

International Briefs

Berlusconi Promotes Vatican Peace Effort

In a Jan 25 interview with *Corriere della Sera*, former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said that while his solidarity with the West and NATO cannot be questioned, he is distressed that “nobody but the Pope and the Holy See seem to have solutions leading to a peaceful resolution of the conflict,” for which the entire world is paying with an intolerable number of “lives, suffering, and economic damage.” Berlusconi is currently leader of *Forza Italia* party, one of the three coalition partners backing the Meloni government.

Covering his statements, *RT* [wrote](#) that the Vatican—

“has on numerous occasions called for a peaceful end to the fighting and has expressed readiness to facilitate negotiations between Moscow and Kiev. Last year, Pope Francis called on President Vladimir Putin to stop Russia’s military operation in Ukraine, and urged his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, to be ‘open to serious proposals for peace.’”

On Jan. 18, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, as reported by the Italian news agency ANSA, spontaneously referred to Berlusconi in a press conference, saying, that Berlusconi had made a contribution to “building relations” between Russia and NATO: As Prime Minister, Berlusconi “started the summit in *Pratica di Mare* in 2002,” which gave birth to the NATO-Russia Council.

U.S. Rep. Gosar Condemns Biden’s War Escalation

U.S. Representative Paul Gosar (R-AZ) issued the following statement Jan. 26 “in response to the Biden ad-

ministration’s decision to escalate our involvement in a war with Russia and send 31 M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine”:

“Joe Biden’s decision to send American tanks to Ukraine brings us one step closer to dragging America directly into a massive, global war. This is a dangerous and reckless escalation matched by a historic escalation by Germany, which has now violated its post-World War II policy of non-intervention.

“Not too long ago, Biden stated that ‘the idea that we’re going to send in offensive equipment and have planes and tanks and trains with American pilots and American crews just underscores that no matter what you say, that is called World War III.’

“By his own admission and, with this latest decision, by his very actions, World War III is more and more possible each passing day, thanks to Joe Biden.

“America should not send any tanks to Ukraine, or any war material at all, or help to prolong a needless war and adding to the body count. We need peace between Ukraine and Russia, not more American equipment and tanks. This war needs to be resolved and America should be a peace maker, not a war monger.

“We just ended a 20-year war with Afghanistan and suffered another stunning and humiliating loss there. Biden’s war-making ability is negligible and his silly war-mongering endangers millions of Ukrainians, Russians, and now potentially other Europeans and Americans.”

Xi Jinping Sees CELAC as Driver of South-South Cooperation

In a video address to the Seventh Heads of State summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Jan. 24, Chinese Pres-

ident Xi Jinping praised CELAC as a “driving force” behind global South-South cooperation, underscoring its role in “safeguarding regional peace, promoting common development and advancing regional integration.” He praised Argentina’s leadership over the past year in CELAC’s rotating chair in advancing this agenda.

In contrast to the proponents of Global NATO, who see the world as competing geopolitical blocs which share no common interests, Xi emphasized that the only way to face this period of “turbulence and transformations” into which the world is entering, is by strengthening unity and cooperation. It will take creating a “common front [to face] challenges and together overcome conjunctural difficulties,” he said.

He also underscored that China values CELAC as a “key partner” in enhancing solidarity among developing nations, and will take the China-LAC relationship “into a new era characterized by equality, mutual benefit, innovation, openness, and benefits for the people.”

The Chinese leader pointed out that more and more countries have engaged in “high-quality Belt and Road cooperation with China,” and have supported and participated in the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative to help build a China-LAC community “with a shared future.” China will work with LAC countries for “the common values of mankind.” The official transcription of Xi’s address is available on China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs [website](#).

As is made clear in the U.S. Department of State’s Jan. 23 [announcement](#) that former Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT) would be attending the CELAC summit as President Joe Biden’s Spe-

cial Representative for the Americas, the State Department is unhappy with CELAC's growing prominence as a regional organization and with China's role in it. The statement carped that—

“Consistent with the Biden-Harris Administration's engagement with relevant regional mechanisms ... the U.S. government reaffirms the value of strengthening regional collaboration through the Organization of American States, the premier multilateral forum in the Western Hemisphere.”

It failed to mention that the OAS has been entirely discredited as an entity capable of honestly representing regional interests. For that reason, Argentina didn't bother to invite the OAS to attend the CELAC summit. OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro is widely considered to be an agent of the United States.

Japan's Fukuda Opposes Kishida's Military Buildup

In an article focused on polling results which claim to show that 80-90% of Japan's people support the buildup of the military, as announced Dec. 16 by Prime Minister Kishida Fumio, due to fear of China and Russia, and due to a desire for closer ties to the U.S. military alliance, Japan's *Nikkei* daily nonetheless admits that the opposition parties oppose the buildup. It notes:

“One of the lone voices openly protesting the expansion is former Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo, a retired member of the ruling LDP, who says the path is a mistake. Fukuda calls for a deeper understanding of China's intentions and boosting efforts to defuse tensions. ‘Can Japan win in a war against China? Nobody would say that we can,’ Fukuda says. ‘Some say the U.S. will help us, but there must be limitations. Japan-U.S. relations are important, but we must avoid a

situation where we fight other countries because we have that alliance’.”

Fukuda served as prime minister briefly in 2007-8, but served in other leadership positions before and after. In 2014, he visited Beijing for secret meetings with Chinese government officials. This led eventually to a summit between Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Abe Shinzo.

Erdoğan to Sweden: Don't Expect NATO Entry, after Anti-Muslim Protests

Sweden might as well give up its ambition to join NATO. That was Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's message in response to a *Quran*-burning in Stockholm Jan. 21. As reported by *Anadolu*, after a Cabinet meeting in Ankara, Erdoğan said:

“Those who caused such a disgrace in front of our embassy should not expect any benevolence from us on their NATO membership applications. If you do not show respect to the religious beliefs of the Republic of Türkiye or Muslims, you will not receive any support for NATO [membership] from us.”

Erdoğan stressed his view that no individual has the freedom to insult the faith of Muslims or other religions and beliefs:

“The heinous action in Sweden is an insult to everyone who respects the fundamental rights and freedoms of people, especially Muslims.”

The *Quran*-burning, led by a right-wing Danish politician, came about a week after Erdoğan himself had been burned in effigy in a pro-PKK protest also outside the Turkish embassy in Stockholm. Again, Erdoğan:

“We've said from the beginning, you have terrorist groups roam your streets, and everywhere, and then you

expect us to support you in joining NATO. There's no such thing. Don't expect such support from us. If they love the members of the terrorist organization and the enemies of Islam that much, we advise them to delegate their country's defense to them.”

German Minister: ‘We Are Fighting a War Against Russia’

The Council of Europe, founded in Strasbourg, France in 1949, calls itself Europe's leading “human rights” organization, comprising 46 member states, including the European Union. The organization included Russia until March 2022, when it neglected human rights, and kicked the Russian Federation out. The Council of Europe is not part of the EU.

Speaking at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg, France Jan. 24, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock bluntly [stated](#) the truth about the West's intention in Ukraine:

“The most important, crucial part [of defending Ukraine] is that we do it together, and that we do not do the ‘blame game’ in Europe. We must not have a ‘blame game’ in Europe, because we are fighting a war against Russia, and not against each other.”

Just last week the *New York Times* had this to say about Russia's frequent statements that the West is waging a “proxy war” against it:

“The Kremlin's propaganda machinery has been working full time churning out false narratives about a heroic Russian struggle against forces of fascism and debauchery, in which the Western arms are but more proof that Ukraine is a proxy war by the West.”

Sounds like the NATO coalition needs to get its story straight.