

EIR Daily Alert Service

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EDITORIAL

Sleepwalking Into Nuclear War? Or Peace on Earth, Goodwill Toward Men?

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)--On Christmas Day, 1776, George Washington restored hope and optimism within the struggling colonies and the bedraggled

Continental Army that the British yoke could be removed and a free nation could be established as a beacon of hope for all mankind. It meant that Christmas celebrations had to be replaced with a stealth surprise attack, crossing the ice-filled Delaware River, in order to win a victory and restore confidence that the colonies could defeat the British.

Today, Christmas Eve 2021, the Schiller Institute has released a timeline with a stern warning contained in its title: “[Are We Sleepwalking into Thermonuclear World War III?](#)” While Christmas is a time to give blessings and prayers for Peace On Earth and Goodwill Toward Men (Luke 2:14), we, like George Washington before us, must recognize that there can be no peace or goodwill if the current descent into war and a new dark age are not addressed and reversed, immediately. How can we celebrate the birth of the child Jesus as a savior of mankind while the trans-Atlantic nations are denying the means of subsistence to millions of children facing starvation in Afghanistan, in Yemen, and other nations as well? How can we honor the Prince of Peace while our political leaders are threatening economic destruction and even nuclear war on Russia and China?

[President Vladimir Putin](#) reflected this same sentiment during his four-hour, annual year-end press conference on Dec. 23. “Mr. President,” he was asked, “what should we prepare for? What is a realistic outlook, and since the word ‘war’ has been said out loud, have we estimated the probability of war even as the result of a provocation?” Putin answered by reviewing the history of Ukraine, which was created as a nation as part of the Soviet Union in 1922-24, including regions which were historically Russian, and with majority populations which spoke Russian. With the collapse of the U.S.S.R., these Russian citizens were stranded outside their own country, both in Crimea and the Donbas, but Russia accepted this--until the U.S.-backed neo-Nazi coup against the elected government in 2014. Putin said he could not turn his back on the Russian people in Crimea who voted overwhelmingly to rejoin Russia, but when the people of the Donbas formed independent republics, he negotiated with Kiev, and with the Western powers, to not use military force against them, while peace was negotiated. But now, Putin said, “we hear: war, war, war,” with

preparations to use military force against the Donbas, while “under the cover of these new weapon systems [delivered by the U.S.], radicals may well decide to settle the Donbas issue, as well as the Crimea issue.”

Most revealingly, Putin concluded his answer: “This is a serious matter. I have just spoken about our plans for infrastructure development, social policy, and healthcare. But what does it all mean if we end up in the conflict you are asking about? This is not our choice, and we do not want it.”

There are some positive steps, however tentative, indicating that some in the West are trying to pull back from the brink. A ceasefire was negotiated in Ukraine by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), working with representatives from Kiev, the Donbas and Russia. Talks are planned for early January between Russia, the U.S. and several European states on the security demands presented by Russia, as well as strategic stability. Putin said that “the overall response we have been seeing has been quite positive. Our American partners are telling us that they are ready to launch this conversation.... Both sides have appointed representatives.”

Also indicating some steps toward sanity, the UN has agreed to lift sanctions on humanitarian aid to be delivered to Afghanistan over the next year, while former Afghan President (during the occupation) Hamid Karzai, told CNN that the world must work with the reality on the ground, meaning the Taliban government, and to “bring Afghans together.” Asked about Taliban “atrocities,” Karzai said there were atrocities on all sides-- Americans bombing villages, Taliban suicide bombers. Now there must be peace: “we must plan for the future.” He stated that that there had been some small aid during the war--some roads, some education facilities, and so forth, “but under the name of a war against terrorism, it has been a disaster for us.” He asked for a “relationship of respect and understanding” between Afghanistan and the U.S.

