

Georgia charges Trump, former advisers in 2020 election case

Former US president Donald Trump was hit with a sweeping fourth set of criminal charges on Monday when a Georgia grand jury issued an indictment accusing him of efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden. The charges, brought by Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis, add to the legal woes facing Trump, the front-runner in the race for the Republican nomination for the 2024 presidential election, Reuters reported.

The sprawling 98-page indictment listed 19 defendants and 41 criminal counts in all. All of the defendants were charged with racketeering, which is used to target members of organized crime groups and carries a penalty of up to 20 years in prison. Among the other defendants were Mark Meadows, Trump's former White House chief of staff, and lawyers Rudy Giuliani and John Eastman.

"Trump and the other defendants charged in this indictment refused to accept that Trump lost, and they knowingly and willfully joined a conspiracy to unlawfully change the outcome of the election in favor of Trump," the indictment said.

The case stems from a Jan. 2, 2021, phone call in which Trump urged Georgia's top election official, Brad Raffensperger, to "find" enough votes to reverse his narrow loss in the state. Raffensperger declined to do so.

Trump's supporters stormed the US Capitol four days later in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent lawmakers from certifying Biden's victory.

The indictment cites a number of crimes that Trump or his associates allegedly committed, including falsely testifying to lawmakers that election fraud had occurred and urging state officials to violate their oaths of office by altering the



Republican presidential candidate and former US President Donald Trump campaigns at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines, Iowa, US August 12, 2023.

● EVERLYN HOCKSTEIN/
REUTERS

election results.

Prosecutors also cited the breach of a voting system in a rural Georgia county and the harassment of an election worker who became the focus of conspiracy theories.

It also mentions an alleged scheme to subvert the US electoral process by submitting false slates of electors, people who make up the Electoral College that elects the president and vice president.

The indictment reaches across state lines, saying that Trump advisers, including Giuliani and Meadows, advanced the conspiracy by calling officials in Arizona, Pennsylvania and elsewhere seeking to change the outcome in those states.

Trump has denied any wrongdoing, and accuses Willis, an elected Democrat, of being politically motivated.

Trump has already pleaded

not guilty in three criminal cases.

Georgia, once reliably Republican, has emerged as one of a handful of politically competitive states that can determine the outcome of presidential elections.

Trump persists in falsely claiming he won the November 2020 election although dozens of court cases and state probes have found no evidence to support his claim.

Iran-US military ...

Iran Daily: Is the recent deployment of new military forces to the Middle East, apparently to secure maritime trade, indicative of a shift in the United States' strategy? This comes in the context of a perceived effort by the US to reduce its presence in the region over recent years.

Gohari-Moqadam: It is worth contemplating the perspective that the United States might not be entirely scaling back its engagement in the Middle East. The US continues to regard the Middle East as a strategically vital region, owing to its geopolitical positioning and substantial energy reservoirs. The evolution of American priorities appears to be at play here. There was a time when West Asia held primary significance for the US, followed by Europe and East Asia. However, the present landscape has shifted, with East Asia, particularly concerning China, now occupying a central role in America's hierarchy of priorities, leaving Europe and West Asia in subsequent tiers. Nonetheless, this shift doesn't translate to an outright abandonment of West Asia or a lack of strategic intent toward it. Consequently, there hasn't been a fundamental alteration in the US overarching strategy; rather, there has been an adjustment in how they manifest their presence within the West Asian theater. The recent introduction of new US military forces into the Persian Gulf, purportedly to bolster maritime secu-

rity, is a tactical maneuver rather than a wholesale strategic shift. Israel and several Arab allies are exerting pressure for a sustained American presence in the region, coupled with heightened commitments to them.

It appears that, in response to these appeals, the United States has recalibrated the nature of its military involvement – transitioning from a prolonged and multi-base presence to one that is short-term and temporary in nature.

How does this shift in American foreign policy priorities correlate with the evolving realities on the ground? Has the rise of new global players like China played a role in shaping this shift?

The recalibration of American foreign policy priorities finds its roots in the dynamics of interplay among major global powers. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the United States pivoted its primary strategy toward countering terrorism, leading to invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the conclusion of the Obama administration and the subsequent tenure of Trump marked a transformative period, wherein the focus shifted from combating terrorism to a renewed emphasis on confronting major powers. In this revised paradigm, the primary spotlight is now cast upon engagements with formidable global actors. Foremost among these is China, emerging as a major power and a strategic adversary to the United States. Consequently, the Biden

administration is presently aligning itself with a doctrine reminiscent of its Cold War stance against the former Soviet Union, colloquially termed the "containment policy." In this context, the US is adopting a multifaceted approach to rein in China, encompassing military cooperation, economic entanglements, and diplomatic affiliations with its network of allied nations.

