

# Voltaire

**International Newsletter**

N°22 - January 6, 2023

## **The majority of the UN General Assembly switches to the Russian-Chinese side**

Since the end of the Cold War US hegemony has been increasingly challenged by a growing number of countries advocating a world stabilized by international law instead of one governed by Western rules. The confrontation in Ukraine has only accelerated this trend.

No one said anything when NATO attacked Serbia without Security Council approval. Nobody protested when, going even further, the US and the UK lied to the UN Security Council to justify their aggressions against Afghanistan, against Iraq and against Libya. However, since Russia came to the rescue of the Syrian people in 2015 and now to the people of Novorossiya in application of UN resolution 2202, things are starting to change.

Westerners are currently trying to exclude Russia from all intergovernmental organizations. They have already achieved this at the Council of Europe and thought they would also succeed at the United Nations like they did in 1939 when they excluded the USSR from the League of Nations. In order to do this, they must first modify the UN Charter which seemed like child's play just three months ago. On October 13th, 143 states condemned Russia's "invasion" of Ukraine and only 35 welcomed its application of resolution 2202.

However, on December 30th 2022, the majority changed sides.

They were 87 States to vote in favor of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the internal court of the UN, declaring illegal the occupation of the Palestinian Territories, against 26 for whom the world governed by Western rules must accommodate 75 years of non-Law.

## **AMERICA**

### **US sabotage in Russia have been prepared since 2017**

According to [Jack Murphy](#), sabotage operations in Russia and Belarus were preemptively authorized by President Barack Obama just before the end of his mandate. They are coordinated by officers of

the Special Activities Center of the CIA delegated to the European Mission Center of the CIA. On the ground, they are never carried out by US citizens.

For several years, non-US CIA agents set up various sites of the Russian and Belarusian military-industrial complex. They only took action the day after the Russian intervention in Ukraine causing heavy damage.

### **What the Twitter Files Reveal**

In the latest installment of the [Twitter Files](#), put together by its CEO Elon Musk, we learn that not only did the FBI ask Twitter to censor information about the Hunter Biden case, but it also paid \$3.5 million for it. The CIA participated in meetings to select what should be censored. This behavior of intelligence agencies against US citizens has been unparalleled since the years 1953-54, the era of McCarthyism's "witch hunt". Shares of Elon Musk's companies keep falling on the stock market, some of his investors making him pay for his political commitment to freedom of speech.

### **Eric Schmidt subsidizes the FAS and pays civil servants salaries up to the White House**

According to [Politico](#), two dozen researchers from the prestigious and pacifist Federation of American Scientists (FAS) are employed by the Biden administration in the White House Council of Economic Advisers, White House Environmental Council, Department of Energy, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Trade Commission. They are not paid by the Biden administration but by billionaire Eric Schmidt. Former president of Google then of Alphabet, Eric Schmidt is the 54th richest man in the world according to [Bloomberg](#). He's a big advocate for federal government investment in technology.

He is notably a member of the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg Club.

### **In general, boosters of "RNA vaccines" weaken patients**

According to Dr. Robert Malone, inventor of the messenger RNA processes used by Pfizer and Moderna laboratories, people who have received several shots of anti-Covid "vaccines" are more likely to be contaminated again and to die than those who received only one injection. [The Epoch Times](#) verified this apparent paradox in 17 of the 18 states where statistics are available.

### **The latest speculation from the Rand Corporation**

The Rand Corporation, the historical think tank of the US military-industrial complex has published a short forecast study : [Responding to a Limited Russian Attack on NATO During the Ukrainian War](#).

The Rand Corp. envisions that Moscow could strike targets in Europe such as the US base at Ramstein (Germany), but never that it would bomb the Foreign Office in London and the Pentagon in Washington as the former Russian ambassador to NATO suggested.

### **Searching for new pieces from the Hunter Biden case**

Kevin D. Evans, a Colorado lawyer specializing in the transmission of official documents has filed a lawsuit in March against the Department of Justice to compel it to reveal 400 documents it has on the financial affairs of Hunter Biden and his professional connections in Russia, Ukraine and China.

Inspired by the Swedish example, The *Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA) requires federal agencies to release their documents.

### **Ron DeSantis against wokism**

Florida Governor [Ron DeSantis](#), dedicated his new year address to defend freedom and stand

against the “woke” ideology that has taken hold in cities and states across the country. “We seek normality, not philosophical madness (...) We will not allow reality, facts and truth to become optional (...) Florida is where Wokism is going to die,” he said.

DeSantis is assumed to take the head of the Republican Party.