While we mobilize to prevent war, to reverse the financial and economic collapse, to provide modern health systems to all nations, to build

independent and productive nations worldwide, to restore classical culture-- these are all One, and will only be achieved as a One, a new paradigm for mankind. Let us celebrate Christmas with that dedication, that commitment to truly achieve Goodwill Toward Men.

- Watch [Harley's Updates](#) with Harley Schlanger on Monday December 27, 2021: Every weekday morning on [The LaRouche Organization](#) website, Harley will give you the strategic briefing you need to start your day.

- **Editor's Note:** *EIR Daily Alert* will skip publishing on Christmas Day (for Sunday, Dec. 26, 2021) and New Year's Day (for Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022). The first two issues in 2022 will appear on Saturday, Jan. 1 and Monday, Jan. 3.

STRATEGIC WAR DANGER

Donbas Holiday Ceasefire Supported on All Sides

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)--One outcome of the Trilateral Contact Group (Russia, Kiev, and Donbas representatives, meeting under the OSCE), conferring in Minsk on Dec. 22, was an agreement to implement the ceasefire first agreed on in July 2020. "Many months of our efforts to return to full compliance with the ceasefire have borne fruit. During today's meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group, all parties expressed their determination to comply with the agreement of July 22, 2020 on measures to strengthen the ceasefire," Andriy Yermak, the head of the President's Office in Kiev, said yesterday. He called the ceasefire a step toward de-escalation in the Donbas. "We hope that this time the ceasefire will be sustainable and will save the lives of defenders of Ukraine and civilians. The upcoming Christmas and New Year holidays should be peaceful. May the silence finally reign in Donbas," Yermak said.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said yesterday that Moscow hopes that "Kiev will observe its liabilities on

ensuring the lasting ceasefire in eastern Ukraine.” She said that while Donetsk and Luhansk have been observing the ceasefire since its inception, the Kiev side has not and has been continuing to shell the Donbas.

State Department spokesman Ned Price issued a statement yesterday welcoming the ceasefire announcement. “We applaud the efforts of the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and the Trilateral Contact Group and urge the ceasefire parties to fully adhere to their commitments for the shared security of people living in the area,” he said. “As the United States has made clear, the conflict in eastern Ukraine can be resolved only in an environment of de-escalation, such as yesterday’s announced ceasefire.”

However, this morning, each side is accusing the other of violations of the ceasefire. The Ukrainian army accused “Russian occupation troops” of three violations on Dec. 23 in Donetsk. In turn, Donetsk military spokesman Eduard Basurin said this morning that “Ukrainian fighters violated the ceasefire six times over the past week using 120 mm and 82 mm mortars, and grenade launchers.”

Senior Administration Official Threatens Russia with More NATO

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)--A [senior administration official](#), briefing on background, arrogantly told reporters yesterday that the U.S. will never agree to some Russian security proposals, but in general, is ready to engage in talks with Moscow through multiple channels as soon as early January. He warned that “if Russia goes ahead with what may be underway, we and our allies are prepared to impose severe costs that would damage Russia’s economy and bring about exactly what it says it does not want: more NATO capabilities, not less; closer to Russia, not further away.

“We’ve conveyed all this directly to Russia, including from President Biden to President Putin. But we’ve also been clear that there is a different path available should Russia choose to take it,” he said. “The U.S. is ready to engage in diplomacy as soon as early January through multiple channels: bilaterally, through the Strategic Stability Dialogue we have with Russia, and, multilaterally, through the NATO-Russia Council and the OSCE.

“We’ve taken note of the concerns that Russia has raised both privately and in public, and want to reiterate that any dialogue must be based on reciprocity, meaning that we have our own concerns to put on the table, and any dialogue must also take place in full coordination with our partners and allies under the principle of ‘nothing about you without you,’ ” the official went on. “Our view is that negotiations should start from the baseline of foundational principles and documents on European security, which underscore territorial integrity, borders not being changed by force, and respect for the sovereignty and sovereign decision-making of countries.

