

## EIR Daily Alert Service

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## EDITORIAL

### JFK vs. Dr. Strangelove

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—Italy is finally committing to the Messina Bridge, linking Sicily with mainland Italy with the longest single-span suspended bridge in the world. Russia just produced the largest grain harvest in its history. Today, China’s President Xi Jinping just had five bilateral summit meetings in one day, with the heads of state of the Central Asia Republics. They were meeting in the original Silk Road city of Xi’an. In every one of

the meetings, *Global Times* reports, the central topic was the Belt and Road centerpiece of massive infrastructure projects.

Ten years ago, when Xi began his Presidency, he introduced his Belt and Road policy in a speech in Kazakhstan. It had grown out of China's experience in bringing, at that time, over 700 million Chinese out of extreme poverty, over the preceding three decades.

Ten years ago, Ukraine's elected President Viktor Yanukovich travelled to Beijing to meet with Xi Jinping and sign initial contracts with the Belt and Road projects. His government was overthrown in a violent coup within three months.

Yesterday, [Ukrinform](#), Ukraine's National News Agency, featured the bizarre announcement to the West that May 16 was a turning point in history, which Kiev proved by shooting down six of Russia's hypersonic Kinzhal missiles fired at it, that Russia is a paper tiger, that Russia has no weapons to be afraid of, and that, "Gunga-din!" it is the moment to charge at Russia with every thing the West has. "So if anyone in the Western world was still afraid of Russian weapons, now they should finally realize that there is nothing to be afraid of. And if anyone in the United States still doubted whether to give Ukraine the latest weapons, they have also received an answer," they quoted an economist as saying.

Ukrinform ran with this lead, even though the U.S. had quietly signalled Kiev that they understood the Kinzhal indeed had hit their Patriot anti-missile system in Kiev.

If that were not bad enough, the economist ends his remarks by explaining to Ukraine's money-obsessed Western "allies" how much can be made by using Ukraine as the testing ground: "Each delivery of several billion dollars worth of weapons to Ukraine will bring hundreds of billions of dollars worth of orders for American arms corporations in the future. European manufacturers also see this. And so they are also motivated to push their government to provide Ukraine with more and more modern weapons. Which will destroy the remaining myths about the power of Russian weapons."

Just because Kiev is volunteering to play Slim Pickens doesn't mean the U.S. has to be Dr. Strangelove. The timely call by the [Schiller Institute](#) features John F. Kennedy's famous June 10, 1963 American University commencement speech, as a reminder of what an American President can be one "who can see the best tradition in every nation, including Russia and China, as the basis for mutual trust and the basis for peace." JFK confronted the original Dr. Strangelove, a young, berserker Henry Kissinger, and his associates, and rose to the occasion:

"What kind of peace do I mean? What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on Earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children—not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women—not merely peace in our time but peace for all time."

### **Correction: *Alert* Editorial Link for Schiller Institute 'Urgent Appeal'**

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—Yesterday's *Alert* Editorial, which published the Schiller Institute's "[Urgent Appeal by Citizens and Institutions from All Over the World to the \(Next\) President of the United States!](#)" mistakenly published the incorrect link to the Appeal.

- Watch [Harley's Updates](#) with Harley Schlanger on Friday May 19, 2023: Every weekday morning on The LaRouche Organization, Schlanger will give you the strategic briefing you need to start your day.

## **STRATEGIC SHOWDOWN**

### **China and Central Asian Heads of State Meet in Xi'an, Where Optimism Replaces Geopolitics**

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—The Presidents of the five Central Asian Republics were warmly welcomed today in historic Xi'an, capital of China's Shaanxi province, by President Xi Jinping. He met with each of

them individually and then held a welcoming celebration with them and their wives this evening. Xi'an is, of course, well known as the eastern terminus of the ancient Silk Road. This year marks the 10th anniversary of Xi Jinping's announcement of the "New Silk Road," now known as the Belt and Road Initiative, which Xi revealed at Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University on Sept. 7, 2013 in a speech on "[Promote People-to-People Friendship and Create a Better Future.](#)"

Attending the Xi'an summit are Presidents Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan, Sadyr Japarov of Kyrgyzstan, Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov of Turkmenistan, and Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan. On May 19, President Xi will keynote the formal China-Central Asia Summit and present what has been described as a major development strategy for the region. A number of important documents will be signed and the six presidents will hold a joint press conference after the Summit.

