

More Divided Than Before

Poll: Half of Americans Think 'It's Time to Split'



Survey respondents who voted for former president Donald Trump and President Joe Biden alike are worried about the effects of the opposite party's policies, a UVA poll found.

WASHINGTON (Sputnik) – According to a recent poll, over half of all ex-U.S. president Donald Trump supporters “somewhat agree” with the idea that red states should secede from the U.S., while 41% of Joe Biden supporters consent with the idea of blue states doing the same.

The poll was conducted by the University of Virginia's Center for Politics, which in partnership with Project Home Fire think tank analyzed online responses to over 300 questions encompassing social, political, and psychological themes from more than a thousand political opponents from each camp.

The further data presented by the researchers revealed, however, that a quarter of Trump supporters “strongly agree” with the idea of

red-state succession, while 18% of Biden supporters support a blue-state breakaway.

“The divide between Trump and Biden voters is deep, wide, and dangerous,” Center for Politics Director Larry Sabato is quoted in a statement regarding the findings as saying. “The scope is unprecedented, and it will not be easily fixed.”

Moreover, at least 80% of Trump and Biden voters say that elected politicians from opposing parties pose a “clear and present danger to American democracy.” The exact numbers are 80% of Biden voters, 84% of Trump voters, per the data.

Next, at least three-quarters of Trump and Biden supporters say that Americans who “strongly support” the opposition party pose a “clear and present danger to the American way of life,” which is 75% of Biden voters,

78% of Trump voters.

Furthermore, more than seven out of ten Biden and Trump supporters think that “some media sources on the extreme left/right have become so untruthful that they should be censored to stop the spreading of dangerous lies.” The exact ratio is 78% of Biden voters, 73% of Trump supporters.

According to the poll, a total of 56% of Biden supporters “somewhat agree” on not seeing any difference between Republicans and Fascists, while 76% of their Trump-voting counterparts consider Democrats and Socialists the same.

As the researchers underscore, almost 80% of both Biden and Trump supporters said democracy was better than other political systems. However, more than six out of ten Trump and Biden supporters regard America as less of a representative democracy and more of a system governed by and rigged for the oligarchy.

And quite surprising, nearly half of Biden and Trump voters think that the president should be empowered to take “needed actions without being constrained by Congress or the courts” if he or she is elected, specifically 46% of Biden voters, 44% of Trump voters.

“The logical conclusion then, is that it is in the long-term interest of the country to pursue a series of strategies and tactics that encourage bridge-building and constructive dialogue and re-affirm America's reputation as the world's leading representative democracy. Simply put — we need a real plan to heal our fractured democracy. In our research, we have uncovered some pathways to help do that,” Project Home Fire's head Larry Schack said.

The survey was conducted in late July and early August.

China Flies 25 Fighter Jets After Incursion By British Warship



A Chinese H-6 bomber (bottom) flying over the Bashi Channel near Chinese Taipei as an F-16 (top) approaches

BEIJING (Dispatches) – China has flown 25 fighter jets over Taipei's airspace after Britain sent a warship through the Taiwan Strait in a move aimed at challenging Beijing's claim to the strategic waterway.

The Chinese Taipei's defense ministry said on Friday that China had sent 22 fighters, two nuclear-capable bombers and one anti-submarine aircraft into the island's southwest Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ).

The first batch of Chinese aircraft flew in an area close to the Taipei-controlled Pratas Islands, with the two bombers flying closest to the atoll, according to a map issued by the ministry.

The second group flew down into the Bashi Channel that separates Chinese Taipei from the Philippines, a key waterway that links the Pacific with the disputed South China Sea.

The ministry described the show of force as “incursion” and said Taipei had scrambled combat aircraft to counter the move, which happened on the same day that Beijing marked the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The incident — the biggest since 28 jets flew into the zone on June 15 — came after Britain sent the HMS

Richmond through the Taiwan Strait on Monday, a move that challenged Beijing's claim to the sensitive waterway and marked a rare voyage by a non-U.S. military vessel.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army censured the voyage, the first time since 2008, accusing Britain of acting out of “evil intentions to sabotage peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.”

China considers Chinese Taipei a breakaway province that should be reunited with the mainland.

U.S. warships periodically carry out provocative voyages through the strait, drawing responses from China that asserts sovereignty over the self-ruled island.

Under the “One China” policy, almost all world countries recognize that sovereignty. The U.S., too, recognizes Chinese sovereignty but has long courted Taipei in an attempt to unnerve Beijing.

While U.S. warships pass through the strait on an almost monthly basis, despite Chinese opposition, the United States' allies have generally been reluctant to follow suit.

China has already sent a stern warning to the UK against deploying warships to the disputed South China Sea.

Algeria Chases Zionist Submarine Out of Territorial Waters

ALGIERS (MEMO) – The Algerian National Navy detected an Dolphin submarine belonging to the Zionist regime last week in Algerian territorial waters, chased it and forced it to rise to the surface before leaving the area, MENADEFENSE has reported.