### **The cement manufacturer Lafarge prosecuted in civil proceedings for the same facts negotiated in criminal proceedings**

Two families of French Marines and one of US Marines who died respectively in Syria, Iraq and Libya, have filed a complaint against Lafarge-Holcim for complicity with Al-Qaeda (Al-Nusra Front) and Daesh.

In 2022 Lafarge pleaded guilty and paid \$778 million to the United States Justice Department for the criminal part, although its links with the CIA are known. This time it is about civil damages. The US proceedings are distinct from the proceedings in other countries, such as in France where the Court of Cassation has ruled that [Lafarge](#)'s participation in the actions of the secret services (DGSE) does not exonerate it of prosecution for complicity in acts of terrorism. [Holcim](#), which had merged with Lafarge in 2015 immediately announced that it was separating from its cumbersome ally.

### **Bolivian Oustachis prosecuted over 2019 Bolivian coup**

Governor of Santa Cruz and leader of the opposition Luis Fernando Camacho was jailed for his participation in the 2019 coup.

Mr. Camacho whose slogan is “Bolivia belongs to Christ !” is the former president of the Santa Cruz Youth Union, an organization of Croatian immigrants linked to the Croatian Christian Democratic Party (HDZ) of Franjo Tuđman. He is a successor of the fascist and anti-Semitic

[Oustachis](#) who made an alliance with the Nazis before taking refuge in Latin America with the help of the Anglo-Saxons. His group is known for its raids against Aymara Native Americans. He played a central role in the riots that resulted in the flight of re-elected President Evo Morales and the seizure of power by President Jeanine Añez. At the time, the international media reported that the elections were rigged and that the Bolivian people had got the better of the dictator. However, what followed showed that this was not the case, which was confirmed by an [MIT study](#).

For its part, Declassified UK showed with supporting documents that Boris Johnson's United Kingdom helped the plotters in order to obtain Bolivian lithium operating licenses. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-03-08-revealed-the-uk-supported-the-coup-in-bolivia-to-gain-access-to-its-white-gold/> President Jeanine Añez has already been arrested and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

### **Colombia reconnects with Venezuela**

New Colombian President Gustavo Petro and his Venezuelan counterpart Nicolás Maduro have opened the bridge connecting the Colombian state of Norte de Santander to Tachira. It was completed in 2016 but never opened due to President Ivan Duque's opposition to his Venezuelan counterpart.

### **Venezuela set to turn the Juan Guaidó page**

The Venezuelan opposition seeks to get rid of the shadow government of Juan Guaidó. In the end it was only recognized by around fifty states, all linked to Washington. It is now tainted with an aura of corruption and has not achieved any results. A poll estimates that 57% of Venezuelans are calling for its dissolution and only 6% for its support in the country.

President Nicolás Maduro said in an interview on January 1st that his country was "totally

ready" to normalize relations with the United States.

## **EUROPE**

### **UK to declare Iranian Revolutionary Guards 'terrorists'**

Director of MI5 General [Ken McCallum](#) makes no secret that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards are planning operations in the UK both against Iranian nationals and against British nationals. He pleads for this organization to be declared "terrorist". Iran has a long tradition of assassinating its political opponents abroad, long before the Islamic Republic. London has not always been so fussy when supporting Tehran. For example, during the assassination of the revolutionary sociologist 'Alî Shari'atî by the Savak of Shah Reza Pahlevi in Southampton, in 1977. Shari'atî was a friend of Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon.

### **The Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI**

Former Pope Benedict XVI has died. His dark side is in the way he fought against Liberation theologians in Latin America or suppressed homosexuality when he was the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. However, this great intellectual advanced Catholic theology by denouncing the modern sins of accumulating excessive wealth, taking drugs or dealing drugs, environmental pollution, genetic manipulation, experiments on human beings, causing social injustice or poverty, abortion and pedophilia.

The controversy opened by his remarks in Ratisbonne (2006) on the Muslim conception of Transcendence ultimately made it possible to establish a permanent dialogue between Christianity and Islam. He chose to "give up" his office (and not to "resign" or "abdicate"), not for health reasons as his biographers claim but because he refused to give in to blackmail against him.

### **The CIA censored the internet to protect Emmanuel Macron**

Documents from the *Twitter Files* show that the CIA interfered with Twitter, Yahoo, Twitch, Cloudflare, LinkedIn and Wikimedia to censor alleged "Russian disinformation" denigrating President Emmanuel Macron during his re-election campaign in 2022.

### **François Hollande confirms that the Minsk Agreements were only a Western maneuver**

In an exclusive [Kyiv Independent](#) interview, former French president François Hollande confirms the words of former chancellor Angela Merkel to [Die Zeit](#).

