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EDITORIAL

‘The Minsk Story’ Proves the Russian Invasion Was Not Unprovoked

Jan. 2, 2023 (EIRNS)—The following account of critical events over the past eight years, ignored willfully by national and international media, was provided today by Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche in a discussion with associates:

“There is a new article by the former Swiss intelligence specialist Jacques Baud, in an Swiss alternative blog called ‘[Zeitgeschehen im Fokus](#).’ [‘Suche nach Frieden in der Ukraine?’] It’s a long article, I cannot possibly go through all the arguments, which are very interesting. But the

key point he is making is that first of all, that Steinmeier was in Kiev at the time of the Maidan coup. He just the day before had made an agreement together with Laurent Fabius and Radek Sikorski, the French and Polish foreign ministers. And then overnight it was all blown away and [German President Frank-Walter] Steinmeier was asked, by Jacques Baud apparently, he said it was [Ukraine's legally elected] President Viktor Yanukovich, who, because of his flight from Kiev, would have taken away the basis for the agreement. Which is really incredible, because Yanukovich was afraid for his life because of the coup! So for Steinmeier to have said that is just an absolutely unbelievable statement.

“But then [Baud] continues to say that Merkel, in her Dec. 7 interviews with *Spiegel* and *Die Zeit* admitted that they lied in terms of what the Minsk agreement was all about, and that his comment is to say that she was obviously willing to sacrifice peace in Europe to create the appearance of unity in NATO, which already is quite incredible. And then he says: So the Western politicians knew from the beginning that they would not realize the Minsk agreement, but that they also said that they would only lift the sanctions against Russia when the Minsk agreement is realized. So the maliciousness of the West is so obvious, that it is absolutely hard to imagine how you can ever create a climate which is friendly to negotiations today.

“Now, that subject, and since noon I looked up the chronology of the Minsk agreement—this lasted eight years—and there were altogether nine rounds of sanctions whereby one can see very clearly that each time they closed the noose around the Russian economy more and more.... And at the same time, it was very clear that what Merkel and now Hollande, who was President of France at the time, admitted, as did [coup President] Poroshenko, they all said the Minsk agreement was a fraud from the very beginning, and they only did it to gain time to arm the Ukrainian Armed Forces, to bring it to a NATO standard. And the EU then moved on sanctions, some of them said, we will lift the sanctions only if the Minsk agreement is done. Several of them went to Moscow, talking to Putin,

pretending to be a little more flexible. So a typical hard-cop/soft-cop agreement.

“And therefore, to say that this Ukrainian war was an ‘unprovoked Russian aggression’ is just completely ludicrous. Because one can say, really, that Putin was amazingly patient and as he had said on various occasions, only when he thought there was no other option left, and that they had their back against the wall, that they decided that it was necessary to react to the upcoming Ukrainian offensive against the Donbass.

“But the point is, if you look at that kind of behavior, and remember that already on [Jan. 25](#), there were these unnamed White House officials who said the aim is to prevent Russia from ever having diversification out of oil and gas, to deny them access to any modern technology, and Baerbock saying the real aim is ‘to ruin Russia’—is it a miracle that Russia then says they want to ‘ruin’ us? I mean, give me a break! I think we really have to circulate this widely, because this narrative is what has to be punctured. I’m sure there will be more voices coming out, because this is a bombshell. It is definitely something which is noticed around the world and it for sure totally discredits Merkel and Hollande, but there is no way this could have been done without the total knowledge of the top EU leadership, and naturally also NATO, because they immediately started training Ukrainian troops according to what Merkel revealed.

“So the betrayal is unbelievable, but it now has reached the sunlight. This needs to be discussed widely.”

- Watch [Harley’s Updates](#) with Harley Schlanger on Tuesday January 3, 2023: Every weekday morning on The LaRouche Organization, Schlanger will give you the strategic briefing you need to start your day.

STRATEGIC SHOWDOWN

Zelenskyy Advisor Dreams of Monarchy

Jan. 2, 2023 (EIRNS)—Ukraine could become a monarchy in a bid to defeat Russia, Oleksiy Arestovych, a senior aide to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has suggested, likening the situation in Kiev to J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, in particular to the final installment, *The Return of the King*, reported RT.

“If we are in *The Lord of the Rings* script ... a return of the king must happen, that is, Aragorn. Is Ukraine ready for a monarchy?” he asked during an interview with Ukrainian musician Oleh Skripka on Jan. 1. “And I’ll tell you, if you think rationally, the only way to kill everything that is coming at us from Moscow is to declare a monarchy,” he added. However, Zelenskyy’s aide did not clarify who might become the country’s new sovereign.

