, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Friday.

\* NATO allies are expected to agree a substantial support package for Ukraine at next week's summit in Washington, Stoltenberg said.

\* Stoltenberg said that he intends to discuss with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban his visit to Moscow at the summit in Washington.

\* The United States welcomes consensus in NATO on the upcoming appointment of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as the alliance's new secretary-general, a senior administration official said on Friday.

#### MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS

\* The Lebanese Shia movement Hezbollah does not expect exchange of fire in the border areas with Israel to escalate into a full-scale war at present, but it remains ready for the worst case scenarios, Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem told Sputnik on Friday.

\* A ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip will be reached in the next several days, Turkish

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said.

\* The possible visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to Turkey may be the beginning of a new process in normalizing relations between Turkey and Syria, Erdogan said.

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Gaza Hostage Talks Dependent on Hamas' Demand for Written Commitments From US - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - Hamas' demands for written commitments by the United States, Qatar and Egypt remain the only obstacle to be cleared before the Gaza hostage and ceasefire talks can resume, Axios reported on Friday.

Hamas has demanded that the three countries commit to continuing negotiations without a time limit as part of Israel's proposal's latter phase while the first phase of the deal is ongoing, the report said.

However, Israeli officials have said that including a written commitment as part of the agreement would allow Hamas to drag out the second phase of the deal indefinitely.

If so, the 42-day ceasefire that is part of the deal's first phase could be extended without Hamas releasing the hostages it holds as outlined in the proposed deal's second phase.

According to Israeli officials cited in the report, such a scenario would make it difficult for Israel to resume fighting without considering it a violation of the agreement. Such an outcome could trigger an imposed ceasefire by the UN Security Council without the release of the hostages.

Hamas representatives cited in the report say, however, that the group's response to Israel's proposal included some ideas to overcome the identified gaps, adding that a detailed agreement could happen rather quickly.

Earlier on Friday, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said the Biden administration is hopeful that a deal can be reached but acknowledged that much work remains to be done.

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US Welcomes Consensus on Rutte as New NATO Secretary-General - Senior Admin. Official

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - The United States welcomes consensus in NATO on the upcoming appointment of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as the alliance's new secretary-general, a senior administration official said on Friday.

"We welcome, of course, the consensus around Mark Rutte as the new secretary-general, to take over on October 1," the senior administration official said.

The senior administration official said that there are no meetings between Rutte and US President Joe Biden to announce at this time.

NATO will hold a summit in Washington on July 9-11.

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## Wall Street on Record High Streak Over Interest Rate Cut Hopes Despite Mixed US Jobs

NEW YORK, July 5 (Sputnik) - Wall Street retained its record high streak as the US stock market stayed optimistic on Friday about an interest rate cut by September, even as key jobs data for June suggested a mixed trend that could result in a Federal Reserve pause.

The S&P 500 Index, which tracks stocks of the top 500 US companies, hit an all-time high of 5,570 before closing at 5,567. That was up 0.5% on the day and 2% higher on the week. Year-to-date, the S&P was up 17%.

The technology-heavy Nasdaq Composite Index, which comprises stocks such as Amazon, Apple, Netflix and Google, hit a record high of 18,366 before settling at 18,351. That was a gain of 1% for the day and 3.5% for the week. For the year, the Nasdaq was up 22%.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, the broadest indicator for US equity markets, peaked at a session high of 39,400 before closing at 39,376. That put the Dow up 0.2% for the day, 0.7% for the week and 4.5% for the year.

The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq raced to record highs after the US Labor Department reported another beat on employment forecasts for June - although a rise in the jobless rate resulted in mixed expectations for an interest rate cut in September.

The United States added 206,000 jobs in June, versus a jobs growth of 190,000 forecast by Wall Street economists.

The US jobless rate, meanwhile, rose to 4.1% in June from 4.0% in May. With that, the United States moved away for the first time in more than two years from a "maximum employment" situation as defined by the Federal Reserve.

Despite the contrasting themes on employment, stock market bulls were optimistic the Fed will call for an easing when its policy makers meet on September 18 to review rates standing at two-decade highs.

"While for now our base case for a first cut remains December, it has become increasingly likely that one may occur earlier than this, with a reduction at the September meeting a strong possibility," analysts at Macquarie said in an outlook shared on Friday.