To the question "Do you also think that the Minsk negotiations were aimed at delaying Russian advances in Ukraine?" "Yes, Angela Merkel is right on this point". As for former President Petro Poroshenko, he publicly declared as soon as the agreements were signed that he would never apply them. Only the fourth signatory Vladimir Putin believed in the good faith of his partners. However, the fact that he proposed to the United Nations Security Council and had adopted resolution 2202 endorsing these agreements shows that he no longer believed Westerners and was beginning to prepare for the current intervention. This resolution gives him the right, as guarantor of the Minsk agreements, to intervene by virtue of its "responsibility to protect".

### **Belgium and Luxembourg release the assets of Western companies that worked in Russia**

Belgium and Luxembourg, home to the clearing houses Euroclear and Clearstream have authorized them to return to 5 million investors the funds that had been frozen in the name of "sanctions" against Russia. Among the aggrieved customers were Western companies working in

Russia such as Amazon or Netflix. The lifting of these sanctions by these two States has enabled certain Russian customers to recover their assets. It only applies to operations that began before the announcement of the “sanctions”.

### **Poland forms an alliance with Italy against the Franco-German project of European federalism**

In an interview with [La Stampa](#), Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki announces that he is uniting with the government of Giorgia Meloni against the Franco-German project for a supranational European Union. For him : “The EU was created so that individual states could develop to the best of their ability, some faster than others, but always taking into account their economic conditions (...) We have the choice between a true solidarity of equal states or the model of a single superstate in which the cards will ultimately be dealt in some of the largest capitals, to the exclusion of other countries”.

### **Poland orders observation satellites from France**

Poland has ordered two *Pléiades Neo* satellites and an image processing station from [France](#) for a total value of €575 million. Each satellite can photograph 500,000 km<sup>2</sup> daily. The images thus taken have a resolution of 30 cm.

### **Poland withdraws its protest against Ukrainian Integral nationalists**

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki posted a tweet on January 1st protesting Ukrainian authorities' celebrations of the 114th birthday of criminal against humanity Stepan Bandera ; ceremonies he described as "unacceptable".

However, he took down this tweet the next day. Born on January 1, 1909, Stepan Bandera is considered the father of Ukraine by integral nationalists. He organized the massacre of

millions of Ukrainians before and during World War II.

### **Hungary calls for the dissolution of the European Parliament**

At his annual press conference on December 21, Hungarian Prime Minister [Viktor Orbán](#) declared : “The Hungarians would like the European Parliament to be dissolved in its current form (...) And [the European partners] obviously know our political position : the swamp must be drained”. Brussels refuses to pay Budapest €6.3 billion under the 2021-2027 European budget and €5.8 billion under the post-Covid recovery plan i.e., a total of €18.1 billion.

### **The EU releases seized Russian fertilizers**

After eight months of blockage the EU has revised its economic warfare measures against Russia, known as “sanctions”, in order to authorize the transfer of Russian fertilizers to Africa. Until now, the laws adopted on April 8 (known as the “5th series of sanctions”) prohibited the import of Russian fertilizers into the Union. This also applied to European vessels transporting fertilizer to non-European destinations and to European insurance companies guaranteeing these transports whatever their carrier and destination. Russia had announced that it was giving the 260,000 tons of fertilizer blocked in European Union ports to African states which would pay for the transport, but Western sanctions prevented these ships from leaving European ports and these states from paying Russian ships.

[The Financial Times](#) had denounced this Kafkaesque situation. Assuming that the weather conditions are average in 2023, the eight months of blockage of Russian fertilizers by the EU should cause a drop of around 20% in world grain production. This will itself cause famines in 2024.

## **Corruption in the European Parliament : the Sakharov Prize in question**

According to *Le Soir* from Bruxelles the Belgian investigators have just open a new lead in the case of corruption in the European Parliament : the Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought. It appears that following secret payments to deputies of the Foreign Affairs Committee in 2021, the candidacies of Saharawi Sultana Khaya and Bolivian Jeanine Añez have been rejected in favor of Russian Alexei Navalny's. While it is clear that Morocco defeated Sultana Khaya, we do not know who ousted Jeanine Añez.

In the midst of the civil war, in 2022, when Russia intervened militarily to enforce United Nations Security Council resolution 2202, the Sakharov Prize was awarded to the "Ukrainian people" as a whole.

## **Very high tension between Serbia and Kosovo**

The situation between Serbia and Kosovo is close to war. Many Kosovar civil servants have resigned in protest at their government's decision to force fellow ethnic Serbs to stop registering their vehicles in Serbia.

President Aleksandar Vucic ordered his defense minister General Milan Mojsilović to make the Serbian army combat ready. Ultimately, the situation seems to have relaxed a little and the barriers between the two countries have been lifted, but the Serbs of Kosovo have established a plan with those of Serbia. In the event of a new problem with Pristina, they will cut off all communications with Kosovo. Kosovo declared its independence, without a referendum, during NATO's victory over Serbia. It has been recognized by the US and the EU, but not by the United Nations. In its early years, Kosovo as a whole was just a US military base.

