

EIR Daily Alert Service

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EDITORIAL

Give Us Peace: World Political and Social Leaders Rally Around Vatican Call for a Christmas Truce for All

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—A group of political and social leaders from around the world today issued an open letter to Pope Francis, supporting the Pope’s offer to use the venue of the Vatican for immediate negotiations between Russia and Ukraine for a diplomatic settlement of the war in Ukraine. Coming off an organizing process among current and former legislators that was initiated two months ago by the Schiller Institute, the open letter is part of a growing chorus of voices internationally urging an immediate ceasefire, a Christmas Truce for all, as a first step towards a full, negotiated peace.

In comments to colleagues today, Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche stated that the strategic crisis continues to dramatically worsen—as captured by Scott Ritter in his latest article, “[A Lexicon for Disaster](#)”—and that the Vatican initiative may well be the only option left on the table.

The following is the full text of that open letter to Pope Francis:

His Holiness Pope Francis
Apostolic Palace
00120 Vatican City

Your Holiness,

Greetings from the grouping of Political and Social Leaders of the World To Stop the Danger of Nuclear War, initiated by the Schiller Institute in Germany.

We have met on three occasions to discuss the impending danger of nuclear war and global Armageddon resulting from the war between

Ukraine and Russia, with a view to taking whatever action necessary to stop the war and to bring peace.

On 17 November 2022, our group issued a [Declaration To Stop the Threat of Nuclear War](#), signed by legislators and former legislators from Latin America, the United States, Europe, the Caribbean, and Africa.

In that declaration, we highlighted Your Holiness's call for a negotiated, peaceful solution. We further welcome Your Holiness's offer of the Vatican as a possible neutral ground for peace talks—without any preconditions—between Russia and Ukraine. Our group wishes to support this initiative in any way we can, including gathering together all who wish for peace and the prevention of nuclear war.

We note that others in Europe and the United States have also offered venues for the Russian and Ukrainian leadership to negotiate peace. We believe it is urgent to unify all such efforts into a globe-spanning movement to bring resolution to this conflict, taking into consideration the valid security interests of all parties.

In that spirit, we hereby sign this letter to indicate that support, and call on other political and social leaders around the world, regardless of differences in ideology or religious faith, to add their signatures as well.

We intend to convene a Fourth Seminar of Political and Social Leaders of the World To Stop the Danger of Nuclear War in early 2023 to further this push for peace and to stop the danger of nuclear war, and we extend an invitation to a representative from the Vatican to attend.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche (Germany), founder, Schiller Institute

Dr. Kirk Meighoo (Trinidad and Tobago), former senator

Karl Krökel (Germany), founder of “Craftsmen for Peace”

Dr. Rodolfo Ondarza (Mexico), former member Mexico City Legislative Assembly

Nick Brana (United States), Chair, People's Party

[additional signatures to follow]

- Watch [Harley's Updates](#) with Harley Schlanger on Tuesday December 20, 2022: Every weekday morning on The LaRouche Organization, Schlanger will give you the strategic briefing you need to start your day.

STRATEGIC SHOWDOWN

Italians Mobilize in Support of Pope's Call for a Negotiated Settlement In Ukraine

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—Pope Francis's Sunday Angelus prayer in St. Peter's Square yesterday brought out gatherings of both Italy's political "right" and the "left" supporting the Pope's call for a negotiated settlement of the Ukraine war. As reported in BreakingLatest.com on Dec. 18, one of the groups was led by Gianni Alemanno, "former mayor of Rome, former minister, and historical exponent of the Italian right," who is also the spokesman for the "Stopping the War" committee. Alemanno said: "We came to St. Peter's Square for Pope Francis's Angelus with a banner with the inscription 'Christmas truce in Ukraine.' We did it to thank the Holy Father who is the only authoritative voice that has been raised in the world to stop the war in Ukraine.... The proposal for a European peace conference, the Helsinki model, put forward by Cardinal Parolin is the only realistic initiative to reach a ceasefire, stop the escalation of the conflict and open a negotiating table.... With a collection of signatures today throughout Italy we ask the government to launch the idea of a Christmas truce: There is still a week to hope."

The same article reported on "left" forces saying something similar. This includes Luciano Vasapollo, founder of the "anthropological economics school" at the Faculty of Arts of La Sapienza University, which in November organized a conference "against war and for a multipolar world, in a new and future humanity of peace and solidarity." A co-organizer of that event was Vatican expert and professor at the same university, Salvatore Izzo. The event was attended by Cardinal Francesco

Coccopalmerio of the Vatican, former president of the Dicastery of Legislative Texts, and also Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, the head of the Italian Bishops' Conference.