How do you assess the US recent military deployment with the aim of upholding maritime trade security while also making several accusations against Iran?

This appears to be an American blame game. Over the past years, the US has been the main source of maritime instability, posing palpable threats to the interests of nations across the world, particularly within the Middle East. The allegations leveled against Iran in the Persian Gulf can be best described as pretexts, bereft of tangible manifestations in reality. This initiative seems to have been prompted by Israeli pressure.

Israel, wrestling with internal discord and aiming to divert public attention away from domestic developments, is pressuring US to augment its presence within the region. This move is strategically aimed at veering the focus away from Israel's internal crises.

Iran, on the other hand, has adhered to a steadfast policy over the last four decades, advocating for regional security to be overseen by regional stakeholders without external

interventions. During this span, Iran's potency has multiplied, underpinned by a host of augmented military capabilities, particularly those encompassing naval power to maintain regional security.

Could the recent deployment, following two years of indirect talks between the US and Iran as well as a recent prisoner exchange breakthrough, be interpreted as a strategic move to exert influence in upcoming negotiations on significant matters such as the nuclear issue and potential sanctions relief?

The US actions carry a provocative undertone and, as per your interpretation, can be seen as a display of force against Iran, although its intended outcomes might not be fully realized. This show of power serves dual purposes within the context of the Biden administration's domestic narrative. It functions as a signal of authority, geared toward countering criticisms from the Republicans, who accuse Biden of exhibiting weakness in the face of Iran. President Biden is seeking to project a resolute stance.

Concurrently, this move appears to be influenced by Israel's pressure and its objective of diverting attention from internal dilemmas. Simultaneously, it could be construed as a veiled admonition to Iran. Throughout the protracted years of nuclear negotiations with Iran, the United States has never refrained from uttering its military threats, operating under the premise that such dis-

plays could potentially yield favorable bargaining leverage. However, it is pertinent to note that these threats have yet to impact Iran's stance.

Experts suggest that the military deployment might be a reaction to Arab countries strengthening ties with China and Iran. The United States, in response, aims to encourage these nations to remain loyal while dissuading them from aligning more closely with Eastern powers, particularly China. What's your take on that?

The international geopolitical landscape is in a state of flux, witnessing a transformative shift where the sole centrality of the United States is no longer indisputable. China's rise as a robust player within East Asia, alongside other influential regional entities, contributes to these dynamic changes. Notably, America's regional partners are attuned to these global shifts, prompting them to pursue associations with China, Russia, and regional players like Iran. In this context, the recent dispatch of additional forces appears to carry a message to US allies: affirming continued commitment to their security interests while concurrently discouraging them from forging deeper connections

with China and Russia. Nevertheless, this maneuver might not yield substantial success in achieving the desired outcomes.

Although talks between Iran and the US over sanctions and the 2015 nuclear deal haven't yielded a final solution, both sides appear to be handling the tensions. In light of this, do you believe that the fresh military deployment, which you've termed provocative, could exacerbate tensions between the two nations?

No, I have no worries about the eruption of a military confrontation. The US has consistently maintained a presence within the region. Additionally, as I previously mentioned, the influx of new military personnel is of a transient nature rather than a permanent fixture. The US finds itself in a position that doesn't favor the initiation of military tensions.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia: Azerbaijan fired on EU observers

AFP – Armenia said on Tuesday that Azerbaijan's military had opened fire on EU observers monitoring the volatile border between the Caucasian former Soviet republics, which have long-standing territorial disagreements. "Units of the Azerbaijani armed forces opened fire from small arms targeting EU observers patrolling near Verin Shorzha and their vehicle," Armenia's Defence Ministry said. There were no casualties from the gunfire that started in the east of the country at around 12:20 pm (0820 GMT), it added.

W Africa military chiefs to discuss Niger crisis



AFP – Military chiefs from the West African bloc ECOWAS will meet in Ghana on Thursday and Friday to discuss possible military intervention in Niger, regional military and political sources said Tuesday.

The meeting – originally scheduled for Saturday but then postponed – came after ECOWAS leaders last week approved deployment of a "standby force to restore constitutional order" in Niger, whose elected president Mohamed Bazoum was toppled on July 26.

Clashes hit Libyan capital: Residents

REUTERS – Clashes broke out in the Libyan capital Tripoli late on Monday, residents said, and flights to the city's main airport were suspended, after the reported seizure of a powerful armed faction commander by a rival force. "We have heard gunfire for almost two hours now and we do not know what will happen. We fear for our safety," said one of the residents in Furnaj district. Mahmoud Hamza, head of the 444 brigade that controls much of Tripoli, was detained at Mitiga airport by the Special Deterrence Force, local media and a source in the 444 brigade said.