“We’ve also told Russia that it’s clear to us that substantive progress in these talks can only be made in an environment of de-escalation, not escalation,” he said. In other words, it’s Russia that has to make all of the concessions, even on its own territory, including some before talks even can start.

The official said that no date has yet been set for the talks in January but that the U.S. will have a “substantive response” to Moscow’s demand for security guarantees. “Clearly, there are some things that have been proposed that we will never agree to, and I think the Russians probably know that on some level. We think there are other areas where we may be able to explore what’s possible,” he said. “And then, again, you know, that is not the full agenda for the talks. The talks will also include, as they must, our own and our allies’ concerns about Russian steps and actions that have destabilized European security. And so, you know, the agenda will be fuller than what is captured in the documents that Russia has made public.”

AFGHANISTAN

Former Afghanistan President Karzai Insists, UN Action on Aid Is a Start, but the World Must Work with Taliban

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)--The former President of Afghanistan [Hamid Karzai](#) (2001-2014) said on CNN Dec. 23: “The reality on the ground is that the Taliban are now the de facto authorities in the country.” He welcomed the UN Security Council action, temporarily removing the block of sanctions

from the delivery of aid, saying that it is “maybe not enough, but it is a start.”

Karzai became the President of Afghanistan in December 2001, following the U.S./NATO invasion. Asked whether the international community should work with the Taliban, he said: “Definitely there will be instances when they have to work with the reality on the ground.” And he was clear, the Taliban is the reality on the ground. When challenged on the UN report on instances of executions and charges of torture and atrocities by the Taliban, Karzai would not countenance such divisive techniques: “The issue of atrocities is unfortunately a part of our lives. Atrocities have been committed on all sides.... The suffering from atrocities is on *all* sides.” He recounted multiple examples on all sides, especially the bombing of villages by Americans and suicide bombings in cities by Taliban; and concluded that Afghanistan has been suffering for some other peoples’ designs. That has to stop. Now we must plan for our future. That is the way forward.

The Taliban must invite Afghans back and must dialogue and collaborate with them. Some of the Taliban leadership had contacted him when they arrived in Kabul city. Now they need to bring security to Afghan lives, and that includes psychological security. We must “do all that is necessary to bring Afghans together.” Pressed to criticize the withdrawal of the Americans, he admitted: “If that had been done honestly,” it would have been different. The rush to the airport, it was a disaster, “an insult to the Afghani people.” While it is appreciated that the Americans did bring some roads, education, in some form, electricity along with lots of other assistance, but under the name of a war against terrorism, it has been a disaster for us. “We want to be friends with the United States. We want to be allies. The United States is a great country.... But we want this to be a relationship of respect and understanding of two sovereign countries.”

UNITED STATES POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC

Biden Signs Insane ‘Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act’

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)--President Joe Biden is celebrating Christmas by signing legislation to undermine the employment of some of China’s poorest people. Like the campaign to withhold the funds belonging to the people of Afghanistan, supposedly to force the government to respect the human rights of women and children, thus starving those same women and children to death, so also this legislation, claiming to help the Uyghurs, actually is aimed at undermining their employment.

The act mandates that all goods traced to production in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region are “tainted” by the forced labor allegedly enforced against the Uyghur people, and are henceforth banned from being imported to the U.S. Such lies will have the impact of undermining the production facilities built in Xinjiang as part of China’s successful effort to eliminate abject poverty in the country, potentially driving the Uyghurs out of their jobs.

Nearly 3,000 American Scientists Rally Against ‘Woke’ Public School Math Reforms

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)--California’s effort to win the race to the bottom of mathematics education has been jammed up, thanks to two open letters signed by almost 3,000 teachers, mathematicians, and other knowledge workers in California and the greater United States. The California Department of Education (CADOE) produced a working draft of the new *Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools* in January 2021. The CADOE then opened a 60-day period of public comment which invited immense criticism of both the overall tone of the document, as well as specific curriculum changes. The stated intent of the new Framework is to narrow the achievement gap between underprivileged children and those who are more affluent. However, the real effect will be to reduce access to an already awful mathematics curriculum for all students, and replace the teaching of math with emotional discussions about dead-end subjects like climate change and white privilege.