Zuppi is quoted telling students: “Non-violence should not be confused with non-resistance. Non-violence is like saying: no to violence. It is an active rejection of evil, not a passive acceptance. Laziness, indifference, neutrality have nothing to do with it. The non-violent, in its refusal to defend itself, is always brave. Non-violence is an act of trust in man and faith in God; it is a testimony given to the truth up to the conversion of the enemy.”

Pope Says We Are Already in a World War

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—Pope Francis gave a lengthy exclusive interview to *ABC* newspaper of Madrid last Tuesday, which was published on Dec. 18. Most of the media wires emphasize the Pope's comments that he signed a resignation letter the day he assumed the Papacy, lest he become “medically incapacitated.” But he also had comments on Ukraine, as reported by TASS:

“Now [Ukrainian President] Volodymyr Zelenskyy is sending one of his religious advisers to me for the third time,” the pontiff reported, “I'm in touch, accepting, helping.” “I don't see the end [of the conflict] in the short term, because this is a world war,” he noted. “There are already several hands involved in the war,” Francis pointed out, “There are many interests.”

Ritter Writes, Having No Common Arms Control Language Is a 'Lexicon for Disaster'

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—Former weapons inspector [Scott Ritter](#), in a column posted on *Consortium News* today, argues that the loss of what was once a common perspective shared by Washington and Moscow on arms control is a “lexicon for disaster.” Ritter notes that Dec. 8 is the anniversary of the signing of the INF Treaty by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in 1988. That treaty, Ritter indicates, was not just the result of specific hard-

nosed negotiations on eliminating intermediate range missiles from Europe, but also the product of decades of talks between the U.S. and the Soviet Union that produced a common language and common understanding of what arms control meant. The termination of that treaty, by the Trump Administration in 2019, however, “is part and parcel of an overall trend which has seen arms control as an institution—and a concept—decline in the eyes of policy makers in both Washington and Moscow.” Whereas arms control was once seen by both sides as mutually beneficial, now the U.S. perspective is that arms control is pursued “to promote the national security interest,” Ritter writes. “And by arms control, we mean arms increase.”

Ritter points to two fundamental changes in the U.S. approach, in addition to the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM and INF Treaties, which have accelerated the war danger. The first is the idea that the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter a nuclear attack on the U.S. and/or its allies. This happened under the GW Bush Administration, replacing it with a policy of nuclear pre-emption.

The second was the loss of reciprocity, that is, that the two parties in an arms control agreement treat each other as they would want to be treated. After that change, Russian inspectors coming to the U.S. under the New START treaty, were unable to come to the U.S. in July 2022 due to European sanctions on commercial air travel. The Russians retaliated by denying entry to a U.S. inspection team attempting to go to Russia in August, citing issues of reciprocity. Thus, a crucial element of implementing New START is now not functioning. The future of the treaty itself is now uncertain.

“With no treaties, there is no verification of reality. Both the U.S. and Russian arsenals will become untethered from treaty-based constraint, leading to a new arms race for which there can be only one finishing line—total nuclear war,” Ritter concludes. “Before either side can resume talking to one another, however, they must first re-learn the common language of disarmament. Because the current semantics of arms control is little more than a lexicon for disaster.”

Biden's Policy Has Put the U.S. 'On the Brink of a Direct Clash' with Moscow

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—Responding today to a media query regarding State Department spokesman Ned Price's remark "that the Biden administration was trying to build more stable and predictable relations with Russia and that Russia allegedly caused them to become more unstable and unpredictable?" Foreign Ministry spokeswoman [Maria Zakharova](#) replied by again pointing to the danger of a direct clash between the U.S. and Russia as a result of U.S. policy in Ukraine. She stated: "This is a false construct that can be easily redressed if you substitute the United States for Russia. We had no illusions whatsoever, but we honestly tried to find common ground—even amid the confrontation that Washington was fomenting—to make Russia-U.S. relations stable and predictable."

She went on: "The United States' striving to maintain its hegemony at all costs while ignoring the new geopolitical realities, as well as its contemptuous unwillingness to engage in a serious dialogue about security guarantees have led to an outcome that was to be expected. ... This is a dangerous and short-sighted policy that brings the U.S. and Russia to the brink of a face-to-face confrontation."

Zakharova further said, "U.S. officials never [hesitate] to lie that Secretary of State Antony Blinken maintains contact with his colleague, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. For your information, July 29 was the last time they spoke on the telephone."

She made clear: "Moscow is calling on the Biden administration to take a clear-eyed assessment of the situation and prevent a dangerous escalation from spiraling out of control..." Zakharova stressed, however, that Moscow still wants to defuse tensions and is open to talking to Washington at various levels.

