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EDITORIAL

***Did You Vote* for the Present War with Russia, and the Next War with China? Who Authorized NATO and EU To Organize World War III?**

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—EVENT: Resurrect the True Mission of Dr. Martin Luther King: Stop NATO's World War, and Dismantle the International Assassination Bureau

DATE: Saturday, January 14, 2023

TIME: 10 a.m. EST

Whatever you may have been told, Russia, perhaps now the world's leading thermonuclear weapons power, believes that it is fighting the United States, Great Britain, and NATO in a proxy war, one that only foolish, uninformed people in "the West" refer to as "the war between Ukraine and Russia." Considering that the United States has, in one year, directly deployed an acknowledged \$112 billion of weapons and matériel into Ukraine, an amount larger than the entire annual military budget of Russia, and that all other NATO military, logistical, and financial aid has been in addition to that, that belief seems more than justified.

With the signing this week by Japan and Great Britain of the Reciprocal Access Agreement, touted as the most significant military agreement between those two countries since 1902, and corresponding agreements in the United States at the U.S./Japan "2+2" ministerial talks, the stage is now being set for a conflict with China, to begin as soon as possible, as the next expansion of "Global NATO." The "old, evil dreams" buried by FDR and the Allies—which included Russia—in 1945, are rising again. Is Global NATO a new "Allgemeine SS" with thermonuclear weapons?

Who is authorizing these wars, being carried out in the name of the people of the United States and Europe? Since those populations are being impoverished, not enriched, by the wars, what is their actual purpose? Russian Security Council Secretary [Nikolay Patrushev](#)'s January 10 interview with the Russian weekly newspaper *Argumenti i Fakti* (aif.ru) called the Ukraine proxy war a "cover for a conglomerate of huge corporations that rule the country and try to dominate the world.... The U.S. authorities, allied to big business, serve the interests of trans-national corporations, including the military-industrial complex. The assertive policy of the White House, the unbridled aggressiveness of NATO, the emergence of the AUKUS military bloc and others—are also a consequence of corporate influence," Patrushev stated.

Without a condition of trust between adversaries perceived or real, in a world dominated by ultimate, final thermonuclear warfare—a sheer cliff, to

whose edge we are inching ever closer—a mere lapse of judgment could be enough to hurtle humanity over the abyss. We will not reverse that mistake, once it is made. The ever-increasing chance that thermonuclear war could be launched by miscalculation, or by the madness or folly of an individual, nation, or even “conglomerate,” means that extraordinary leadership of the highest caliber—trusted and trustworthy leadership—must become available to deliberate among nations otherwise committed to war.

Patrushev elaborated: “Amid the fundamental changes in the world, the corporations have one goal—to preserve the system of global exploitation. It is headed by an elite of businessmen that do not tie themselves to any states. Beneath it are the so-called developed countries and the ‘golden billion.’ And further below is the rest of humanity, contemptuously referred to as the ‘Third World.’ ”

Certainly, population reduction, including the dramatic reduction of the potential population density of whole regions of the globe, has been the result of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, and various theaters in Africa over the past 30 years or more. Certainly, Britain’s late Prince Philip as well as other members of British royal family-affiliated institutions, have proposed in various documents and formats over the years that it were desirable that the Earth’s population be no more than 1-2 billion people. Promoting that policy in itself would, however, lead to thermonuclear war well before its completion.

“States and people need to negotiate their futures and destiny, and to do that, they need to listen to the words of international leaders and references, such as the Pope, intellectual and local actors, civil society, diplomats, and all peace actors,” one person has recommended. This week, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and head of the international Schiller Institute, is appearing in three different symposia, for two purposes: first, as part of an international public awareness campaign, designed to propose a solution to reverse direction from an otherwise-inevitable “species extinction” war; second, for the establishment of a higher global peace and development

architecture that allows for not only durable human survival, but durable prosperity as well.

