

International Briefs

Russia Concerned About U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy and Missile Defenses

In an on-line address Nov. 2 to the Fort Ross Dialogue, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov reported that Russia is concerned about the fact that the U.S. is creating additional ambiguity on the issue of circumstances that permit the use of nuclear weapons. His remarks were covered in TASS:

“We are concerned by the fact that in recent years the U.S. side deliberately introduced additional ambiguity into the issue of what might be the circumstances under which possible use of nuclear weapons would be conceivable. We need more certainty here. On the Russian side, we have now three basic documents of a very recent date that ... give you an explanation in what extremely, extremely hypothetical circumstances the possible use of nuclear weapons could be conceived. We are working towards elevating the nuclear threshold. Hopefully, it would be reflected in the nuclear posture review that is ongoing in the U.S.”

Ryabkov then took aim at the mantra that U.S. weapons systems are for defensive purposes only, saying, “We consistently believe in an inseparable interlink between strategic offensive and strategic defensive capabilities of either side.”

President Biden is reported in the Nov. 6 *Politico* to have tasked the Pentagon’s *Nuclear Posture Review* to consider the adoption of a “no first strike” policy.

Russia Takes on AKK’s Bellicose Remarks about NATO Nuclear Weapons

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has criticized

remarks made by Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Germany’s Defense Minister, at the Oct. 21-22 NATO Council Ministerial in Brussels. Commenting on NATO’s “Concept for Deterrence and Defense in the Euro-Atlantic Area” against Russia, which could include nuclear weapons, cyber warfare, and assaults from space, Kramp-Karrenbauer had earlier approvingly told Deutschlandfunk radio: “This is the way of deterrence.”

Zakharova responded: “The lack of interest in a serious dialogue on de-escalation with Moscow was displayed by German Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer ahead of the NATO meeting. She underscored that NATO must show its readiness to use its armed forces against Russia. We hope that Germany has sensible leaders, capable of holding its minister from the ill-advised desire to test the reliability of our Armed Forces.”

On Oct. 25, Russia’s Defense Ministry summoned the German defense attaché, handing him a note that Kramp-Karrenbauer’s remarks on nuclear deterrence of Russia only provoked further tension in Europe.

Lavrov Decries the Lack of Any Russia-NATO Relations

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was in Norway Oct. 25-26, to meet with officials of the Labor government that took office in Oslo earlier this month and to participate in the Barents and Euro-Arctic Council, which met Oct. 26 in Tromsø. During a brief press conference on Oct. 25, following a meeting with Norway’s Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt, Lavrov said that Russia-Norway bilateral relations are respectful, but

Norway is also a member of NATO “which is no friend of Russia.” NATO, he said, “decided that they don’t want to be friendly; they decided that they don’t want to have the Founding Act between NATO and Russia to be the basis of our relations. They called Russia, and now China, and, actually, Russia and China together, a threat to NATO. NATO is looking for the meaning of its future existence.”

In response to a question in which the reporter characterized Russia-NATO relations as “catastrophic,” Lavrov said, “I wouldn’t say they are catastrophic. To be catastrophic, you need to have some relations. We don’t have any relations with NATO.”

UN Rapporteur Confirms Assange ‘Being Tortured to Death’ in Belmarsh

After the hearing as to whether the extradition of Julian Assange to the U.S. might provoke a mental breakdown, the UN Special Rapporteur Nils Melzer, in an Oct. 31 interview with RT’s “Going Underground,” said that Assange has no psychological problems except as a by-product of the abuse from his isolation at the U.K.’s high-security HM Prison Belmarsh.

“If he should die in prison, he’s effectively been tortured to death. That’s the reality of it. And I’m not exaggerating.” Hence, it is a phony issue to pose the UK as protecting Assange from the possible torture in the U.S. He’s being tortured and he likely would be treated similarly in the U.S.