The Fed says it wants to cut rates but is wary of doing so with inflation still running above its 2%-per-year target.

The Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Index, closely watched by the Fed for inflation, grew 2.6% year-on-year in May, from 2.7% in April.

Another key price gauge - the Consumer Price Index (CPI) - also moderated in May, growing at 3.3% year-on-year, from April's 3.4%.

Rates, at between 5.25% and 5.5%, are at their highest since 2002. They compare with the low of between zero and 0.25% seen four years ago at the height of the economic crisis created by the coronavirus pandemic.

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US Progressing in Training Ukrainian F-16 Pilots, Will Have More To Say Next Week -Official

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - The United States is making good progress in training Ukrainian pilots on the F-16 platform and will have a new announcement next week, a senior administration official told reporters on Friday.

"On the F-16, as you know, the United States has for more than a year now been training Ukrainian pilots on the F-16 platform, and we've been making good progress," the official said. "And I expect that we're going to have more to announce on this next week."

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There Will Be Significant Announcement During NATO Summit On Ukraine Support – US Official

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) – NATO will make a significant announcement on bolstering military, political, and financial support for Ukraine during its summit in Washington, a senior US official said on Friday.

"We will make significant new announcements about how we are increasing NATO's military, political and financial support for Ukraine," the official told reporters, adding that this is a part of Ukraine's bridge to NATO.

The official also pointed out that on the sidelines of the summit, US President Joe Biden will host an event with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zeleskyy and nearly two dozen allies and partners who have signed bilateral security agreements with Kiev.

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US To Announce New Steps to Strengthen Ukraine Air Defense During NATO Summit - Official

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - The United States will announce new steps to strengthen Ukraine's air defense and military capabilities at the upcoming NATO summit, a Senior Administration Official said on Friday.

"The United States will also announce new steps to strengthen Ukraine's air defense and military capability," said the Senior Administration Official.

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## Biden Says Trump Must Be Exiled Politically

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden said during a campaign rally on Friday that his political rival Donald Trump must be exiled politically.

"Let's stand together, win this election and exile Donald Trump politically," Biden told his supporters at the rally.

In light of the US Supreme Court's Trump immunity ruling, Biden said the presumptive Republican nominee could become a dictator if he returns to the White House.

The US president emphasized he would stay in the running for president regardless of a bad debate night last week that has spurred numerous calls from the Democrat Party to drop out of the election.

Biden and Trump are scheduled to have their second presidential debate on September 10.

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## Democratic US Senator Rallying Colleagues to Urge Biden to End 2024 Campaign - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - Democratic US Senator Mark Warner is trying to rally a group of his colleagues to urge President Joe Biden to end his 2024 presidential campaign, the Washington Post reported on Friday.

Warner has told fellow Democratic senators that Biden cannot remain the party's presidential candidate in the 2024 election after his dismal debate performance last week against Republican challenger Donald Trump, the report said, citing two people with direct knowledge of the effort.

Democratic senators are discussing trying to convene a meeting with Biden at the White House.

The Biden campaign has said that there have been no discussions about replacing Biden as the Democratic party's presumptive nominee.

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## Oil Rally Blazes On With Early July Gain But Some See Weaker Market Ahead

NEW YORK, July 5 (Sputnik) - Oil bulls are doing all they can to defend this year's rally in crude, boosting prices by another 2% as the first trading week of July concluded - even as some predicted a barrel could drop to \$70 by the end of 2024 from current levels of above \$80.

In Friday's trade, US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude settled at \$83.16 per barrel, down 72 cents, or 0.9%, on the day. For the week though, it was up \$1.62, or 2%. Year-to-date, the US crude benchmark was up \$11.51, or 16%, with 2% of that coming in July.

UK-origin Brent crude settled at \$86.54, down 89 cents, or 1% on the day. For the week, Brent

showed an advance of 13 cents, or 0.2%. For the year, the global crude benchmark was up \$9.50, or 12%.

Oil's 2024 rally began with threats to supply caused by geopolitical developments and output cuts by producers in the 23-nation OPEC+ alliance led by Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Lately though, the run-up in crude prices has been powered by bets that the summer season, the busiest for travel in the United States, will result in huge drawdowns in crude stockpiles as refiners race to make enough fuels to feed everything from cars to trucks, airplanes and ships.