The most controversial tenet of the new Framework is that it discourages youth from getting to calculus during high school. It advises, among other things, that the way to get underachieving youth a better edge on math (or, “make math more equitable”) is to have all students take the same math classes up to 10th grade, and delay Algebra I until 9th grade. Primary author and Stanford Prof. Jo Boaler has stated that “the push to calculus is deeply inequitable and has kept out students of color and girls for generations now..” What remains of the math classes will be focused on “data science” (e.g., compiling data into Excel spreadsheets and building PowerPoint presentations), and infused with “trauma-informed pedagogy,” “environmental and social justice,” “contributions that historically marginalized people have made to mathematics,” and a rejection of the “ideas of natural gifts and talents.”

Though the Framework was to be implemented by the end of this year, an open letter published by the right-leaning Independent Institute prompted the CADOE to delay the Framework’s adoption until May 2022. The open letter, called “Replace the Proposed New California Math Curriculum Framework,” has been signed by over 1,200 math professionals who work in California. A follow-up letter that addresses the national trend in math reforms, and targets the California Framework by name, was published in early December, and already has almost 1,500 signatures. The national letter, “Open Letter on K-12 Mathematics,” also reports that these reforms will effectively privatize advanced primary school math education, since private schools will not have to follow the new guidelines.

It is unclear what will happen to the Framework between now and May 2022, but it is garbage and should be scrapped. However, we should recognize that this is really a single issue fight, and misses the more important point. Mathematics as taught today really does just teach students to memorize rules, devoid of the process that led to those rules. A real math education should seek to have kids recreate the discoveries that generated modern civilization, such as Cusa’s solution to the isoperimetric problem, Archytas’s doubling of the cube, or Gauss’s proof of the Fundamental Theorem of Algebra. In reliving these discoveries, students end up learning

all the math mechanics they would get in primary school anyhow, but they would also be reproducing modern human culture.

COVID-29 AND FAMINE

Relentless Chinese Wage Another Battle Against COVID-19

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)--China locked down the 13 million residents of Xi'an, the capital city of Shaanxi Province, on Dec. 23. Over 15 million nucleic acid tests have turned up 234 cases, or a positivity rate of 0.000156%, of the Delta variant. People are to stay at home, with one household member allowed out to purchase necessities, once every two days. Otherwise, those who are sick are allowed to go to medical care, and anti-epidemic workers are on duty. All trains in or out of the city were suspended and 765 flights were canceled on Dec. 23. A new round of the testing began on Dec. 23, with another 13 million or so tests to be completed shortly.

On Dec. 4, one passenger on flight from Pakistan, arrived in Xi'an infected with the Delta variant. That person was placed in a quarantine hotel. However, sloppiness in carrying out the prescribed strict regimen allowed the infection to spread to the hotel staff. Ten people have been identified and disciplined for their failure. A second failure was identified in not controlling and managing the close contacts of confirmed cases in a timely fashion, and four more participants were cited for disciplinary actions. On Dec. 9, cases began accumulating, and on Dec. 20, genetic sequencing of the first 36 cases (out of what was then 91 cases) showed they were "highly similar" to the Dec. 4 case.

Most concerning to the authorities is that, as of Dec. 23, they had not yet identified the precise chain of spread. The three separate chains that they've found--those of "work, family and community"--need to be traced out for the precise interplay. Yet another public health complication is that endemic hemorrhagic fever cases are present in Xi'an.

This makes for the third time that China has shut down a city of at least 10 million residents in their war against COVID-19. Experts estimate a four

week battle, based upon their “dynamic zero COVID-19 strategy” and their previous experience.