Zepp-LaRouche reported that in her [Jan. 10 Schiller Institute](#) symposium, “First of all, we discussed the implication of [former German Chancellor Angela] Merkel’s lying, either lying in the beginning, in the period where they pretended still to try to implement the Minsk agreement; or lying now, saying that she never meant it, and it was all just to give time for Ukraine to rebuild or go for rearmament. So, we discussed that, and in that context, I made the point that, as a consequence of that and many other aspects, we are now at an extremely dangerous point, because the Russians have lost all trust in the West, that one can negotiate. Zelenskyy naturally doesn’t want to negotiate either, and supposedly there is even a law which forbids Ukrainians to negotiate as long as Putin is in office. In any case, there were many arguments coming also from Scott Ritter, from French General Delawarde (ret.), from French Colonel Corvez (ret.) that basically the time for negotiation is not there and the Russians will force a military solution on the battlefield. And they were of the opinion that Russia will win this battle.

“I was making the point that, given the fact that NATO is saying Russia can absolutely not win, Ukraine must win, that this implies too many dangers, and that we absolutely have to have an international mobilization to take up the offer of Pope Francis, who offered the venue of the Vatican for unconditional negotiations between Ukraine and Russia.”

For her efforts, Helga Zepp-LaRouche has for six months been placed at the head of a “kill list” issued by the Ukrainian Center for Countering Disinformation. That list, however, is not a product of Ukraine, but of the “international assassination bureau” that has, at least since the President John F. Kennedy assassination, eliminated or neutralized people, including Enrico Mattei and Aldo Moro of Italy; Patrice Lumumba of Congo; Malcolm X, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King of the United States; Jürgen Ponto, Hanns Martin Schleyer, Alfred Herrhausen, and Detlev Rohwedder of Germany. The apparatus carried out over 30 assassination

attempts against President Charles de Gaulle of France. That apparatus now seeks to intimidate anyone who has the moral fortitude to point out the injustice of the “Global NATO” plan for World War III against China, Russia, and anyone not considered to be a member of the “Anglosphere.”

Now, therefore, this assassination and intimidation “bureau” must be not only exposed, but dismantled. The continuing existence of nations, and perhaps the planet itself, could depend on it. It takes only the summoning of the true spirit of freedom and independence that Dr. Martin Luther King exemplified, looking at humanity “from the mountaintop,” to walk away from war, by walking away from fear.

This Saturday join Ray McGovern, Garland Nixon, Cliff Kiracofe, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, and others for the Schiller Institute symposium, “Resurrect the True Mission of Dr. Martin Luther King: Stop NATO’s World War, and Dismantle the ‘JFK International Assassination Bureau,’ ” Saturday, January 14 at 10 a.m.

- Watch [Harley’s Updates](#) with Harley Schlanger on Friday January 13, 2023: Every weekday morning on The LaRouche Organization, Schlanger will give you the strategic briefing you need to start your day.

STRATEGIC SHOWDOWN

Ritter Says, Additional Western Military Aid for Ukraine Will Be Too Little, Too Late

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—In his latest assessment of the war in Ukraine published in *Consortium News*, former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter concludes that, while additional Western military aid to Ukraine is forthcoming in quantities larger than before, it will make little difference to the outcome on the ground. The problem, according to Ritter, revolves around “burn rates,” that is, how quickly losses are sustained, and “replenishment rates,” how quickly those losses are replaced. “The calculus bodes ill for Ukraine,” Ritter writes.

First off, Ritter argues, the U.S. and NATO “appear able to sustain the quantity of weapons that have been delivered to Ukraine.” While new military aid appears to be forthcoming, “it will be late to the battle and in insufficient quantities to have a game-winning impact on the battlefield.” The same calculus applies to manpower. “Likewise, the casualty rates sustained by Ukraine, which at times reach more than 1,000 men per day, far exceed its ability to mobilize and train replacements,” Ritter writes. “Russia, on the other hand, is in the process of finalizing a mobilization of more than 300,000 men who appear to be equipped with the most advanced weapons systems in the Russian arsenal.”

“Both Ukraine and its Western partners are struggling to sustain the conflict they initiated when they rejected a possible peace settlement in April 2022,” Ritter continues. “Russia, after starting off on its back feet, has largely regrouped, and appears poised to resume large-scale offensive operations which neither Ukraine nor its Western partners have an adequate answer for.