"'Who Will Blink First?' Is Nuclear War Between Russia and the U.S. Possible?"

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—That is the headline on a [lengthy feature in RT](#) yesterday, which mulled over the current strategic confrontation between

Russia and the United States, and raised the issue of a possible nuclear war. One expert interviewed by RT, Vladimir Vasliev, a senior researcher at the Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences, said: “The West can put the world on the brink of a global conflict, to see who blinks first, and use this fact to create elements of a strategic turning point in the course of the special military operation in Ukraine. Perhaps the West is really considering such plans today due to rather complicated economic considerations.”

British Prime Minister Mucking About in Baltics To Organize Against Peace

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was in Riga, Latvia, today for a summit of a formation called the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). The JEF is made up of the U.K., the Baltic and Nordic states and the Netherlands—10 countries in all. A statement issued by the Prime Minister’s office on Dec. 18 said that Sunak would “call on the group to sustain their strong military support to Ukraine in 2023, and announce a major new artillery package.” After the summit, Sunak “will then travel on to Estonia to meet U.K. troops and sign a new technology partnership with Estonia to bolster digital ties.”

In his speech to the summit today, Sunak laid out three British Imperial objectives for this group to fulfill. The first is “ensuring that we deliver more military aid and that military aid evolves to meet the situation that we are now facing.” He pledged that the U.K., in 2023, would exceed the £2.3 billion in aid to Ukraine that it provided in 2022. Secondly, Sunak ruled out any unilateral call for a ceasefire by Russia is completely meaningless in the current context. “It would be used by Russia to regroup, to reinforce their troops and until they have withdrawn from conquered territory, there can and should be no real negotiation,” he said.

Third, “we must continue to focus on degrading Russia’s capability to regroup and to resupply and that means going after its supply chains and removing the international support,” Sunak said, targeting the alleged Iranian supply of drones to Russia and other economic measures that could

be taken. The “economic consequences for Russia must continue to be severe and in that vein, the new oil price cap that the G7 have instituted and others have followed, I think, can be very helpful,” he said.

Putin Meets Lukashenko in Minsk

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—Russian President Vladimir Putin, along with a delegation of senior Russian government officials, traveled to Minsk today for meetings with Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko and other Belarusian officials. The meeting had been proposed after discussions at the ministerial level, in which some issues between the two countries were not completely resolved. There was a general meeting which included members of the cabinet and then a one-on-one meeting between the two Presidents.

Much of the discussion centered around the economic cooperation between Moscow and Minsk, which is extensive and has increased considerably since the two countries have been isolated from much of the rest of the world. Russia committed to finishing a nuclear plant they are building in Belarus and have extended cooperation in the nuclear field between the two parties. They also committed to cooperating in space, with Putin promising that there would soon be a Belarus cosmonaut chosen. Putin also pointed to the importance of the Russian relationship in import substitution, given the restrictions placed on Russia by the Western nations. Moreover he reiterated an invitation to the Belarus President to visit the Russian space facilities before an upcoming CIS meeting.

And as one would expect there was also a serious discussion of the military and security situation. In public remarks, Putin said that Moscow and Belarus are developing military-technical cooperation through collaboration and joint projects. “They include military-technical cooperation, which is not reduced to mutual supplies. It implies, and I think it is very important, joint projects, development and collaboration in this sphere, including the promotion of high-tech industries and production lines,” he said, reported TASS. “And the same applies to the space sector. We have corresponding plans there.” Putin made the point that their

cooperation is no different than the type of cooperation that exists between the countries in NATO in discussing their mutual defense.

Lukashenko also mentioned the importance of their collaboration and stressed that this complicated time requires political will and commitment to achieving results in the advancement of Belarus-Russia relations. “The position our countries will secure in a new system of international coordinates tomorrow will depend on how successful we will be in this work,” he said. “We must in no way repeat the mistakes that happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This is why our unconditional priority is the resolution of sensitive economic issues, on which the population’s wellbeing and ultimately support for the reforms we are implementing in the society and politics depend.”

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, among the top officials who accompanied Putin to Minsk, met with Belarusian Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin, as did Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov with the new Belarus Foreign Minister Sergei Aleinik.

Zelenskyy Claims the ‘Reconquest of Crimea Has Started in People’s Heads’

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—The dangerously delusional Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told French broadcaster TF1 in an interview on Dec. 18 that Ukrainians had already begun to seize Crimea back from Russia. “The operation itself has not started yet,” Zelenskyy explained. “When it starts, you will definitely hear about it,” but already “the reconquest of Crimea has started in people’s heads, and that’s very important.”