This came after Russian journalist Darko Todorovski revealed information about the incident in a tweet on Thursday: “Off the coast of Algeria, an Israeli submarine – Dolphin type tried to track a training launch of a cruise missile Club-S from a submarine of project 636, but in turn, it was discovered and pursued by two submarines of project 636. They forced it to surface and leave the area.”

The website disclosed that the

incident happened during an Algerian navy drill on 29 and 30 September.

“The drill, which saw the participation of many Algerian naval units, was intended to demonstrate the capabilities of in-depth attack or stealth destruction of targets at sea at very long distances,” the website detailed.

According to MENADEFENSE: “The Israeli Dolphin class submarine was spotted by passive detection, tracked and forced to surface in waters and leave the area. The decision was quickly taken to pursue it aggressively without the use of sonar in order to avoid counter detection.”

Pointing to the objectives of the Zionist regime's submarine's presence, the report said they must have been

“intelligence and technical informa-

tion gathering” since it was expected that at least one Algerian submarine would fire one or more missiles.

“In this case, the Dolphin would have obtained the precious acoustic signature indicating the opening of the missile racks and would have recorded the sound of the firing preparation and firing routine; valuable information that could help predict the actions taken by Algerian crews in the event of a conflict,” the website said.

“The fact that the exercise is complex and involves many warships, was also an opportunity to make electronic intelligence and collect data on the transmissions of the Algerian Navy and their encryption,” it added.

Rights Groups Urge Full Probe Into Rohingya Leader's Killing

DHAKA (Al Jazeera) – Rights groups have called for an investigation into the killing of a prominent Rohingya leader who was shot to death at the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh.

Mohibullah, who was in his late 40s and had eight children, was killed by unknown gunmen in a camp in Cox's Bazar on Wednesday night. He led one of the largest community groups to emerge since more than 730,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar after a military crackdown against the Muslim-majority minority in August 2017.

“He left me with so much responsibility,” his wife, Nasima Begum, told Al Jazeera. “I am devastated, how can I manage the family now? It's a difficult road ahead. I am scared to live here now, we need security.”

Al Jazeera's Tanvir Chowdhury, reporting from the site where Mohibullah was shot dead, said there was “an uneasy calm prevailing in the camp and a heavy security presence”.

“Rohingya refugees are worried and anxious to find out who is behind the killing.”

Mohammed Qasim, a Rohingya refugee, could not hold back his tears. “For years now, we have been watching and following Mohibullah, he was a gem to us and done so much for us, but we couldn't save him,” he told Al Jazeera. “He took our case to the global community to seek justice for us.”

Mohibullah came to prominence when he was chosen to represent his community on a visit to meet then-U.S. president Donald Trump at the White House and attend a UN Human

Rights Council session in Geneva in 2019.

Human Rights Watch called Mohibullah a vital voice for the Rohingya community.

“He always defended the rights of the Rohingya to safe and dignified returns and to have a say in the decisions concerning their lives and future. His killing is a stark demonstration of the risks faced by those in the camps who speak up for freedom and against violence,” Meenakshi Ganguly, the rights group's South Asia director, said in a statement.

More than a million Rohingya Muslims live in the camps, the vast majority having fled neighboring Myanmar during the military crackdown that UN investigators have said was carried out with genocidal intent.

UK Gov't Calls In Army as Gas Stations Run Dry



The British Army is being deployed to help assist with a gas shortage crisis in the UK.

LONDON (Reuters) – The British Army is being deployed to help assist with a gas shortage crisis in the UK, the government has announced.

The shortage, now in its second week, is blamed on the lack of truckers to deliver the gas to keep the country moving, which has meant thousands of gas stations have been empty for days. The lack of truckers is linked to the UK's decision to leave the European Union this year, cutting off access to vital foreign truck drivers.

From 4 October, 200 military tanker personnel, 100 of which are drivers, will assist with deliveries.

“Our Armed Forces are there to fill in any critical vacancies and help keep the country on the move by supporting the industry to deliver fuel to forecourts,” said Defence Minister Ben Wallace.

The shortages at gas stations have culminated in fights at gas stations, traffic queues for miles, and extreme panic buying.

“I am completely, completely fed up. Why is the country not ready for anything?” Ata Uriakhil, a 47-year-old Afghanistan-born taxi driver who was first in a line of more than 40 cars outside a closed supermarket gas station in South West London, told Reuters.

Uriakhil told Reuters that his weekly

earnings had been reduced by 20%, as his time was occupied by waiting in queues for fuel rather than driving fares.

“When is it going to end?” Uriakhil said. “The politicians are not capable of doing their jobs properly. The government should have been prepared for this crisis. It is just incompetence.”

The Petrol Retailers Association (PRA) said members reported on Friday that 26% of pumps were dry, 27% had just one fuel type in stock, and 47% had enough petrol and diesel.