COVID-19 Deaths in U.S. Soar to Over 35% of the World’s Recorded Deaths

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)--Deaths in the United States from COVID-19 soared to almost 3,300 on Dec. 23--about three times the level of a week ago, and over 35% of the total COVID-19 deaths reported in the world. The U.S. total in the first four days of this week is now about 9,200 deaths--double recent weeks. The amount of official new cases also zoomed skyward, reaching 265,000 on Dec. 23, over twice the rate of last week. In the first four days, over 1 million new infections have been identified. Worse, the actual amount of infection has increased even faster, as the Dec. 23 positivity level went over 13% nationwide. (It was averaging 7% last week.) That is, since there’s a higher percentage of those who are getting tested actually being infected, there may be over double the amount of cases, but infections may have increased three or four times.

To add insult to injury, 19 testing sites in New York and New Jersey were closed down, not for lack of tests, but for lack of available staffing. And even though New York City is reporting massive infection in prisons and homeless shelters, there are many other states with higher positivity levels than New York--led by Kansas, Vermont, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Worldwide there were 972,000 official new cases on Dec. 23, driving the 7-day average up to 739,000 (from last week’s 628,300). Even in the spring, when India had 400,000 cases in a day, the world never reached 900,000. The Dec. 23 one-day records in the United Kingdom (122,400) and the United States (265,000) represented 40% of the world’s reported total.

Otherwise, Italy and Spain over the last 7 days are showing the massive increases that northern Europe had been showing a few weeks ago; while Germany, Russia and South Africa now show declines from their peaks.

Former Surgeon General Jerome Adams Keys In on Vaccine Collaboration of Trump and Biden

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)--The political pundits experienced no little discomfort this week when both President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump acknowledged some common realities about COVID-19 vaccines. First, speaking on Sunday, Dec. 19 on Fox, Trump reported that he had gotten his booster vaccine shot. Then, he repeated his previous comments on his 2020 scientific crash program: “Look, we did something that was historic. We saved tens of millions of lives worldwide. We, together, all of us--not me, we--we got a vaccine done, three vaccines done, and tremendous therapeutics.” During his [Dec. 21 address](#), Biden said: “Thanks to the prior administration and our scientific community, America is one of the first countries to get the vaccine.” The President has not always been forthcoming about the role of the Trump administration’s crash program to create vaccines, Operation Warp Speed--nor about the fact that other countries (that is, the unnamed China and Russia) administered COVID-19 vaccines prior to the United States.

That evening, Trump said that he was “surprised” and “appreciative” of Biden’s acknowledgment. “It is a little tough to be overly critical now because he just thanked us for the vaccine and thanked me for what I did. You know, that’s a first--so it is very tough for me to be overly critical now.... I think he did something very good. You know, it has to be a process of healing in this country, and that will help a lot.” Trump went on to encourage Americans to “embrace” vaccination--with the qualification that he still opposes using a mandate, as “it destroys people’s lives, just as the vaccine saves people.”

Former Surgeon General Jerome Adams on Dec. 23 was asked by CNN whether it was surprising that Trump was promoting vaccination. (In fact, the only surprise there was that CNN finally heard what Trump has repeatedly said, even in the face of opposition from some of his own supporters.) Adams took it to a higher level: “So, to me, what was most shocking, what was most telling, wasn’t that Donald Trump came out and supported vaccines--it was that it took Joe Biden 11 months to finally do

what he has been known to do for 79 years, and that's to reach out across the aisle. Once he gave President Trump those words of affirmation, you heard President Trump come out and say, 'Thank you, I appreciate that.' And he applauded it. And I hope we see more of that." Adams praised this unique moment as the way to go forward. CNN's John Berman did his best to go backward: But wasn't it "pathetic" that Trump waited so long? Adams countered that it could be called pathetic that Biden waited so long; but the important thing is that such cooperation should happen.