Indeed, the latest Weekly Petroleum Status Report from the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) showed crude stockpiles falling by 12.157 million barrels during the week ended June 27. Historical data showed it to be the largest weekly pull in crude by US refiners since the first week of August 2023. Industry analysts on Wall Street had expected a decline of just around 550,000 barrels.

Yet, for weeks prior, US crude stockpiles had been going higher - despite seasonal trends calling for declines.

That had raised questions about oil demand for the rest of the year, with some market observers saying inconsistencies in fuel consumption could be a recurring theme.

"CTAs are long oil and could get longer ... [but] I am bearish overall," Scott Shelton, a broker in energy futures at ICAP in Durham, North Carolina, said in an email to the company's clients, shared with Sputnik.

Long-biased CTAs, or Commodity Trading Advisors, are the lifeblood of the bull trade in oil, with their bets for higher prices.

Despite the push by this community to get even longer with their bets, Shelton doubted that crude prices could get very much higher than the April peaks of \$87.67 seen for US crude and \$92.18 for Brent.

"I struggle to think we are breaking out above the highs from April, unless we draw 15 million barrels or more of crude from the US, and I just don't see that happening," Shelton said.

"[Refinery] runs will be lower in a few months and stocks will begin to build again."

Despite potential disruption to US oil production from hurricanes and geopolitical tensions such as the Israel-Hamas war keeping crude at above \$80 per barrel now, analysts at Wall Street's Citigroup predicted lower prices going forth.

"Underlying physical market strength looks set to turn softer," Citi's analysts said. The Wall Street group maintained its 3-month target for Brent at \$82 per barrel, but lowered its 6-12 month call to \$72, citing a potential post-summer supply glut.

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Biden Admits Had Bad Debate Night, But Assures Supporters He'll Beat Trump

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - President Joe Biden during a campaign rally admitted that he had a bad debate night last week but assured his supporters that he will not suspend his run for reelection and believes he can beat the presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump.

"Probably heard I had a little debate last week, can't say it's my best performance, but ever since then, there's been a lot of speculation. What's Joe going to do? Is he going to stay in the

race? Is he going to drop out? What's he going to do? Here's my answer: I am running and going to win again," Biden said during a speech in Wisconsin.

Biden continued to emphasize that he believes he can beat Trump and called out those in the Democratic Party telling him to suspend his campaign.

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Washington Post Publishes Op-Ed of Readers Urging Jill Biden to Get Husband Out of Race

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - The Washington Post on Friday published a collection of letters from readers urging Jill Biden to persuade her husband President Joe Biden to end his run for reelection.

"We turn to you, Ms. Biden, with our request to urge your husband to end his campaign for the presidency. It is time for the younger generation to take charge in a manner that will stop Mr. Trump in his tracks and build on your husband's legacy rather than allow it to be destroyed," a group of Democrat women said in a joint statement.

Another reader said it's important for Joe Biden to drop out of the race while he still has some dignity, adding that staying in the presidential race will only "prolong the abuse he will suffer."

One reader said he lost all respect for Jill Biden for trying to keep Joe Biden's hopes alive, pointing out that the US president's decline cannot be reversed.

Other readers also highlighted that Jill Biden cannot continue to ignore that Joe Biden does not seem fit for office.

Many in the Democratic Party have raised concerns following Biden's debate with Donald Trump last week about whether the incumbent president is fit to run for office, others have called on him to pull out of the presidential race, including a few congressional Democrats.

Biden and his campaign admitted that he had a rough showing at the debate with Donald Trump in Atlanta but assured the public that he would not end his reelection bid.

Top Democratic donors remain anxious about Biden's condition in the wake of the debate last week and are looking for a replacement, with two preferred candidates already in place, the Financial Times reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the matter.

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White House Says Biden Brain Comment 'Lighthearted Joke'

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre on Friday dismissed criticism over the timing of a comment made by President Joe Biden during a meeting with Democratic governors, saying it was a "lighthearted joke".

On Thursday, US media reported that Biden said during a meeting with the governors he was fine, but was not sure about his brain. Biden's campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon dismissed concerns about his remark and said the president was joking.

"He made a lighthearted joke," Jean-Pierre said during a press gaggle when asked whether it

was the right timing for Biden to make such comments amid concerns about his cognitive and mental state.