Arestovych claimed a monarchy would also enable Ukraine to start “collecting the lands” that had belonged to the Rurik dynasty that ruled Kievan Rus from the 9th century. After the collapse of Kievan Rus four centuries later, the Ruriks ruled the Grand Duchy of Moscow, greatly expanding its territory and eventually transforming it into the Tsardom of Russia.

In support of his argument, Arestovych commented that the United Kingdom is also a monarchy. “Not the worst country in the world, is it?” he asked. “Just consider this thought even outside the scope of this interview and look for the benefits of the return of the king,” Arestovych said.

Tensions Continue To Increase on Korean Peninsula

Jan. 2, 2023 (EIRNS)—On Monday, Jan. 2, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol further ratcheted up tensions in a newspaper interview with *Chosun Ilbo*. In reference to Pyongyang Chairman Kim Jong Un’s call for an “exponential increase” in its nuclear arsenal, Yoon said that American nuclear weapons might need to play a more prominent role in South Korea. He said that while the United States maintains South Korea under its

“nuclear umbrella” and “extended deterrence,” more is needed now. “What we call extended deterrence was also the U.S. telling us not to worry because it will take care of everything; but now, it’s difficult to convince our people with just that,” he said. “The U.S. government also understands that to some degree.”

Yoon claimed that nuclear weapons could be brought in for purposes of military exercises and training. “The nuclear weapons belong to the United States, but planning, information sharing, exercises and training should be jointly conducted by South Korea and the United States,” Yoon asserted.

Newly elected Yoon Suk-yeol has been in favor of the U.S. stationing nuclear weapons on Korean territory for some time, and had called for tactical nuclear weapons to be placed there during his campaign in 2021. The United States, however, has opposed this, and any change in this regard would be a major escalation in the region.

COLLAPSING WESTERN SYSTEM

EU ‘Global Gateway’ Exposed as a Flop by Friendly Fire

Jan. 2, 2023 (EIRNS)—The following article appears in the *EIR Strategic Alert*, No. 1, 2023:

As we said from the beginning, the EU “Global Gateway Initiative” aimed at competing with China’s Belt and Road policy, was an empty shell doomed to fail. Now, the GGI is exposed as a failure even from inside the European Commission.

On Nov. 30, 2022, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament held hearings on the Global Gateway and the Indo-Pacific Region, where lawmakers learned from EU officials that very little of the €300 billion of the GGI was spent, and what was spent was not “new” money.

“Global Gateway does not bring new financial means—there is no additional money when it comes to the EU level,” said Vincent Grimaud, an acting director in the commission’s Department for International

Partnerships. “There’s no new money. And I’ve always held the view that if there’s no new money, there’s no new policy,” said Barry Andrews, an Irish MEP with the centrist Renew Group. “This is a communications exercise. It’s a strategy to put together what was already going to happen and present it as something new. And if our partners are tricked by this, then more fool them.”

Perhaps, behind the candid admission of the high Commission official, there is, as the German economic daily *Handelsblatt* reported, a disagreement on using the GGI as a strategic weapon against China. “Hildegard Bentele, a German member from the European People’s Party, said she had been trying to find German companies who are ‘part of this adventure,’ ” but had failed to locate any. ‘If I talk to journalists, journalists are asking me what are these Global Gateway projects? If I go on the website of the European Commission, I do not find it—this is really difficult,’ ” she is quoted saying in the Dec. 31 *South China Morning Post*.

Nobody knows how much of the promised €300 billion was spent. Commission spokesman Anna Pisonera said there is no list of projects available: “We do not have a list of predefined Global Gateway projects and investments worth €300 billion at this stage; we are taking forward projects and flagship programs with our partner countries under Global Gateway agreed on a rolling basis.”

Interviewed by *Politico* last week, Commission officials said projects will come next year!

Even China-haters expose the failure of the GGI. “I think it was a mistake to begin with, trying to compete with Belt and Road, because BRI was launched under completely different circumstances, by a completely different country who, at the time, sort of filled a vacuum, proposed a new model, and had capital,” said Francesca Ghiretti, a Brussels-based analyst at the Mercator Institute for China Studies.

At the Euro Parliament hearing, it came out that the few projects listed by the Commission officials pre-dated the launching of Global Gateway. “It is a rebranding exercise,” said MEP Barry Andrews.