NEW WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER

Argentina Will Join the Belt and Road Initiative in 2022, Foreign Minister Confirms

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)--Speaking Dec. 21 at an event in Buenos Aires, Argentine Foreign Minister Santiago Cafiero confirmed that President Alberto Fernández's government will officially join the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) when he visits Beijing next year, as soon as a date is definitely established. Fernández was officially invited to attend the Winter Olympics in February, but given the pandemic situation and the fact that the local political opposition just sabotaged passage of his 2022 budget, which will affect negotiations with the IMF, it's not clear whether he can or will attend, the newspaper *El Diario* reported Dec. 21. And on Dec. 2, Argentina's ambassador in Beijing Sabino Vaca Narvaja also announced that his government will join the BRI next year, when the two nations will celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations. The BRI will help to create a "more harmonious world," he said, speaking at the 2021 Belt and Road Trade and Investment Forum

Also referencing the 50 years of diplomatic relations, Cafiero emphasized "we want to reinforce that relationship," *El Cronista* reported him saying Dec. 21. He was speaking to a group of journalists at an event organized by the Argentine Center for International Affairs (CARI), to whom he emphasized that the President "has had a commitment for some time to move forward" with the BRI and the government is conducting the

necessary studies to adapt the BRI “to Argentina’s economic and infrastructural needs.” This also involves looking at what new financing might be offered and how it will complement 16 priority projects already discussed with China. Last week Cafiero met with Chinese Ambassador Zou Xiaoli to discuss them. Needless to say, Washington is extremely unhappy about these developments and has pressured Argentina to distance itself from China.

But China is currently Argentina’s second largest trade partner, after Brazil, purchasing 95% of Argentina’s soy exports and 65% of its beef exports. In addition to a number of infrastructure projects, China is also involved in mining projects in lithium and gold, has proposed to build an Antarctic logistics pole in the Patagonian city of Ushuaia, and also Argentina’s fourth nuclear reactor Atucha III. Moreover, Beijing and Buenos Aires have a close working relationship in aerospace. China is also building the giant Nestor Kirchner-Jorge Cepernic hydroelectric project in Santa Cruz. Sputnik news agency on Dec. 23 quoted Sergio Cesarin, a specialist in Asia-Pacific Affairs at the National Tres de Febrero University in Buenos Aires, who confirmed that Argentina already participates in the BRI, through such connectivity projects as Belgrano Cargas railroad that China financed and maintained, which traverses Argentina’s central and northwestern parts, connecting to Bolivia, Brazil and Chile, transporting both grains and mineral products. The fact that China’s private telecom giant Huawei already collaborates with Argentina’s satellite production company Arsat also links the two nations in the BRI, Cesarin points out, although he remarked that the U.S. wanted to squeeze Argentina to cut Huawei out of building its 5G infrastructure; thus far Buenos Aires has made no decision about it.

COLLAPSING WESTERN FINANCIAL SYSTEM

Spot Markets and CO2 Tax Are Driving Europe's Energy Price Inflation

Dec. 24 (EIRNS)—Futures traded at the Title Transfer Facility in the Netherlands drove the price of natural gas per MWh up from just under €17 on Jan. 4, 2021, to more than €100 at last count for delivery at the end of next February. That was a record increase of almost 600%. By way of comparison, the price for a MWh normally has ranged €15-€20 on average, over many years. But a look at the quotations for delivery dates set by futures, for even after the winter heating season, shows that these times for low prices are over for now: With prices of almost even €60 for deliveries at the end of June, natural gas will remain three times as expensive as the long-term average in the summer of 2022. The current price for gas traded for immediate payment for short-term delivery is at €175/MWh, a new all-time high.

A second price driver for automotive fuel is the CO2 tax in Germany, which translated into a net price per liter increase of 7% for gasoline and 8% for diesel, on top of general price increases related to the same spot market pattern as for gas.