
International Briefs

Lavrov Calls for Five-Power UN Security Council Summit

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov repeated Russian President Vladimir Putin's call for a summit of the permanent five members of the UN Security Council, during a wide-ranging [lecture](#) at the Far Eastern Federal University on July 8, where he spoke on U.S.-Russian relations:

"At least, China and France stand strong with our idea to hold this summit" of the leaders of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. "The new administration in the White House has yet to respond to our reminder. They are in the process of considering it. I think Great Britain, as always, is waiting for the U.S. response. We are used to this, it's business as usual."

At the lecture, Lavrov also addressed other issues such as strategic stability with the United States, Russia's proposal for a dialogue on cybersecurity, NATO provocations, and the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Snowden on Pegasus: Ban the Spyware Trade

On July 19, the whistleblower the NSA fears most, Edward Snowden, called for the banning, across the globe, of the "international spyware trade—a business that should not exist." In an interview with Britain's *Guardian*, Snowden was framing the revelations of a long investigation by journalists of the worldwide hacking of personal phones for hire, by the Israel-based cyberwar company, NSO Group Tech-

nologies, which hacks into the phones for which its clients have requested surveillance, embedding spyware in them. The investigation into NSO Group is known as the "Pegasus Project," after the NSO spyware Pegasus.

Said Snowden: "It's like an industry where the only thing they did was create custom variants of Covid to dodge vaccines. Their only products are infection vectors. They're not security products. They're not providing any kind of protection, any kind of prophylactic. They don't make vaccines—the only thing they sell is the virus.... There are certain industries, certain sectors, from which there is no protection, and that's why we try to limit the proliferation of these technologies. We don't allow a commercial market in nuclear weapons."

G20: No Agreement on Climate Goals in Communiqué

On July 23, Italy's Ecological Transition Minister Roberto Cingolani said that the energy and environment ministers from the G20 nations have failed to agree on the wording of key climate change commitments in their final communiqué. Prince Charles and his mother will likely be upset, given that the G20 meeting in Naples was seen as a decisive step on the way to COP26 in Glasgow this November. Cingolani said that the disputed issues among the G20 ministers would have to wait until the next energy summit in Rome in October.

Cingolani had said the week earlier to reporters that the G20 is split on climate policies and "it will be difficult to reach an agreement" at the

G20 Energy meeting. He also said that he is in favor of "climate protection" policies, but warned that the net zero "transition must have a specific timing. If we are too slow, we will fail as *homo sapiens*, but if we are too fast, we will fail as a society.... We must face global inequalities, which do not make transition easy at the global level."

Drugs Expert Arlacchi to EIR: Resume My Plan To Eradicate Afghan Drugs

Former UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Executive Director, Giuseppe "Pino" Arlacchi (1997-2002), told *EIR* that with the help of China, Afghanistan today could get rid of opium plantations by implementing the plan he suggested to the European Union in 2010. Arlacchi had worked with the Taliban in the years before the U.S./NATO invasion in 2001 to successfully reduce opium production by more than 90%. Production again exploded following the foreign occupation.

Today, the 2010 plan can be resumed, Arlacchi told *EIR*, as Afghanistan has far more resources now than it did in the past. He observed the positive opening of the Taliban to China for reconstruction of the country, adding that Beijing can be an element in re-launching the plan, which would take five years for eradication and five more years for consolidation.

In 2010 Arlacchi, who had been elected to the European Parliament, proposed to create "an Afghan agency with European technical assistance," an idea to which Afghanistan's Hamid Karzai government subscribed. The agency, to be financed at \$100,000 per

year, could eradicate opium cultures over five years through alternative development programs for farmers.

The European Parliament rejected the plan.

Arlacchi had also brought Russia on board. He drafted a plan with Russia's then director of the Federal Drug Control Service, Viktor Ivanov, with Moscow ready to co-finance the proposal, but the EU rejected it.

UN's Guterres: 11 Billion Doses of Vaccine Needed To Defeat the Pandemic

Speaking to the UN's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on July 13, Secretary-General António Guterres stated succinctly:

"First, everyone, everywhere, must have access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests, treatments and support.... Pledges of doses and funds are welcome—but they are not enough. We need at least 11 billion doses to vaccinate 70% of the world and end this pandemic."

"The world needs a Global Vaccination Plan to at least double the production of vaccines, ensure equitable distribution through COVAX, coordinate implementation and financing, and support national immunization programs. To realize this plan, I have been calling for an Emergency Task Force that brings together the countries that produce and can produce vaccines, the World Health Organization, the ACT-Accelerator partners, and international financial institutions, able to deal with the relevant pharmaceutical companies and manufacturers, and other key stakeholders."

Foreign Secretary: UK Intends More Provocations Against Russia and China

The British are determined to continue the behavior that led to the June

23 incident in the Black Sea involving the *HMS Defender's* provocative entry into Russian territorial waters. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab promised July 6 that there will be more such provocations not just against Russia, but also against China, since the aircraft carrier *HMS Queen Elizabeth* will be sailing on to the South China Sea after it's done with Russia and Syria. He told the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee that he has warned Chinese leaders to expect a Navy flotilla in the disputed South China Sea, reported the *Mirror* tabloid: "It's absolutely right we exercise and defend the rights, and we do so from the Ukrainian territorial sea to the South China Sea."

Quizzed about the June 23 incident by MPs, Raab said: "*HMS Defender* was taking the shortest and most direct route, it's an internationally recognized traffic route."

As for *HMS Queen Elizabeth's* strike group's upcoming jaunt through the South China Sea, Raab said: "It's going to be an exceptional opportunity for us to showcase our defense capabilities, but also the wider aspects of 'Global Britain.'"

British GCHQ's NCSC Takes Credit for Fraud that China Hacked Microsoft

The U.K. has revealed that "Chinese state-backed actors were responsible for gaining access to computer networks around the world via Microsoft Exchange Servers," the U.K.'s National Cyber Security Center (NCSC) announced in a press statement July 19. The aim of this alleged "most significant and widespread cyber intrusion against the U.K. and allies uncovered to date," the NCSC asserted, was "to enable large-scale espionage" by the Chinese state.

The hacking of Microsoft's business servers was detected last March. Then, on July 19, the great outcry became that China has been "proven" to have been behind the hacking. How timely. President Biden has been seeking a meeting with President Xi Jinping, and last week, a State Department spokesman named Afghanistan as one of the few areas where the U.S. and China can cooperate.

U.K. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken issued parallel statements—Blinken's pontificating that China's "pattern of irresponsible, disruptive, and destabilizing behavior in cyberspace ... poses a major threat to our economic and national security;" Raab's promising that the "Chinese government must end this systematic cyber sabotage and can expect to be held to account if it does not."

China BRI Investment Continues to Increase, Prioritizing Asia

Rumors of the demise of China's Belt and Road Initiative (increasingly circulating in Western media during the pandemic) are indeed premature. Figures from China's Ministry of Commerce reveal that BRI financing by China increased 13.8% in the first five months of 2021, primarily in Asian countries.

As reported in the *Silk Road Briefing* on July 12, in an article by Dezan Shira & Associates founder, British shipping magnate Chris Devonshire-Ellis, in the first five months of 2021, China's investment into BRI countries expanded 13.8% when compared to the same period last year, to a total of \$7.43 billion. That accounted for 17.2% of China's total foreign investment, which rose 2.6%, to \$43.29 billion during the same period.