Last but not least, potential customers do not want to be told what they should do with the money. “If we want to build a better partnership, the partnership must be based on equality,” remarked Indonesian President Joko Widodo. “There must not be one who dictates to the other, and says our standards are better than yours.”

Former Public Works Minister of Liberia W. Gyude Moore, now a senior policy fellow at the Center for Global Development, said that “it was never clear what was additional about Global Gateway. It draws heavily on existing programs and initiatives that would have moved forward even if Global Gateway did not exist. It was sold as a viable alternative to China’s BRI—an alternative that was driven by values like transparency and sustainability. It has not gone beyond just words.”

What do you expect from an EU that wants to decouple from that part of the world which is growing? The Global Gateway Initiative should be renamed as “Global Get-Away” Initiative.

Federal Reserve Constricts Credit in the Economy While ‘Easing’ for Biggest Banks

Jan. 2, 2023 (EIRNS)—The Federal Reserve’s “reverse repo facility” has boomed up to \$2.554 trillion at 2022 year’s end, the highest amount ever. Since the Fed is paying a very high (for ultra-short-term) rate of 4.3% to financial firms for lending this cash overnight, it is using the reverse repo facility as another means of draining funds out of the credit channel for the economy which the banking system represents. The bank is also paying 4.4% on banks’ excess reserves held at the Fed and out of the economy.

While pushing rates up across the economy and constricting credit, the Fed is also “foaming the runway” for the large banks by making its “qualitative tightening” (QT) of bank excess reserves much slower than the schedule it announced back in May 2022. The Fed’s \$9 trillion balance sheet then, in May, has shrunk by \$500 billion in seven full months since, or about \$70 billion/month, instead of what it announced in May, which was reduction of \$75 billion/month for June-August and then \$95 billion/month from September on. At this actual rate of “QT” it would take

six more years to return to the level of early 2020, and 11 years to get back to the level of its balance sheet before the 2007-08 financial crash—that is, to actually bring quantitative easing (QE) to an end.

U.S. POLITICAL & ECONOMIC

Fentanyl Increase in U.S. Made Worse by ‘Decoupling’ from China

Jan. 2, 2023 (EIRNS)—Though many in the United States would like to place blame on China for the continued fentanyl epidemic here, they should be looking much closer to home for the cause of the problem. For starters, it is the Wall Street and City of London financial interests that run the drug trade, fentanyl included, from the top, as *EIR* documented in its bestseller *Dope, Inc.: Britain’s Opium War against the World*, first published in 1978, and has proven time and time again since then. Secondly, recent China-U.S. anti-drug cooperation has been destroyed by Washington’s policy of attacking and containing China. A Dec. 22 article in the *Wall Street Journal* highlighted some of the particulars of this second aspect—but of course doesn’t dare touch the first point.

In 2017, the U.S. and China reached an agreement to work together to stop fentanyl and precursor drug trafficking. As a result of China’s class scheduling of fentanyl in May 2019, trafficking of fentanyl from China into the United States plummeted: in 2017, some 128 kilos of China-originated fentanyl were seized; in 2020, that had dropped to one-half kilo. There was also an agreement to work closely with U.S. authorities to limit the sale of precursor chemicals involved in fentanyl production. These largely went to Mexico, but some go to Canada as well, where the drug is then produced and trafficked into America. A landmark case occurred at the time, in which U.S.-China collaboration succeeded in finding and prosecuting a fentanyl export ring run by Liu Yong. There was a publicly celebrated success and big press conference after the prosecution went through. In 2018, as a result of efforts by the United States in tracing the fentanyl supply chains, China put strong restrictions on two key fentanyl ingredients, as well as 25 fentanyl analogues (substantially similar but

chemically different drugs), leading to high praise from the United States. Nonetheless, China said at the time that despite the agreement, “the relevant work is yet to be started.”

However, due to increasing attacks on China from America, these advances began to slow and then stop entirely. In 2020 the U.S. had blacklisted a Chinese police institute over alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang. China was angered, and asked the United States to unblock them in exchange for further anti-narcotics cooperation. The United States refused. Then, after Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan on Aug. 2-3, 2022, China broke off all cooperation in the anti-fentanyl work. U.S. officials have tried to get China to cooperate again, but to no avail. “As a matter of fact, it is the U.S. that has undermined China-U.S. counter-narcotics cooperation,” said Liu Pengyu, a spokesman for China’s Embassy in Washington. *Global Times* wrote back in August that “it’s daydreaming for the U.S. to expect and demand China to continue cooperation on issues of U.S.’ concerns while it infringes on China’s core interests.”