Jean-Pierre said several of the meeting attendees publicly said Biden was joking and emphasized that he also said following the comment - "all kidding aside."

However, Jean-Pierre acknowledged that there is a lot a stake in the US presidential election and Biden takes the situation seriously.

Earlier in the day, chief CNN medical correspondent Sanjay Gupta suggested that Biden should take a cognitive exam to address concerns about his health and competency after the dismal debate performance against Republican challenger Donald Trump.

Biden, 81, is the oldest US president in the history of the United States and would be 86 at the end of a second potential term in the White House. Biden did not take a cognitive exam as part of his most recent presidential medical examination.

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Massachusetts Governor Urges Biden to 'Carefully Evaluate' Electoral Viability - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey is urging President Joe Biden to consider whether he is the most viable Democrat to beat Republican candidate Donald Trump, Politico reported on Friday.

"Over the coming days, I urge [Biden] to listen to the American people and carefully evaluate whether he remains our best hope to defeat Donald Trump," Healey was reported as saying in a statement.

However, Healey said that she is committed to doing everything in her power to defeat Trump, regardless of what Biden ultimately decides to do.

Biden's campaign has faced scrutiny in the wake of a lackluster debate performance against Trump last week, including calls by some Democrats to drop out of the race.

However, the Biden campaign said that there has been no discussion of replacing Biden as the Democratic Party's nominee.

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White House Staff 'Miserable,' Distracted by Biden Debate Debacle - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - White House staff are miserable and distracted by the continuing fallout from President Joe Biden's dismal debate against Republican challenger Donald Trump, Axios reported on Friday.

"Everyone is miserable, and senior advisers are a total black hole," Axios reported a White House official as saying. "Even if you're trying to focus on work, nothing is going to break through or get any acknowledgment."

The report mentioned that one former Biden aide recalled the US president having no

independence, constantly relying on his aides for reminders.

Many in the Democratic Party have raised concerns following the debate about whether Biden is fit to run for office. Others have called on him to pull out of the presidential race, including a number of congressional Democrats.

On Wednesday, Bloomberg News reported that dozens of Democratic lawmakers are considering writing a letter demanding Biden withdraw from the presidential race following the recent debate.

According to the New York Times, Biden told a key ally that he may drop out of the 2024 US presidential election after his poor debate performance, but the White House rejected that claim.

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US Forces Completing Withdrawal From Niger's Air Base 101 on Sunday - Defense Official

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - US forces will complete a withdrawal from Air Base 101 in Niger on Sunday, but several hundred other troops will remain at a second air base in the country through September, a US defense official told Sputnik on Friday.

The defense official confirmed that reports about US forces leaving Air Base 101 near Niamey by Sunday are accurate.

However, the official noted that a majority of some 500 US troops currently in Niger are stationed at Air Base 201 near the Nigerien city of Agadez. Those troops will remain in the country through September.

"They will also close down 201 as well, but the priority was 101 in Niamey first, followed by 201. AB 201 withdrawal will be complete no later than 15 September," the official said.

The US military withdrawal was initiated in March after a Nigerien military spokesperson said the country's transitional government, which took power in a coup in July 2023, had terminated the military agreement with the United States with immediate effect, citing the interests of the Nigerien people.

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Biden Spoke With, Congratulated New UK Prime Minister Starmer - White House

(Updates with more details in paras 5-9)

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden called new UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer to congratulate him on his electoral victory, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said on Friday.

"Earlier today, President Biden called Prime Minister Starmer of the United Kingdom to congratulate him on his appointment as prime minister, following yesterday's election," Jean-Pierre said during a press briefing.

Biden conveyed that he looks forward to working with Starmer on the full range of critical issues

on which the US and UK are engaged, Jean-Pierre said.

Biden told Starmer that he is committed to deepening US-UK cooperation on areas of shared interest and looks forward to welcoming him to Washington for the NATO summit next week, she added.

Biden and Starmer reiterated their support for Ukraine in its fight against Russia, the White House also said in a readout of the call.

The leaders also affirmed their shared commitment to protecting the gains of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and working with Northern Ireland to create and sustain economic growth and opportunities, the White House said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken also spoke with new UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a statement.