Giving a sense of the optimism surrounding the gathering, Uzbekistan's Ambassador to China Farhod Arziev wrote in a commentary in CGTN, "the China-Central Asia Summit stirs within me a wellspring of expectations," mentioning, among other things, the proposed establishment of a China-Central Asia Business Council and the planned launch of the "Year of Culture and Art of the Peoples of Central Asia and China." The latter was an initiative proposed by Uzbek President Mirziyoyev, the ambassador explained.

The bilateral meetings that Xi held today with each of the Presidents were extremely positive, during which a "raft" of bilateral agreements were signed, Xinhua reported. In the case of Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, their bilateral relationships with Beijing were elevated to being comprehensive strategic partnerships. In each case, the leaders discussed the need for "high-quality" Belt and Road cooperation and support for the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative.

China's semiofficial [\*Global Times\*](#) points out in its editorial that relations among the Central Asian nations and China in recent years have been stable, "almost unaffected by geopolitical factors." Contrast that to "the geopolitical manipulators in the West [that] have long eyed Central Asia and considered it as a chess piece to use against China and Russia, in their words, to expand its influence in the region at the cost of China and Russia."

Speaking for those "geopolitical manipulators," various Western media are harping that Russia has been "left out" of the Central Asia gathering and has to watch China moving into what has been Russia's "backyard." Russia, a state "in decline," is "nervous," says the *Europe's Edge* journal for the [Center for European Policy Analysis](#) geopolitical think tank. Thus, Moscow is in no position to "compete" with China in the region. "China has a lot to offer; Russia does not so much," opines author Emil Avdaliani. These astute observers argue that Russia is so insecure about maintaining its Central Asian allies that it had to invite them all to the Victory Day parade in Moscow, to put on a good show.

### **Kiev Goes Full 'Dr. Strangelove'**

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—More than a day after a Russian hypersonic Kinzhal missile hit Kiev's Patriot air defense unit, after the video of the strike was made public, even after U.S. officials put out the word that the Patriot had been hit, Ukraine's state news agency Ukrinform featured a lead article, "[The Night of Downed Kinzhals Is a Loss of \\$120 Million for Russia, Plus Destroyed Reputation](#)," explaining that nothing in Kiev was hit, all six Kinzhal hypersonic missiles were destroyed along with twelve other missiles, and only some poor animals in Kiev's zoo were scared.

Such has become standard operating procedure in Kiev these days. However, that was just the beginning. The article went to the other side of Alice's looking glass. Not only did the hypersonic missiles not do any damage, but "the 'Kinzhals' ... the same missiles that Russian propagandists have been scaring the whole world with for years" are impotent. Russia claims that the Patriot system was knocked out. "But who

would believe this? Only the Russian plebs. ... And the world has also seen that to be afraid of Russian blackmail with the use of such weapons is to disrespect oneself.”

Ukrinform quotes various authorities, ending with economist Sergiy Fursa, who explains that the attack was a complete disgrace for the Russian army. “The question of which technologies are stronger and whether Russian weapons are capable of competing with American systems has been put to rest. So if anyone in the Western world was still afraid of Russian weapons, now they should finally realize that there is nothing to be afraid of. And if anyone in the United States still doubted whether to give Ukraine the latest weapons, they have also received an answer.”

So, it is one thing to look the other way when one’s ally is in denial, but the argument is that, since Kiev has shown the West that there’s nothing to fear from going all the way, the failed May 16 attack is an historic game-changer. Kiev has shown the way. Damn the torpedoes (or nuclear bombs), full speed ahead!