“Moreover, given the duplicitous history of the Minsk Accords, it is unlikely Russia can be dissuaded from undertaking its military offensive through diplomacy. As such, 2023 appears to be shaping up as a year of continued violent confrontation leading to a decisive Russian military victory,” Ritter concludes.

“How Russia leverages such a military victory into a sustainable political settlement that manifests itself in regional peace and security is yet to be seen.”

Macgregor on Ukraine’s Collapse, German Hesitancy

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—[Col. Douglas Macgregor \(ret.\)](#) gave a sober and stark assessment of the ongoing hostilities taking place in Ukraine on Judge Andrew Napolitano’s “Judging Freedom” online broadcast on Jan. 10. He threw cold water on a lot of the propaganda coming out of Western media and governments, and described how Ukraine’s army is deteriorating, with low morale and low supplies. Macgregor reported on a letter he had received from an Australian friend on the ground near the line of conflict,

who wrote that even the Ukrainian civilians are beginning to speak up and express their resentment at being sacrificed in this way: “Many [civilians] are now speaking up, many are openly critical of the Zelenskyy administration. They’re openly angered at the West and feel betrayed.”

Importantly, Macgregor was asked about Germany’s sending Leopard tanks to Kiev. Macgregor responded that he understands why Germany is reluctant to do it: “The Germans are worried, and justifiably, I would add, that they’re going to be hung out to dry and their equipment will not only be destroyed, but in many cases captured.” It is unclear what the Americans will do, he added, referring to the debate as to whether American tanks will follow the German tanks. But if Germany thinks it would be a clever way to introduce German troops on the ground to fight Russians in Ukraine, in order to train Ukrainians or even operate their tanks, the German government would be thrown out in 24 hours. There is no support in Germany for that, he said.

As for Russia’s army, Macgregor pointed out that Russia’s mobilization of 300,000 was successful, and is preparing to move in. In addition to the 300,000 troops, there are 80,000 volunteers who have joined to fight as well, which adds up to an enormous force, and for which Ukraine has no answer.

Russians Find Evidence of Drugs and Disease by Ukrainian Military

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—In an Aug. 4, 2022 dispatch, TASS reported that Russian specialists had found opiates and ephedrine substances at positions that had been earlier abandoned by Ukrainian troops. Chief of the Russian Army’s Radiation, Chemical and Biological Protection Force Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov said at the time, “Special attention should be paid to the narcotic drugs, including opioid drugs, found at the positions abandoned by the Ukrainian army, such as methadone, Codepsine and Codeterp [codeine-based antitussives], as well as ephedrine substances: T-fedrine and Triphedrine.” He noted that methadone is used to treat drug addiction, as a means of substitution therapy.

TASS also cites Kirillov reporting that studies by Russian specialists had found markers of diseases found in biological and blood samples taken from Ukrainian prisoners of war, writing that Kirillov “recalled that earlier high concentrations of antibiotics and immunological markers were found in their [Ukrainian POWs’] blood, which indicated contact with the causative agents of the fever with renal syndrome and the West Nile fever, which the Pentagon had been studying under the Ukrainian projects UP-4 and UP-8.”

Kirillov also mentioned of the use of mind-altering drugs by the Wehrmacht under the Nazis and in the U.S. military in Korea and Vietnam. The Nazis provided Pervitin, the brand name for an amphetamine, to troops in order to reduce stress, and the U.S. also used the same drug during the Korean and Vietnam wars for American soldiers. “Such drugs cause addiction and result in such side effects as excessive aggressiveness, which explains extreme cruelty towards the civilian population by some Ukrainian soldiers, as well as the bombardments of cities in Donbass,” TASS quoted Kirillov as saying.

U.S. POLITICAL & ECONOMIC

U.S. Promises To ‘Defend’ Japan with Nuclear Weapons if Need Be

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—The joint statement released, following the “2+2” [2023 U.S.-Japan Consultative Committee](#) meetings of the U.S. and Japanese defense and foreign ministers yesterday, includes a commitment by the U.S. to defend Japan with nuclear weapons if necessary. “The United States restated its unwavering commitment to the defense of Japan under Article V of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, using its full range of capabilities, including nuclear,” the statement said. “The ministers held an in-depth discussion on U.S. extended deterrence for Japan, as well as on the recently released U.S. [Nuclear Posture Review](#), and reaffirmed the critical importance of ensuring U.S. extended deterrence remains credible and resilient, bolstered by Japan’s capabilities.”