China has also claimed the United States should address its drug crisis by curbing demand. “The U.S. must look squarely at its own problem instead of deflecting blame,” said Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin at an August press conference.

Naturally, China is the largest exporter of pharmaceuticals in the world, so it’s no wonder these issues lead back there. But how can the issue be separated from America’s increasingly aggressive actions to weaken China? Additionally, China considers the various pharmaceuticals, some of which go into making fentanyl but most to other products, as an important economic driver and therefore doesn’t want to unnecessarily overregulate the industry. The passage of Biden’s CHIPS Act, which China sees as overt economic warfare and an attempt to stifle key areas of China’s export markets, certainly has further complicated the problem.

NEW WORLD PARADIGM

Russian Delegation Meets with Brazil's New President Lula, Vow To Deepen Cooperation

Jan. 2, 2023 (EIRNS)—Speaker of Russian Federation Council Sen. Valentina Matviyenko, who headed the Russian delegation to Brazil for Lula da Silva's inauguration Jan. 1, had a lengthy face-to-face meeting with the new President. Matviyenko said of the meeting that "Russia is determined to further actively develop relations with friendly Brazil." The two countries "have the same vision of a future world—a multipolar and just one.... I also want to stress that Brazil is a very reliable, important and well-tested partner."

According to Matviyenko, Lula said he wants to improve Brazil-Russia relations: "It is very important that during the meeting, the newly elected President confirmed his readiness and interest to reset Russian-Brazilian relations in terms of increasing trading and economic cooperation in science, engineering, and the environmental and other fields. He supported the idea of promptly launching a high-level commission, which, unfortunately, has not met in session for several years for a number of reasons, including subjective ones," she reported.

The Russian senator especially highlighted that Brazil, and Lula personally, was a founding member of the BRICS. Lula made a number of proposals for deeper cooperation with the BRICS, which he asked to be relayed to Russian President Putin.

There was apparently also discussion around increasing Russian fertilizer shipments to Brazil, with an emphasis on the "rethinking of logistics and the payment system, which would eliminate existing obstacles for cooperation in this sphere," Matviyenko reported.

Turkish-Syria Rapprochement, under Russian Mediation, Continues

Jan. 2, 2023 (EIRNS)—The rapprochement between Syria and Turkiye under Russian mediation continues to move forward. Following the meeting of the three countries' defense ministers and intelligence chiefs in

Moscow on Dec. 28, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu held a phone conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the details of a tripartite ministerial meeting with his Syrian counterpart, according to the Türkiye's *Hurriyet Daily News*.

Lavrov reportedly asked Çavuşoğlu when to hold the meeting, to which he replied: "Let's prepare well. Let's do it whenever we're ready," adding that Lavrov had proposed the second half of January.

Çavuşoğlu was speaking to reporters in Brasilia on the sidelines of the Jan. 1, 2023 swearing-in ceremony of Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. "We haven't decided where to hold it yet. It could also be in Moscow. It can also happen in a third country. We talked about some countries," he said without naming them.

"So what we are going to talk about, it goes upwards. First meeting at the technical level, military intelligence. Then the political stage, the foreign affairs, then a higher meeting in the future or not." Çavuşoğlu said, stressing that "we need to make it work."

According to *Hurriyet*, a Russian Foreign Ministry statement declared: "The Ministers mutually congratulated the New Year and discussed cooperation plans for 2023 between the foreign ministries, including further coordination of steps for the resolution of the Syrian issue."

SCIENCE & INFRASTRUCTURE

Crash Program Path to Fusion Getting Clearer and Nearer?

Jan. 2 (EIRNS)—The aftermath of the Dec. 5 fusion ignition and energy-gain breakthrough at the National Ignition Facility at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, included the release on Dec. 17, 2022, of a remarkably detailed 30-minute [video](#) produced by [Real Engineering](#) website, run by Irish youtuber Brian McManus, about the test reactor of [Helion Energy](#), headquartered in Everett, Washington. The video is a remarkably detailed and open presentation of the fusion dynamics of

Helion's experiment, given the era of proprietary private fusion experiments funded by investors, and it is a first of its kind.