“Independents, which total 65% of the entire network, are not receiving enough deliveries of fuel compared with other sectors such as supermarkets,” Gordon Balm, executive director of the Petrol Retailer Association, told Reuters.

The government has written to all Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) license holders - past and present - to offer them training in an attempt to plug the labor shortage.

They have also temporarily relaxed safety restrictions for HGV drivers, meaning that they can work longer hours.

In a U-turn by Boris Johnson's government, emergency visas have also been extended to European drivers and workers to help address the labor shortages that have led to empty shelves and gas station queues.



MANILA (AFP) – Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said Saturday he will not run for vice president in 2022 and will retire from politics, potentially paving the way for his daughter to contest the country's highest office. Duterte, who polls show remains almost as popular as when he was swept to victory in 2016 on a promise to rid the country of drugs, is constitutionally barred from seeking a second term as leader. “The overwhelming... sentiment of the Filipinos is that I am not qualified and it would be a violation of the constitution to circumvent the law, the spirit of the constitution” to run for the vice presidency, Duterte, 76, said. “Today I announce my retirement from politics.” The firebrand declared in August he would contest the country's second-highest office in the May election.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – U.S. lawmakers have fired a barrage of criticism at a top Facebook executive on how its Instagram photo-sharing platform impacts teens' mental health, but Facebook has instead offered assurances that the sites are safe. “This research is a bombshell. It is powerful, gripping, riveting evidence that Facebook knows of the harmful effects of its site on children, and that it has concealed those facts and findings,” Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) said. Davis testified to the U.S. Senate Committee that a Wall Street Journal series — based on internal research leaked by a whistleblower at Facebook — had selectively chosen parts of its studies to give an inaccurately dark vision of the company's work. She reportedly defended Instagram's efforts to protect young people, and presented a survey to lawmakers that indicated Instagram as being generally helpful to teens suffering from serious issues like anxiety, sadness and eating disorders. The lawmakers accused Facebook of concealing the findings which reported evidence that the company is aware of the platform's negative impact on mental health. A Facebook whistleblower is set to testify before senators on Tuesday.

TBILISI (AP) – Georgians voted in municipal elections across the country on Saturday that are seen as a test for the strength of the ruling party and which opposition parties hope could lead to an early national election. The vote came a day after the arrest of exiled former president Mikheil Saakashvili, who had returned to the country to try to bolster opposition support despite facing prison on convictions for abuse of power that were declared after he left Georgia. Opinion polls showed more than half the electorate in the former Soviet republic were undecided ahead of the election in which the ruling Georgian Dream party and the United National Movement founded by Saakashvili are the main contenders. A strong performance by the opposition could raise tensions if Georgians expect that to bring an early national election.

TRIPOLI (AP) – A major crackdown in western Libya has resulted in the detention of 4,000 migrants, including hundreds of women and children, according to officials. The raids took place on Friday in the western town of Gargaresh as part of what authorities described as a security campaign against undocumented migration and drug trafficking. The interior ministry, which led the crackdown, made no mention of any traffickers or smugglers being arrested. Officials said that 500 undocumented migrants had been detained but on Saturday reported that number had reached 4,000. Gargaresh, a known hub for migrants and refugees, is about 12km (7.5 miles) west of the Libyan capital, Tripoli. The town has seen several waves of raids on migrants over the years, but the latest one was described by activists as the fiercest so far. “We are hearing that more than 500 migrants including women and children have been rounded up, arbitrarily detained and are at risk of abuse and ill-treatment,” said Dax Roque, Libya's director of the Norwegian Refugee Council, in a statement. “Migrants and refugees in Libya, particularly those without legal residency in the country, are often at risk of arbitrary detention. Torture, sexual violence, and extortion [are] rampant in Libyan detention centres,” the statement added. Pictures posted by the interior ministry showed dozens of migrants sitting with hands cuffed behind them or being taken away in vehicles.

TUNIS (MEMO) – Speaker of Tunisian Parliament Rached Ghannouchi has declared the resumption of parliamentary sessions, urging lawmakers to resume work, news agencies reported on Friday. Ghannouchi defied President Kais Saied's suspension of Parliament and called in a statement for the resumption of Parliament's work. “The office of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People is in permanent session,” Ghannouchi announced in a tweet. The Parliament speaker said he rejected the “unconstitutional activation of Article 80” by Saied and considered all his decisions related to the suspension of Parliament and its committees “null”. According to Al-Quds Al-Arabi, he asserted that: “Decision 117, through which Saied suspended the Tunisian Constitution, was a theft of the power of Parliament and bringing all authorities in that hands of only one man,” stressing that this goes against democratic values. He called for Saied to “backtrack” from his decrees, stop the suspension of Parliament and launch a national dialogue to look for an exit from the current: “Dangerous crisis that threatens the stability of the state and unity of people.”