Another point stressed in the document is the “unprecedented alignment of their vision, priorities, and goals” expressed in the two governments’ national security and national defense strategies. “This forms a solid foundation for their efforts to constantly modernize the Alliance in order to address the increasingly severe security environment,” it says.

Naturally, it included the usual nonsense about U.S.-Japan commitment to “a free and open Indo-Pacific region” and hailed “the U.S.-Japan Alliance as the cornerstone of regional peace, security, and prosperity.”

All of this is aimed against China, of course. The four ministers “reiterated their strong opposition to China’s intensified attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force in the East China Sea, including through actions that seek to undermine Japan’s longstanding administration of the Senkaku Islands,” the statement says. “The United States reaffirmed that Article V of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands. The Ministers condemned China’s dangerous and provocative military activities around Japan, including China’s ballistic missile launches in August 2022, during which some missiles landed in waters near Japan’s Sakishima Islands. They shared their continuing concerns regarding China’s ongoing and accelerating expansion of its nuclear arsenal, which is also characterized by its lack of transparency.”

The islands are known as Diaoyu Dao by China, which were seized by Japan in 1895, and recognized by the Allies in 1943 (Cairo Declaration) and again in 1945 (Potsdam Proclamation) as being Chinese territory, and also including Taiwan and other territories that Japan had occupied.

The “2+2” statement was welcomed by Taipei. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Joanne Ou said that Taiwan welcomes the support from Japan and the United States, reported Radio Taiwan International. She said that Taiwan will work with these “like-minded” countries to defend “universal values” such as democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule of law.

There’s not much response, yet, from Beijing to yesterday’s events in Washington. “We have noted the reports,” Foreign Ministry spokesman

Wang Wenbin responded to AFP about the U.S.-Japan statement. “Military cooperation between the U.S. and Japan must not harm the interests of third parties or undermine the peace and stability in the region.”

New Congress Votes To Create a Committee Fixated on China

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—If you think the new Republican majority will tone down the war rhetoric and increase domestic sanity, think again. The recently approved “House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the U.S. and the Communist Party of China,” is one of the new pet projects of the new House Speaker Kevin McCarthy. It plans to “investigate and submit policy recommendations on the status of the Chinese Communist Party’s economic, technological, and security progress and its competition with the United States.”

The House voted on Jan. 10 heavily in favor of the committee, with about a third of the Democrats opposing it. McCarthy has been an outspoken anti-China voice for some time, and has been working with Mike Gallagher (R-WI), whom McCarthy chose to chair the committee.

Gallagher has a pedigree steeped in the intelligence and permanent bureaucracy communities. He served seven years as a Marine Corps intelligence officer, including deploying to Iraq with General Petraeus’s CENTCOM Assessment Team. Then he earned his degree from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, interned with the RAND Corporation in Cambridge, Massachusetts on strategic terrorist studies, and finally completed his Master’s of Science in Strategic Intelligence at National Intelligence University in 2010. In other words, he fits the bill for Global NATO’s increasing turn towards war with China.

China’s *Global Times* quotes a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences that “McCarthy is restoring McCarthyism.”

House of Representatives Forms ‘Church Committee’ To Investigate Subversion of U.S. Political Process

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—The House of Representatives voted 221-211, along party lines, on Jan. 10, to create the Select Subcommittee on the

Weaponization of the Federal Government, which has been called a new “Church Committee” by several Republicans in support of the initiative. The reference is to the 1975 Senate Committee chaired by Sen. Frank Church (D-ID), to investigate wrongful domestic interventions by U.S. intelligence agencies. The new Select Committee will be under the Judiciary Committee, whose Chairman is Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) will oversee it.

The two-paragraph resolution, [H.Res. 12](#), establishing the new Select Subcommittee, states: “The subcommittee must investigate matters related to the collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of information on U.S. citizens by executive branch agencies, including whether such efforts are illegal, unconstitutional, or otherwise unethical. The subcommittee must make a final report of its findings by January 2, 2025, and terminate 30 days after filing that report.”