Real Engineering's Brian McManus, who visited Helion for the video, commented on it that he had long considered fusion reactors to be decades away, but now thought "they might be around the corner." Any such near-term development depends, not on this or another particular company or effort, but on an international crash program being launched to develop fusion power and plasma technologies. Nonetheless, significant signs of a pathway are being revealed in the wake of the "sudden" scaling up of the Livermore NIF results by 50 times in the past two years. Those results are being reported for the most part as "laser fusion" or "inertial fusion" results pure and simple, but they are likely to be directly relevant to the work of *magnetic* fusion researchers and developers in many countries.

A number of the private fusion companies, of which Helion is probably representative, appear to be carrying out work with some similar, critical characteristics:

First, it is using, not a tokamak design, but a reversed-field magnetic pinch design in which heated and ionized plasmas are shot magnetically from both ends of a cylindrical apparatus to collide and be trapped ("pinched") by a combination of their own magnetic field lines and external magnets—and perhaps also heated and "shaped" by injected laser or particle beams. This echoes a more than 50-year legacy of the fusion pioneers who knew, and some of whom worked with, the Fusion Energy Foundation founded in 1974 by Lyndon LaRouche and these scientists.

Second, at least several are planning to use helium-3 or boron fuel for aneutronic fusion reactions (producing only charged particles), and aiming at direct energy conversion rather than a steam cycle, at such time as they can generate the necessary extremely high plasma temperatures for those fuels.

And third, these experimenters are now able to progress rapidly through design iterations of their experimental apparatus (Helion Energy is working on its eighth iteration in a decade's existence, for example). They can thus

rapidly improve the design, in particular, by use of the most advanced supercomputing capacities.

The Livermore teams were also able to use these capacities to get their breakthrough. If the INF were a fusion program rather than a weapons program, it would probably be moving to use lasers with up to 20%, rather than the 0.6% efficiency of its large laser array, and would be aiming to go rapidly toward an energy gain factor of 10 or more, from the 1.5 factor on Dec. 5. It would be working on lasers that can fire 10 shots/second rather than perhaps a few shots a day, and burn up more than 10% of the fuel. The burning fuel itself might even trigger the laser shots.

It is possible that a real crash program of experimentation, which has *never* been attempted, involving cooperation of major nations, could lead much more rapidly to demonstration reactors now, than at any previous time in fusion R&D. Yet total funding in the United States has been no more than about \$3 billion annually, and the great majority of that recently is proprietary private investment, not government funding.

New French-American Satellite Sparks Hope for Water Management on Earth

Jan. 2, 2023 (EIRNS)—On Dec. 16, a SpaceX rocket launched the [Surface Water and Ocean Topography](#) (SWOT) satellite. The first satellite specifically designed to conduct a global survey of Earth's surface water, SWOT was developed by NASA and France's National Center for Space Studies (CNES), with contributions from the Canadian and U.K. space agencies. The satellite is a game changer. It is designed to study changes in global water levels and provide, in unprecedented detail, 3D volumetric data for Earth's oceans and millions of lakes and rivers across 90% of the globe every 21 days. That, of course, if used for the common good, will allow a massive upgrade of overall water management, guaranteeing food production and avoiding droughts and floods.

SWOT's primary instruments are its nadir altimeter and the Ka-band Radar Interferometer, or KaRIn for short. KaRIn consists of two antennas separated across a 10-meter boom, which independently receive readings

the satellite takes of Earth's surface. Using the satellite's position data and subsequent phase differences in signal reception, SWOT is capable of measuring water elevations within a 1 cm margin of error.

NASA Earth Science Division Director Karen St. Germain explained the upgrade that SWOT will bring to orbit. "We've been doing satellite altimetry measuring sea surface height for 30 years, and that's a big part of the record we rely on to understand climate change," she said in response to a question asked by Space.com. "What SWOT will do is give us a tenfold improvement in the spatial resolution of our measurement of water height." SWOT will be responsible for tracking nearly 2.1 million km of rivers and millions of lakes, and it will be capable of monitoring coastal sea levels to provide oceanic data in corroboration with other on-orbit sources. To help sort through the incredible amount of data, NASA plans to make the mission's information publicly available and is developing tools to make it easier to access.

Benjamin Hamlington, research scientist for the Sea Level and Ice Group at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California, said during SWOT science briefing on Dec. 13. "Really, anyone who cares about water should be concerned about what SWOT can provide." Hamlington predicts that SWOT data will be useful for coastal communities, civil engineers, water resource professionals, scientists researching flooding and drought, and more. "Some locations have too much water; others don't have enough," he said. "We're seeing more extreme droughts, more extreme floods; precipitation patterns are changing. It's really important that we try to understand exactly what is happening using the SWOT data."