Blinken and Lammy emphasized the "enduring and essential" importance of the US-UK relationship in addressing global challenges, the statement said.

Blinken noted that he looks forward to welcoming Lammy to the NATO summit in Washington as well, the statement added.

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US 'Concerned' Over Orban's Trip to Moscow, Meeting With Putin – White House

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) – The United States is concerned over Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's visit to Moscow, where he met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and discussed Ukraine and other bilateral matters, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said on Friday.

"We are concerned that Prime Minister [Viktor] Orban would choose to make this trip to Moscow, which will not advance the cause of peace and is counterproductive," Jean-Pierre said during a press gaggle.

Orban's visit to Moscow puts Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence "at risk," Jean-Pierre added.

Prime Minister Orban and Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto arrived in Moscow on Friday for talks with President Putin. Orban called the visit the next step of his "peace mission," which aims to bring peace to Ukraine

The trip comes five days after Orban paid a surprise visit to Kiev to talk to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He said that peace in Ukraine would be Budapest's priority during its six-month rotating presidency of the European Union.

European Commission spokesman Eric Mamer said on Friday that Orban's trip to Moscow had not been agreed with the European Union's executive and that the Hungarian was not "representing the EU in any form."

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## White House Says Biden Held 'Check-In' With Doctor About His Health

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden held a check-in with his doctor to address a cold he purportedly had during a debate last week with Republican challenger Donald Trump, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said on Friday.

"[Biden] did have a short, verbal check-in in recent days about his cold," Jean-Pierre said during a press briefing.

The engagement was not a medical exam or a physical exam, Jean-Pierre added.

The White House claims that Biden suffered from a cold during the debate with Trump. Biden's dismal performance during the debate prompted concerns among some Democrats about his viability as a presidential candidate.

The White House and Biden campaign have dismissed concerns about Biden's purported cognitive decline.

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## Brain Specialist Calls on Biden to Take Cognitive Exam After Debate Debacle - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden should take a cognitive exam to address concerns about his health and competency after a poor debate performance against Republican challenger Donald Trump, neurosurgeon and chief CNN medical correspondent Sanjay Gupta said on Friday.

"For me as a brain specialist, it was concerning to watch President Joe Biden, and it quickly became clear that I was not alone in my reaction," Gupta said in an essay for CNN. "The consensus from the doctors reaching out to me, however, was that the president should be encouraged to undergo detailed cognitive and movement disorder testing and those results should be made available to the public."

Gupta said Biden's rambling, loss of concentration, halting speech and lack of facial animation were concerning.

During the debate, Trump called on Biden to take a cognitive exam. Trump also claimed to have "aced" two such exams himself.

However, Trump, 78, also sometimes displays some of the same signs of cognitive decline as Biden, including "nonsensical rants" and confusing names and current events, Gupta said.

Biden, 81, is the oldest US president in the history of the United States and would be 86 at the end of a second potential term in the White House. Biden did not take a cognitive exam as part of his most recent presidential medical examination.

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Alleged Drunk Driver Kills 3, Injures 7 After Veering into NYC Park-Police

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - Three people were killed and seven injured when an allegedly inebriated driver plowed into a park on the Lower East Side of New York City on Thursday night, the New York City Police Department said.

"Responding officers who did arrive on the scene did smell some alcohol. There were people who were there at the scene who grabbed the driver, removed the driver, and made sure the driver didn't leave until first responders made it to the scene," said NYPD Chief of Department Jeffrey Maddrey at a press conference.

According to police, Daniel Hyden, 44, of Monmouth Junction, New Jersey, is charged with multiple counts of driving while under the influence and driving without a license.

Hyden was allegedly driving down Water Street in a Ford F150 when he drove up onto the sidewalk and plowed into people gathered at Corlears Hook Park, just off FDR Drive shortly before 9 pm on Thursday, killing three and injuring 7 people.

Officials added that the ages of all the victims are still being verified, but two of the victims were a 59-year-old mother and her 38-year-old son.

According to officials, terrorism is not suspected at this time and the investigation is ongoing.

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Biden Spoke With, Congratulated New UK Prime Minister Starmer - White House

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden called new UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer to congratulate him on his electoral victory, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Friday.

"Earlier today, President Biden called Prime Minister Starmer of the United Kingdom to congratulate him on his appointment as prime minister, following yesterday's election," Jean-Pierre said during a press briefing.