House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-LA) issued a press release Jan. 10 on the “sweeping investigative powers” the Select Committee will have.

This initiative, given its clout and potential, can be a powerful tool to pry the U.S. off the track of the Global NATO subversion of all kinds at home and abroad, depending on the high-impact mobilization of citizens to set the focus and scope of what needs to be brought to light, and destroy the lying Global NATO narratives.

The panel was demanded by some GOP members last week, during the successive votes on who would be Speaker of the House, during which the favorite, former Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (CA), who became Speaker, said he would back it.

The day of the vote, Thomas Massie (R-KY) said he will be serving on the Committee. It is not publicly known who else will be on the Committee. Massie was a guest of Tucker Carlson on Fox News on Jan. 6 discussing the importance of forming such a committee. Carlson had called for such a new committee on Jan. 3.

In statements reported Jan. 11 by Spectrum News, Massie said that members will be brought into the new subcommittee from other committees, such as the Intelligence Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee, “which has jurisdiction over the social media companies.” In terms of what the new committee might investigate, he explained that “for instance, we know that, based on Elon [Musk] buying Twitter, and some of the evidence that’s come out of that, the FBI coordinated with Twitter to monitor accounts and then to suggest that they be silenced.” That, he said, is “a violation of civil liberties.” The committee will be empowered to “allow us to investigate whether the FBI or any other three-letter agency in this government has been violating the constitutional civil rights of Americans.”

The committee membership will be eight Republicans and five Democrats.

Snowden Points Out the Real Issue Behind Biden’s Classified Documents

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—With the revelations that classified documents were found among President Biden’s possessions, many are falling into partisan reactionary politics, whereas the serious issues are largely being left unsaid.

Former National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden pointed out Jan. 12 in a tweet. “The real scandal isn’t that Biden had classified documents coming out of his socks, because sadly they’ve all been doing it. The scandal is that the DOJ found out about it a week prior to the midterm elections and chose to suppress the story, conferring a partisan advantage.”

The U.S. Congress Has Gone Bust

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC) made a proposal on Jan. 9 to honor the heroic Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Wilson directed the Fine Arts Board to obtain a nice bust of the Ukrainian President “for display in a suitable, permanent location in the House of

Representatives wing of the United States Capitol.” According to reports, Kiev was enthusiastic about the proposal. However, they offered instead a talking Zelenskyy replica, which gives passionate speeches about democracy whenever someone puts in a \$100 bill.

American Conservative Highlights Ukraine’s CCD Hit List, Western Authorship of War

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—Doug Bandow, writing today in the *American Conservative*, usefully highlights the criminality of the Ukraine Presidency’s [Center for Countering Disinformation](#) hit list, on which he is included. “I’ve ended up on a hate list from Ukraine’s propaganda operation, the so-called Center for Countering Disinformation, apparently funded in part by American taxpayers,” Bandow writes. His argument is that American interests should come first for Americans, that Ukraine should lay off, and he is rightfully upset that Ukraine labels him a promoter of Russian propaganda for saying so. “It is not enough for Congress to open wide the Treasury’s vaults and the Pentagon’s armories for Kiev. All Americans are supposed to speak in one voice, sing hosannas in praise of the Zelenskyy government, and unite behind Ukraine’s war aims.”

Bandow, a CATO Institute fellow and former assistant to President Ronald Reagan, has previously spoken in favor of improving relations with Russia. In 2017 Bandow called President Donald Trump’s effort to improve relations with Russia was his “most important policy initiative.” While he makes note of some others on the “CCD’s naughty list,” he declines to mention the prominent position of the Schiller Institute’s Helga Zepp-LaRouche, or any of the other collaborators of the LaRouche movement, which comprise a fair plurality of the hit list.