If that were not bad enough, Fursa concludes his remarks by explaining to Kiev’s money-obsessed allies how so much money can be made by using Ukraine as the testing ground: “Each delivery of several billion dollars worth of weapons to Ukraine will bring hundreds of billions of dollars worth of orders for American arms corporations in the future. European manufacturers also see this. And so they are also motivated to push their government to provide Ukraine with more and more modern weapons. Which will destroy the remaining myths about the power of Russian weapons.”

As Sophocles observed: “Those whom the gods would destroy, they first drive mad.”

### **Kiev’s Assassination Policy Brought to UN Security Council**

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—The issue of a government official publicly threatening to assassinate civilians and public officials was put before the UN Security Council (UNSC) on May 15. The rotating president of the

UNSC, Switzerland's Permanent Representative Pascale Baeriswyl, was presented with a letter from Moscow's Permanent Representative at the UN [Vassily Nebenzia](#) on the recent "Russophobic" remarks by top Ukrainian officials—in particular, those of Ukrainian military intelligence (GUR) chief Gen. Kyrylo Budanov.

RT, which saw the letter, cited [Budanov](#)'s response in an April 21 interview with Yahoo, when asked about Kiev's involvement in the assassination of Russian journalist Darya Dugina in Moscow: "We've been killing Russians and we will keep killing Russians anywhere on the face of this world until the complete victory of Ukraine." Nebenzia's letter also cited Kiev's news outlet UNIAN for its poll on its official Telegram channel "with the main question about who should be the next after Daria Dugina, Vladlen Tatarsky (both killed in terrorist attacks) and Zakhar Prilepin (injured in terrorist attacks)."

Nebenzia asserted: "These manifestations of hate speech, Russophobia, incitement to violence on the basis of nationality are, at a minimum, a flagrant violation of the rules of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination."

[Nebenzia](#) made a similar public statement to the UN Security Council, which is posted on the Russian Mission's website.

Today, it was [Mykhailo Podolyak](#), adviser to the head of Ukraine's Office of the President and who advises President Zelenskyy directly, who tweeted its terrorist response to Nebenzia: "So? Yes, Ukraine hates you. Yes, we will persecute you. Always and everywhere.... Yes, Ukraine will get each and every one of you, whether legally or physically. And stop exploiting the UN—undeniable war criminals have no international law."

Obviously, those accused of being war criminals have a trial; however, Kiev has invented the new category, "undeniable war criminals." Translation: We don't need no stinkin' trial. We will assassinate whom we choose to. We are outside of international law.

## Lavrov Discusses the Situation in the 'Post-Soviet Space'

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—In a May 17 interview on Tsargard TV, Russian Foreign Minister [Sergey Lavrov](#) was asked by the interviewer about Russia's special interests in “the countries closest to Russia ... the former Soviet republics,” or what is called the “post-Soviet space.” This is the region, the interviewer noted, in which U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken “makes no secret ... that they will escalate the situation.... Escalate the anti-Russia forces.” But, Tsargrad asks, would any of those countries move in the direction of engaging in anti-Russia actions?

The presidents of the five Central Asian Republics are participating in China-Central Asia Summit in Xi'an today, and Western warmongers and geopoliticians insist that Russia has been outflanked by China and is nothing more than a “vassal state” of China, a “nation in decline,” etc. as we report in this issue.

The reality, Lavrov points out, is “There are a lot of ... statements from our closest allies, our strategic partners who say that they have been put (to put it mildly) in a very uncomfortable position. ... They find themselves caught in the crossfire.” While the Russian Federation, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) “account for the lion's share of economic ties,” he observes that the “West's share in the economy of Central Asia and the South Caucasus is growing,” and “the West methodically and cynically demands that they refrain from taking steps contrary to its interest, promising them everything under the Sun, although in reality it only means interference in internal affairs.”

But, despite Western attempts at destabilization, Lavrov said, “I believe that these countries stand together with the Russian Federation. They are truly our allies. Victory Day May 9, 2023 reaffirmed this.” And, he continued, the EAEU—Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia—“is producing concrete results—its trade is growing for the benefit of all participants. Many of our partners benefit considerably from labor migration agreements in the EAEU, and on a broader plane, in the CIS.”