“One should be ready and go [to Crimea],” Zelenskyy added. “No one would just surrender Crimea for no particular reason. Reconquest always starts with society: with its will and readiness. I believe the start has been made,” the president explained. He said that he “loves Crimea” and would be “glad to come to our de-occupied Crimea,” adding that it would be “nice” to get there in the summer of 2023.

Earlier this week, Oleskii Danilov, the head of Ukraine’s National Security and Defense Council, also said that Ukraine plans to take the peninsula back. “We will fight for Crimea if needed,” he said, adding that Kiev would not ask for permission to do that.

COLLAPSING WESTERN SYSTEM

Xinhua Covers Helga Zepp-LaRouche Warning Against Decoupling from China

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—“Cost of ‘Decoupling from China’ Enormous for World, Says Expert,” Xinhua headlines its “exclusive interview” from Germany with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, who declared: “It is in Germany’s interest to continue and expand cooperation with China,” and asserted that the idea of “decoupling from China” is a geopolitical plot, and amounts to economic suicide for Germany, with the European Union (EU) and the world economy suffering the consequences. Xinhua identifies Zepp-LaRouche as founder and chairwoman of the German think tank the Schiller Institute. It further emphasizes her insistence that Germany’s attempts to reduce its economic dependency on China under the pressure of the United States will plunge the country into turmoil and put its economy at great peril.

As the geopolitical situation worsens and the energy crisis intensifies, the possibility and cost of “reducing dependence on China” and “decoupling from China” are under intensive discussion in Germany and the EU, Zepp-LaRouche said, stressing that China and Germany have great potential for cooperation and “decoupling” is against Germany’s interests.

Xinhua writes that a study by the Munich-based ifo Institute for Economic Research found that for the EU and Germany to decouple from China would cost Germany almost six times as much as the Brexit did. The ifo study revealed that the automotive industry would be the biggest loser in the event of a trade war with China. Zepp-LaRouche remarked that the ifo’s estimation understated the impact of economic decoupling, which would lead to geopolitical confrontation and weigh heavily on the world

economy. “So I think this is a pass into a disaster and should not be taken,” she said.

Germany has reached the point where it needs to stand up to defend its own interests, instead of making itself “a servant of geopolitical games of the United States,” she said.

The complementarity between the Chinese and German economies is palpable, and it would be unwise for Germany to discontinue its cooperation with China, she said. It is in Germany’s interest to continue and expand cooperation with China. The economic policy pursued by China has enabled itself to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and achieve persistently steady economic growth, she argued.

The concept of decoupling from China is being advocated by a handful of countries, Zepp-LaRouche said, while more than 120 countries and regions are willing to cooperate with China, which has helped them tremendously in poverty eradication and building infrastructure. “So I think that dynamic clearly is that the majority of the world population does not want to go with such a decoupling,” she said.

Energy Looting Cost Europe \$1 Trillion This Year—Next Year Will Be Worse

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—Bloomberg reported yesterday what ordinary Europeans know in their bones: that EU member states have spent roughly a trillion dollars because of the energy crisis, triggered by the suicidal sanctions against Russia, and that their physical economies are collapsing to boot. Most European countries have been bludgeoned into cutting off all gas imports from Russia, and have either turned to *far* more expensive alternate sources, or to simply doing without.

“Once you add everything up—bailouts, subsidies—it is a ridiculously large amount of money,” Martin Devenish, a director at consultancy S-RM, told the agency. “It’s going to be a lot harder for governments to manage this crisis next year.”

Bloomberg reported that the total estimated losses marks just the beginning of a full-scale crisis, as a period of high prices for energy could last years, while aid is already becoming unaffordable. A state of emergency could linger for years, according to Brussels-based think tank Bruegel, Bloomberg reported.

U.S. POLITICAL & ECONOMIC

U.S. Military Contractors Looking to Profit From War Drive

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—The military industrial complex is looking forward to big profits as a result of Congressional support for a huge surge in defense spending. Another feature on this appeared in the *New York Times* yesterday as the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act is about to become law. The bill authorizes \$858 billion in spending and the *Times* notes that if this is approved, the Pentagon budget will have grown at 4.3% per year over the last two years—even after inflation—compared with an average of less than 1% a year in real dollars between 2015 and 2021. This is according to calculations made by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. Funding for weapons procurement in particular spikes upward, including a 55% jump in Army funding to buy new missiles and a 47% jump for the Navy’s weapons purchases.