The United States and United Kingdom have a special relationship, Jean-Pierre said. Biden conveyed that he looks forward to working with Starmer on the full range of critical issues on which the US and UK are engaged, Jean-Pierre said.

Biden told Starmer that he is committed to deepening US-UK cooperation on areas of shared interest and looks forward to welcoming him to Washington for the NATO summit next week, Jean-Pierre said.

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Mass Shooting in Philadelphia During July 4 Celebrations Leaves 1 Dead, 8 Injured - Police

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - Philadelphia Police Commissioner Kevin Bethel said on Friday that one individual died and eight more were injured during a mass shooting that occurred during the Independence Day celebrations on July 4.

US media reported that the incident occurred in southwest Philadelphia and involved three juveniles and six adults.

"Last night, around 11:30 as a result of a pop-up party, which I'll get into a little bit more, we had nine individuals who were shot," Bethel said during a press conference. "I offer condolences to the family here today as a result of the life loss."

Bethel said the pop-up party began in north Philadelphia, where law enforcement was initially successful in preventing individuals from gathering, but people reconvened half an hour later.

"That resulted in an individual coming up in a vehicle, firing multiple rounds in that vehicle, striking the individuals from the highway," Bethel said.

The police made significant progress in identifying the vehicle used in the incident but would not make public the name of the suspect at present, Bethel added.

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Biden Says He Can Still Beat Trump in November Election - White House Pool

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden said on Friday that he thinks he can still best his challenger Donald Trump in the 2024 presidential election.

"Yes," said Biden when asked if he thinks he can still beat Trump in the upcoming November election.

On June 27, Biden debated Trump at a CNN-hosted event in Atlanta, Georgia, and performed dismally.

The poor performance rekindled talk among many Democrats and the corporate media about replacing Biden as the Democratic Party presidential candidate.

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Pro-Democracy Group Calls on Biden to Withdraw Re-Election Bid – Report

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) – A group of 168 civic leaders, political donors, and business executives called on US President Biden on Friday to withdraw from the US presidential race in a letter sent to senior White House officials, the Washington Post reported on Friday.

"We respectfully urge you to withdraw from being a candidate for re-election for the sake of our democracy and the future of our nation," the letter from Leadership Now Project stated, as quoted by the report.

The group was founded in 2018 to promote democracy. The letter was sent to multiple White House advisors, the report said, citing an unnamed source.

According to the report, the 168 signatories of the letter include business executives such as Christy Walton, the daughter-in-law of Walmart's founder; retired NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue; investor Mike Novogratz; former Google executive Ning Mosberger-Tang; Warburg Pincus Managing Director Harsha Marti; Weyco Group CEO Tom Florsheim; and hedge fund investor Kevin Brennan of Bridgewater Associates.

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Biden Says He Can Still Beat Trump -White House Pool

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Biden Admin. Opposes Trump Aide's Call for US to Restart Nuclear Testing - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration opposes the proposal of Donald Trump's advisors to restart nuclear weapons testing through underground detonations, the New York Times reported on Friday.

The advisors support such testing if Trump is re-elected in November, but a number of experts reject such an idea as unnecessary and one that could lead to the end of the nuclear testing moratorium.

The Biden administration and other Democrats warned that the initiative could spur a chain reaction of nuclear testing by other countries, resulting in a new nuclear arms race that could destabilize the global balance and heighten the risk of war.

Ernest Moniz, secretary of energy in the Obama administration, was quoted as saying that the proposal is a "terrible idea."

"New testing would make us less secure. You can't divorce it from the global repercussions," Moniz said.

Los Alamos nuclear laboratory former Director Siegfried Hecker emphasized that the proposal is a risky step that could destroy the balance between domestic gains and global losses whereby the United States could "lose more" than its nuclear rivals.

The United States would violate the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) if it went ahead with a detonation as suggested in the proposal.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in March that he would not rule out that Russia may conduct nuclear tests - despite being unnecessary - if the United States does so.

In November 2023, Putin signed a bill to revoke the CTBT ratification, which was signed by Russia in New York in 1996.

CTBT is a multilateral treaty that bans nuclear weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions for civilian and military purposes.

While never entered into effect given that it requires ratification by all 44 countries that had nuclear power or research reactors at the time the accord was signed.