Lavrov explained that in the EAEU, the national borders do not exist for the flow of capital, services, workforce, or goods. “These integration processes are making rapid headway. All the participants in these associations are benefitting from them. Other countries are considering EAEU membership. I am referring to Tajikistan ... and Uzbekistan that is closely studying the EAEU experience.”

Moreover, Lavrov explained, Russia is facilitating the settlement of the dispute between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. “We are helping Tajikistan build up its defense capacity and reinforce the border with Afghanistan, considering what risks and threats are permanently emanating from its territory. I don’t see any deep crisis in the post-Soviet integration processes.”

## COLLAPSING WESTERN SYSTEM

### **PEN America Finds Kissing Up to Kiev Backfires**

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—The writers’ group PEN America evidently didn’t stoop low enough in appeasing Kiev. For their annual week-long World Voices Festival for 2023, held in New York, they chose two Ukrainian writers who were also active-duty soldiers. In case that wasn’t enough of a message, they chose for their “Russian” writers two anti-Putin writers who had left Russia. One might have thought they had properly covered their bases.

However, the two Ukrainians explained that they could face significant political, legal, and compliance repercussions and risks back home if the two Russian dissidents were at the same event. Of course, PEN America relieved the two Ukrainians of the threat to their freedom of expression from their regime back home by disinviting the two dissident Russian expatriates.

Did Kiev just teach Putin a lesson by having the two anti-Putin writers kicked out?

## NEW STRATEGIC & ECONOMIC ARCHITECTURE

### Italian Chamber of Deputies Approves ‘Messina Bridge’ Great Project

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—The long-awaited great project connecting Sicily to mainland Italy, the Messina Bridge, took a big step forward on May 16 when the Italian Chamber of Deputies approved the government decree with “urgent measures for the stable connection between Sicily and Calabria,” i.e., the construction of the bridge over the Messina Strait. The bill was approved 183-93. The government coalition plus the so-called centrists voted in favor, whereas the Democratic Party, the Five Stars, and the radical left voted against. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) attacked the decision, falsely claiming that neither financial nor environmental feasibility studies had been made. The Italian Senate’s approval is expected shortly.

The Messina Bridge, together with the extension of the high-speed rail connection south of Salerno and, across the bridge, to Palermo, some 660 km, will finally complete the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor, connecting and integrating the poorest regions of Italy with the rest of the country, and with Northern and Eastern Europe. To make a comparison, the per-capita GDP of the two regions directly connected by the bridge, Sicily and Calabria, is the lowest in Italy and among the lowest in the EU: €18,200 and €17,500, against an average €32,800 in the European Union, according to 2021 data.

A leading labor consultancy in Florence has calculated that in Sicily alone, the construction of the bridge will add €20 billion to GDP and create 90,000 jobs.

After the vote in the Deputies, Transport Minister Matteo Salvini stated: “After 50 years of talking, we finally make facts for modernizing the country.” With its 3.3-km span, the Messina Bridge will be the world’s longest single-span suspended bridge.

If upgrading the ports in the two regions is also accomplished, Southern Italy will be equipped to play a major role in the Maritime Silk Road—

provided that the Italian government does not back down to Anglo-American pressures for Italy to exit the Belt and Road Initiative, which it signed with China in March 2019. Of note, insiders have told *EIR* that they are still optimistic that Rome will renew the BRI Memorandum.

### **Largest Grain Harvest in Russia's History**

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—The grain harvest in Russia for the last crop year, almost 158 million tons, was the largest in the country's history. After a meeting with Agriculture Minister Dmitry Patrushev, President Vladimir Putin announced the news, along with the news that overall grain exports by June 30, the end of their agricultural year, will be 60 million tons. That amount is fully 22 million tons greater than the previous agricultural year, despite the country's having to function under repressive sanctions for the whole period. That has also pushed the export of all agricultural produce to a level higher than last year. Russia's overall agricultural exports have grown five times over since 2010.