While Bandow says he condemns Russia’s invasion into Ukraine and agrees with the sanctions, “the CCD’s hit piece suggests that Kiev fears rational debate as well as rational policy.” He goes on to discuss the “endemic corruption” in Ukraine, and raises the 2014 “political transition,” which eastern Ukrainians consider to be a “coup orchestrated by the West.... Zelenskyy is less pure than the driven snow,” he writes, and wants

to lie America into the war, as in the case in which Zelenskyy claimed it was a Russian missile that hit Poland instead of Ukraine's own missile. "A foreign leader who believes it is in his interest to involve America in a great power and potential nuclear war is no friend and, frankly, is *more dangerous than Russia.*"

In an important reference to the Western authorship for the events unfolding in Ukraine, he writes: "The West has consistently lied to Moscow about NATO expansion—while also misleading Ukraine about bringing it into the trans-Atlantic alliance. Poroshenko, Zelenskyy's predecessor, admitted that the European-backed Minsk Accord between Kiev and Moscow was never meant to be implemented; former German Chancellor Angela Merkel recently did the same. The allies understandably say they cannot trust Moscow. However, why should Russia take any Ukrainian or allied promises seriously?"

Bandow concludes by saying: "The Ukrainian attack on Americans for putting the U.S. first offers a stark reminder that Americans must defend their interest from *all threats*, including false friends like Kiev. Else Washington risks finding itself manipulated into a bitter, brutal war not its own. Perhaps it is time for the U.S. to establish its own Center for Countering Disinformation, focused on *Ukraine.*" (All emphasis in original.)

NEW WORLD PARADIGM

Putin Meets with Government Ministers in a Portrait of Russia at War

Jan. 12, 2023 (EIRNS)—The meeting was held yesterday to discuss progress over the last year, and plans for the upcoming one. In his opening, Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) reported a 200-billion-ruble additional revenue: "This gives us the opportunity to meet every development objective we have and solve current tasks that are serious and important."

He laid out the priorities for 2023: The expansion of Russia's foreign economic relations and the development of new logistics corridors;

improving roads, other infrastructure, housing, and utilities; enhancing the technological capabilities of the Russian economy; improving Russia's "financial sovereignty" and high-technology industries; and real growth in wages and incomes.

What ensued were intense reports from various ministers and their deputies on the state of what is clearly a major transformation of Russia's economy, especially in connection with the growth in the four western new territories. In the face of Western sanctions, in which many previous trading partners and supply chains have been blocked, Russia has determined not to stay stagnant, but to change. New trading partners are being developed (as the Minister for Transport said, "all logistics have been reoriented to the East"), and efforts are being made to develop Russia's domestic supply chains and industries—import substitution. And all this in addition to a massive war mobilization, in which Russia is competing with the collective trans-Atlantic bloc.

To illustrate the tenor of the meeting, take the exchange between the President and the Minister of Trade and Industry Denis Manturov. After Manturov went through the extraordinary growth in his field, and projected production in the coming period, Putin insisted that it is still too slow and that the synchronization with the private sector is inadequate.

Putin: It is taking too long! Much too long.... I want all of this to be done within a month. What quarter are you talking about? Do we not understand the circumstances we are in? Please complete this work within a month. Okay?

Manturov: We will try to do our best with our colleagues from the economic bloc. Thank you.

Putin: No, do not try to do your best; please get it done in a month. It must be done in a month, no later. Agreed?

Manturov: Yes.

Before beginning the reports, however, Putin made the point that all work must be done in view of the new Russian territories in Donbass. "I

would like to emphasize that the work in this area must embrace all regions of the country, including Russia's new regions," he said. "By 2030, they should reach the national average in terms of infrastructure, social services and many other parameters of living standards." That includes health checkups for every child in the four new territories.

Huge increases have been made in air and sea vessel production, military and civilian. Rail infrastructure also has been transformed, such that Russia has increased the number of cargo containers it can process by an astonishing 60% since last year. Rail transport overall has increased substantially, including passenger and domestic cargo, with efforts made to circumvent all sanctions and insurance problems.

It was reported that the construction sector has built more housing in the recent period than at any time in Russian history, including during the Soviet period. Overall the construction industry grew by 6% last year. Combined with the successful harvest in 2022, intensive efforts were made to improve the delivery and logistics in order for the goods to reach store shelves. Because of this and other efforts to maintain stable demand and supply, inflation dropped to 11.9% for the year, and is on target to drop to 4% by the second quarter. (Compare this to Western economies which are straining under inflation, deficits and lack of internal investments.)