Of the nine recognized nuclear powers, only Russia, France and the United Kingdom have signed and ratified the treaty.

The United States, China and Israel have signed but not ratified the treaty, while India, Pakistan and North Korea have neither signed nor ratified it.

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## Canada's GoviEx Uranium Says Niger Nulled Its Permit to Develop Mine

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) – Nigerien Minister of Mines Ousmane Abarchi has informed Canadian miner GoviEx Uranium that it no longer holds rights over the perimeter of the Madaouela mining permit, the company said.

“GoviEx .... has been informed by the Government of the Republic of Niger, by way of a letter from the Minister of Mines, that it no longer has rights over the perimeter of the Madaouela mining permit, which is now in the public domain,” the company said in a statement issued on Thursday.

GoviEx said that the decision to withdraw the company's mining rights does not follow the usual withdrawal procedures as prescribed under the Nigerien mining code. The Canadian miner thus noted it reserves the right to challenge the decision by Niamey.

Niger's move will have a negative impact on the economic and social development of the region, GoviEx claimed. The Madaouela Project was expected to generate an initial capital expenditure of \$343 million and create close to 800 jobs over the mine's 20-year lifespan, it added.

The decision to strip the Canadian mining company of its exploitation rights comes weeks after Niamey made a similar move by withdrawing the permission for French nuclear fuel cycle company Orano to develop one of the world's largest uranium deposits, Imouraren, located in the country.

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## European Officials Privately Say Biden Should Quit Presidential Race - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) – European officials are saying privately that US President Joe Biden should quit the presidential race and make way for a different candidate from the Democratic Party, Bloomberg reported on Friday, citing sources familiar with the matter.

Officials from European countries express such views in private discussions more and more forcefully, the report said. They are afraid that Biden will not be able to win reelection in November and preserve NATO's unity on Ukraine and the alliance itself, it added.

There are concerns about how Biden will host the NATO summit in Washington next week, where his every move will be under close scrutiny, according to the report.

In these circumstances, the sources pointed out that any potential mistake in closed-door meetings during the summit would be made public by participants and would fuel demands for him to go. One G7 official compared Biden with a loose cannon in an unscripted setting, without the help of a teleprompter.

People who asked for anonymity said that Biden's poor performance during the recent presidential debate with Donald Trump only strengthened their concerns, which have been growing over the past months, particularly when he was "awkwardly" trying to sit down during the D-Day ceremony in France, while his wife and France President Emmanuel Macron were standing up.

The nearest weekend may become "make-or-break" for Biden if he continues multiplying his

mistakes, the report said. In these circumstances, Vice President Kamala Harris is emerging as a clear alternative to him, it added.

Washington will host the 75th anniversary NATO summit from July 9-11.

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Majority of Americans Still See Value in NATO Alliance - Poll

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - The majority of Americans still see value in NATO, with Democrats much more likely to favor the military alliance, a new Chicago Council on Global Affairs-Ipsos survey revealed on Friday.

Fifty-two percent of respondents said that NATO makes the US "more safe" while 35% said it "makes no difference," a report on the survey said.

Democrats were much more likely to hold this view (65%) compared to 52% of Republicans and 50% of independents, the survey report said.

Similarly, two thirds of respondents (67%) said that NATO is "still essential" to US security, the survey report said.

Eighty-three percent of Democrats held this view compared to 61% of Republicans and 60% of independents, the survey report added.

In 2002, approximately two-thirds of each group said NATO was essential to US security.

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Pentagon Postpones Exercise Noble Partner in Georgia Amid Review of Bilateral Relations

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) – The United States has indefinitely delayed the military exercise "Noble Partner" in Georgia as part of a comprehensive review of the bilateral relationship, the Pentagon said on Friday.

"The United States has initiated a comprehensive review of the United States – Georgia bilateral relationship. As part of that review, the United States will indefinitely postpone this iteration of exercise NOBLE PARTNER in Georgia, originally scheduled for July 25 – August 6, 2024," the statement said.

The US government initiated the review on May 30.

"The decision to postpone this iteration of NOBLE PARTNER is due to the Georgian government's false accusations against the United States and other western entities, to pressure Georgia to open a second front against Russia to alleviate pressure on Ukraine, and of participating in two coup attempts against the ruling party. As such, the United States Government has determined that this is an inappropriate time to hold a large-scale military exercise in Georgia," the statement said.