Putin stated: "As before, our country is one of the key suppliers of agricultural products in the world, and we have established ourselves as a reliable, predictable partner." He explained that, beyond Russia's self-sufficiency in food, it now produces and exports a surplus of fish, meat, vegetable oils, grains, and sugar.

As American farmers have known, beyond the economic solidity for a country, there is a great sense of self-worth accomplished, with incalculable social benefits.

### **Arab League Welcomes Syria to Jeddah Summit**

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, is the site of the May 17-19 Arab League summit, which, for the first time in 12 years, is welcoming Syria's participation as a full member. At the May 17 meeting of foreign ministers, Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf handed over the ministers' rotating presidency to Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan. The foreign ministers are charged with discussing the agenda and drafting resolutions for the May 19 heads-of-state summit.

According to *Al Arabiya*, Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad attended the foreign ministers meeting with a large delegation and also confirmed that President Bashar al-Assad will attend the May 19 summit with the other heads of state. Speaking to Saudi al-Ekhbariya state television, Mekdad expressed gratitude to the Saudis for the role they have played in planning for this meeting and “embracing all Arab countries.”

In his remarks, Prince Faisal welcomed Syria’s delegation. He stressed the need for unity among Arab countries “to face and find solutions to these challenges so that our region can be safe and stable.” One of those challenges is the ongoing conflict in Sudan. Countries must put aside their differences while rejecting foreign interference in their internal affairs, he said. There are both great human potential and natural resources in the region, he added, and this should prompt Arab countries to coordinate among themselves. What should be devised, he said, are “new mechanisms ... with people’s interest in sight.”

Along the same lines, Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf emphasized that Arab nations must join ranks to overcome obstacles. “We seek at the Arab summit to unite [positions] to face the challenges we are witnessing,” he said. Global transformations will change the balance of power, he warned, and this requires Arab countries “to come together to move forward as these changes unfold.”

During the opening session of the League meeting, Syrian Economy and Foreign Trade Minister Mohammed Samer al-Khalil took the opportunity to invite other members to invest in Syria, which is in urgent need of investment and funds for reconstruction. The U.S. and West’s savage sanctions are still in place, which are an obstacle, and the U.S. has announced that it will not aid Syria’s reconstruction in any way. But with the “new mechanisms” Prince Faisal mentioned, and with discussion underway for trade in national currencies and de-dollarization, new options may open up for financing and investment.

There is not total unanimity toward Syria at the summit. Qatar and Kuwait have not yet normalized relations with Damascus, demanding that it

first make greater political concessions. According to National Public Radio, Sudan's military leader Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan will not attend the summit but will send one of his cabinet officials. United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed will not attend due to prior commitments, but will send his brother, Vice President Mansour bin Zayed.

### **Turkiye Wins Russia's Agreement: 60 More Days To Get West To Comply with Grain Deal**

May 18, 2023 (EIRNS)—“I have good news,” announced Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday, one day before the expiration of the Black Sea grain and fertilizer agreement. He reported that Russia had agreed to continue participating in the arrangement for another two months, to give time for others to secure Western compliance with the terms of the deal. Erdogan thanked Russian President Vladimir Putin and promised that Türkiye would do everything it can to see the deal fully implemented. Russia's Foreign Ministry confirmed Erdogan's announcement.

Last week Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin had left the discussions in Istanbul without Russia's longstanding concerns having been solved. The core issues revolve around the West's bad faith, preventing Russia's food and fertilizers from being exported: The sanctioning of Russian ships, the blocking of access to insurance brokerage services; the financial sanctions against Russia's fertilizer producers, the disconnection of Russia's Agricultural Bank (Rosselkhozbank) from the SWIFT payment system, and Ukraine's closure of the Togliatti-Odessa ammonia pipeline.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov today explained that “various options are being worked out that will be equivalent to unblocking SWIFT” for Rosselkhozbank, and “there are certain hopes based on the negotiations that have taken place so far ... and the talks are ongoing” on the supply of ammonia and fertilizer. “In this regard, a decision was made to extend for two months.... [T]he fate of the deal is still in the hands of those with whom the UN should agree on the Russian part of the deal.... We will try to fully resolve this problem during these coming 60 days.”