However, overcoming physical limitations in the production process is another problem. “We went through 6 years of Stingers in 10 months,” Gregory J. Hayes, Raytheon’s chief executive, said in an interview earlier this month, referring to 1,600 of the company’s shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles sent by the U.S. government to Ukraine. “So it will take us multiple years to restock and replenish.”

According to the *Times*, military spending next year is on track to reach its highest level in inflation-adjusted terms since the peaks in the costs of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars between 2008 and 2011, and the second highest in inflation-adjusted terms since World War II—a level that is more than the budgets for the next 10 largest cabinet agencies combined. Even more orders are coming in to military contractors from U.S. allies in

Europe and Asia, as they too have concluded they must do more to arm themselves against (allegedly) rising global threats.

Congress this year has moved to allow the Defense Department to more broadly make multi-year spending commitments for certain weapons systems and shipbuilding operations, the *Times* continues. That is a provision that industry lobbyists have long pushed for, arguing it gives companies certainty that investments they make to start production will see continued returns in future years. That move alone suggests \$73 billion in additional munitions orders could be on the way in the next three years, contracts that will largely benefit the big players like Lockheed and Raytheon, according to an analysis by Myles Walton, a military industry analyst at Wolfe Research, a Wall Street research firm.

These trends help explain stock market performance of the major military contractors—a small group of which control the bulk of sales to the Pentagon. In other words, war is good for shareholders.

IBERO AMERICA

Uncertainty Reigns in Peru; Shining Path Role in Protests Exposed

Dec. 19 (EIRNS)—A special video report published Dec. 18 in Peru's weekly *Panorama*, with commentary by Police Gen. Oscar Arriola, head of the Directorate Against Terrorism (Dircote), offers detailed intelligence about the role of the narco-terrorist Sendero Luminoso/Shining Path in instigating and leading the violent protest that has rocked Peru since the removal of President Pedro Castillo on Dec. 7. Castillo was impeached and arrested after he tried to shut down the Congress and set up an emergency government with plans to write a new Constitution.

EIR has documented in great detail the origins of the Pol Pot-like [Shining Path](#) which sprang out of the networks of the French anthropologist Jacques Soustelle.

In the video, General Arriola discussed the *modus operandi* by which former members of Shining Path, who work with the group's legal arm, the

Movement for Amnesty and Fundamental Rights (Movadef), have infiltrated peaceful marches in Lima and other cities, and both instigated and carried out acts of vandalism and violence. He identified three former Shining Path members who were convicted of terrorism in the 1980s and 1990s but later released, and are now involved in the current protests along with 30 others belonging to Movadef. Based on reports by intelligence agents, Arriola named specific individuals, showing them attending protests at Lima's Plaza San Martin, or engaging in acts of violence elsewhere in Lima, setting fire to vehicles, throwing projectiles, rocks, etc. and ordering others to do so.

He also asserts these individuals are likely tied into illegal mining and drug-trafficking networks, judging from the fact that they rode around in fancy, late-model vehicles.

Of particular interest is the case of Javier Melgarejo Malima, who was convicted of terrorism in 1989 and served time in prison. After that, he worked with other organizations that were front groups for Shining Path, such as Socorro Popular (Popular Aid), which is in charge of the legal defense for Sendero members still in jail.

On Nov. 11 of this year, Melgarejo was invited to the presidential palace by Castillo, where he harangued a group of neighborhood leaders in a radical speech demanding that the Congress be shut down and a Constituent Assembly be empaneled to write a new Constitution. Castillo told him he'd always be welcomed at the government palace. "This is your home," he said. Melgarejo was later seen in the street protests calling for Castillo's release.

General Arriola emphasized that there is nothing spontaneous about the protests. They were "encouraged, orchestrated and planned" by people who are "terrorists, Marxist-Leninists, Maoists." He claimed that meetings that Castillo had with former Sendero members in the government palace were to map out a "Plan B," should he fail in closing the Congress; that is, mass protests. So, Arriola blamed Castillo for the deaths that have occurred around the country, totaling 25 to date.

He did not mention that impoverished rural populations have reasons to be discontent with successive governments that failed to respond to their needs, making them easy prey for the likes of Shining Path, who have no problems in using them for cannon fodder. Several human rights organizations, domestic and international, are investigating charges that the police and military engaged in “disproportionate use of force” in responding to protests.

The Spanish-language video is entitled “[The Faces of Violence](#).”

Editor’s Note: As every year, *EIR Daily Alert* will skip the issues on Christmas and New Year’s, and therefore, no issues will be published on Dec. 26 and Jan. 2. Vol. 9, Issue 359 will be published on Dec. 27, and Vol. 10 Issue 2 will be published on Jan. 3.