The Pentagon, however, said that the United States will continue to partner with the Georgian

Defense Forces.

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Mixed US Jobs Report Leaves Wall Street at Odds Over Possible September Interest Rate Cut

(Updates with more details, background in paras 5-13; modifies headline, lede)

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) - The United States added 206,000 jobs in June, the US Labor Department said on Friday, announcing another beat on employment forecasts, while the jobless rate rose too, leaving mixed expectations for an interest rate cut in September.

The Labor Department revised down May's non-farm payrolls growth to 218,000 from a previously published 272,000. That created a net decrease of 12,000 jobs between what the Labor Department reported for June and May. But when compared with the 190,000 growth forecast by Wall Street economists for June, the difference was 16,000 higher.

The US jobless rate rose to 4.1% in June from 4% in May with which the United States moves away for the first time in more than two years from maximum employment as defined by the Federal Reserve.

The stronger-than-forecast jobs growth that came on the back of a higher jobless rate left Wall Street's economists at odds over the chance of a Federal Reserve cutting interest rates in September.

"Fed pricing for year-end before the report was for [a] 49 bps [basis points] of easing, with an 80% chance of a Sept cut," economist Adam Button said on the ForexLive forum. "Afterwards, pricing has ticked up to 50 bps but Sept odds [for an interest rate cut] are unchanged."

The Fed's policy-making Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) will meet four times before the end of this year to review interest rates. The first of the meetings will be held on July 31. But Wall Street is betting on a cut to happen at the following meeting scheduled on September 18.

Interest rates, at between 5.25% and 5.5%, are at their highest since 2002 and compare with the low of between zero and 0.25% four years ago at the height of the economic crisis created by the coronavirus pandemic measures.

Fed Chairman Jerome Powell declined to entertain any speculation earlier this week on whether a September easing was likely.

But Powell did say on Tuesday that disinflationary trends were beginning to emerge in the United States - acknowledging that the seeds for a policy pivot may have been sown.

Powell also said that if "the labor market unexpectedly weakens that would also cause us to react."

The Fed has said the best US labor market in 50 years - where some 20 million-odd jobs lost during the pandemic were offset in just months, with millions more being added since - has enabled Americans to spend more than anticipated by the US central bank. The end result has been inflation well above the Fed's 2%-per-year target.

The Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Index, closely watched by the Fed for inflation, grew 2.6% year-on-year in May, from 2.7% in April.

Another key price gauge - the Consumer Price Index (CPI) - also moderated in May, growing at

3.3% year-on-year, from April's 3.4%.

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Former Canadian Foreign Minister Says Trudeau Damaged Nation's Global Standing - Reports

WASHINGTON, July 5 (Sputnik) – Former Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Marc Garneau believes that an "ill prepared" Justin Trudeau has damaged Canada's global reputation during international talks and is not very good at diplomacy, La Presse reported on Friday, citing excerpts from Garneau's autobiography.

Garneau became foreign minister in January 2021. However, his tenure was short-lived as he was removed from his position in October of the same year as part of a cabinet reshuffle following the federal election.

"Unfortunately, Canada's standing in the world has declined, in part because our statements are not always accompanied by capacity to act or actions that clearly demonstrate that we mean what we say," Garneau wrote in his autobiography planned for publication in October.

The former minister said that Trudeau overestimated Canada's impact on the global scene and that he did not attach any value to the foreign ministry, the report noted. Garneau also believes that Trudeau is anything but gifted when it comes to foreign affairs, it added.

Garneau deemed Trudeau's state visits to China in 2016 and 2017 and to India in 2018 as unsuccessful as he was "ill prepared" to hold talks with his counterparts. Notably, the former minister recalled Beijing's criticism of Trudeau's attempt to address human rights during trade negotiations, and his decision to inadvertently invite to a reception an individual convicted of attempting to assassinate an Indian minister in Canada in 1986.

"Basically, we didn't understand who we were meeting. We thought we could charm them, and we were surprised it didn't happen that way," Garneau said.

The former minister further lamented that during his tenure as foreign minister, Trudeau reached out for counsel only once, the report said. Garneau expressed his disappointment and concluded that the premier did not consider his advice useful.