Meltzer concluded with a stark assessment of Assange’s situation, saying, “Grave medical harm has been caused to him in the last decade, through that constant isolation, defamation and abuse, and the constant

anxiety that he suffers. And he's been isolated *absolutely unnecessarily*, and *therefore unlawfully*. So, he's continuously also arbitrarily detained. It would be a tragedy if he lost his life in those circumstances." [emphasis in original]

Global Espionage Pact Between Amazon and British Agencies

Jeff Bezos' Amazon has reached an agreement with the British Empire's three spy agencies to host classified material collected in the global internet from all countries where these agencies are active, in a specially-created cloud. Amazon Web Services (AWS), the company's cloud computing arm, which controls 30% of the global "cloud sphere," will be used by Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ); the Security Service (MI5); and the foreign intelligence service (MI6), in addition to government departments such as the Ministry of Defense during joint operations.

The deal, estimated to be worth £500 million to £1 billion over the next decade, was signed earlier this year.

Jens Weidmann Resigns as Bundesbank President

On Oct. 20, Jens Weidmann resigned as President of Deutsche Bundesbank, Germany's central bank, and consequently from the board of the European Central Bank, effective Dec. 31. Whereas his official motivations were of a private nature, it is no secret that Weidmann was opposing several features of the ECB monetary policy, including the decision to favor "green" assets in the assets purchase program. The central bank must not make economic policy, Weidmann has insisted in the past.

Apparently, Weidmann does not want to be around when, at the next

ECB board meeting, a decision will be taken on the successor program to the Pandemic Emergency Purchase Program (PEPP), which expires next March and which the ECB said will be replaced by another program. Under the PEPP, the ECB preferentially buys assets consistent with the EU decarbonization scheme.

Five Million Human Beings Have Died of COVID-19

"This is a global shame," UN Secretary General António Guterres stated Nov. 2, referring to the grim fact that the world has now passed the mark of 5 million deaths to date in the COVID pandemic. In its report, AP wrote that "the staggering figure is almost certainly an undercount because of limited testing and people dying at home without medical attention, especially in poor parts of the world, such as India."

Putin Argues for Western Nations to Release Reserves Belonging to Afghanistan

Asked at the Valdai Discussion Club meeting Oct. 21, how Afghanistan can be helped to achieve political stability and economic development, President Vladimir Putin [emphasized](#) that while the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Afghanistan's neighbors will help the country economically, as they planned earlier in the summer, the Western nations that occupied the country for 20 years must take primary responsibility to stabilize the situation. "The first thing they must do is to release Afghan assets, and give Afghanistan an opportunity to resolve high priority socio-economic problems."

In an exchange with Tsinghua Uni-

versity strategist Zhou Bo, Putin went on to note the security problems surrounding ISIS and Afghanistan's drug trade, and how that affects regional stability, concluding:

"[W]e will actively continue this work with China on a bilateral plane, develop dialogue with relevant structures and promote cooperation within the SCO as a whole. In the process, we will allocate the required resources and create all the conditions to let our citizens feel safe regardless of what is happening in Afghanistan."

Bloomberg Exposes Vile Russian Plot ... To Lower Gas Prices in Europe by 60%

In the Alice-in-Wonderland world of the disintegrating British Empire, the Russian government's efforts to *lower* the price of natural gas in Europe, by refusing to dump more gas on the spot market and instead insisting on long-term fixed supply contracts, has been transformed into Putin's latest crime against humanity.

Bloomberg ran an Oct. 26 wire to "expose" this heinous Russian plot with the following headline: "Russia Wants Gas Price 60% Lower To Keep Energy Grip on Europe."

In it, Bloomberg cites "two officials with knowledge of the country's energy policy" to explain that "Russia wants prices in Europe to be about \$300-\$400 per thousand cubic meters, the sweet spot that would help Gazprom keep its grip on the continent's market, even as nations from the UK to Poland transition to cleaner energy sources, one official said.... That stands in sharp contrast to current benchmark prices in Europe, which have repeatedly surged to record levels in recent weeks amid an energy crunch"—not to mention speculation on the spot market.