## **Ukrainian army integrates Turkish-speaking mercenaries from Asia**

The Kyiv authorities have integrated a new Muslim battalion into their army called "Turan". It is made up of former mercenaries from Central Asia who participated in the civil war in Donbass in 2014 under the command of Kyrgyz Almaz Kudabek uulu. Probably to embarrass Türkiye, the Ukrainian media underline the presence of members of the Turkish Gray Wolves among them.

## **President Zelensky appoints sex therapist as ambassador**

President Volodymyr Zelensky has appointed a person with no diplomatic nor governmental experience, his friend sexologist Olesya Ilashchuk as ambassador to Bulgaria. This character, founder of the jeweler Jemma, presents herself as a specialist in hypnosis. The Jemma company is owned by billionaire Ivan Rynzhuk. Police seized \$650,000 in cash there as part of a money laundering investigation.

## **The Alliance between Ukrainian "integral nationalists" and Israeli "revisionist Zionists" does not work**

During the vote by the General Assembly of the United Nations to request the ICJ to rule whether or not the West Bank is occupied by Israel, the new Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu phoned President Volodymyr Zelensky to call for help. The latter confirmed to him that he would support him if Tel-Aviv broke with Naftali Bennett's policy and finally delivered arms to Ukraine. Mr. Netanyahu replied that Israel could not upset Russia without losing the possibility of bombing Iranian positions in Syria, but that he would see what he could do. Ultimately Ukraine did not participate in the vote.

## **Ukraine prepares a "peace summit" against Russia**

Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba is preparing a peace summit on February 24, 2023, the anniversary of the entry of the Russian army into his country. He said Russia could not participate until it was brought before an international tribunal for its crimes. He multiplies the steps so that Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres is present and that the question of the exclusion of the Russian Federation from the United Nations is publicly debated.

## **Russia develops its gas fields**

President Vladimir Putin has launched the drilling of the Kovykta gas field (eastern Siberia). It will supply the *Power of Siberia* gas pipeline to China. Its capacity is 1,800 billion cubic meters.

The next day, Rosneft announced the discovery of a large hydrocarbon deposit during geological prospecting work carried out in the Republic of Sakha. It includes more than 9.5 billion cubic meters of gas and more than 1.5 million tons of oil.

## **The political instability of the Western hydrocarbon market suggests a very serious energy crisis to come**

According to Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak the Western policy of energy "sanctions" is leading multinationals in the energy sector to stop investing and to redistribute their profits as dividends. Therefore, the shortage of investment from them will be felt in 5-10 years, causing a deep crisis in the West.

## **Sergei Lavrov's point of view**

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov gave an interview to [Tass press agency](#). He specifies that Moscow does not want to reconnect with the EU given the way it has behaved. "Of course, there will be no more

'business as usual' with such actors. We have no intention of knocking on a closed door or initiating joint projects. Thank God the EU is not the center of the universe for us. We have many political friends in other parts of the world. If, or when Europe wakes up from the current Russophobia rage and starts sobering up, and there are nationally oriented politicians who understand the benefits of an equal and mutually beneficial partnership with Russia, I assure you there will be no problem on our part" he said. Also in the same interview, Mr. Lavrov commented on the Pentagon plan mentioned by [Newsweek](#).

"Some 'anonymous officials' at the Pentagon have in fact threatened to inflict a "decapitation blow" on the Kremlin, but it is in fact a threat of physical elimination of the Russian head of state. If such ideas are actually hatched by someone, that person should think very carefully about the possible consequences of such plans. "As for the duration of the conflict," Mr. Lavrov also said, "the ball is in the court of the regime and of Washington. They can stop senseless resistance at any time. The enemy is well aware of our proposals on the demilitarization and denazification of the territories controlled by the regime, the elimination of threats to the security of Russia emanating from them, including our new territories - the regions of the DPR, the LPR, Kherson and Zaporizhia. It remains only to implement them of one's own free will. Otherwise, this problem will be solved by the Russian army."

Contrary to a common idea, the defeat of the Azov battalion did not solve the "Nazi" problem, since integral nationalists remain in control of the main levers of the State and that monuments, stadiums and streets still bear the names of Banderist war criminals.

## **Russia withdraws from all its commitments with the Council of Europe**

Russia which is no longer part of the Council of Europe should also withdraw from the treaties and agreements signed with this institution. This is already the case for the international cooperation group on drugs and addiction ; the partial agreement of 1990 establishing the European Commission for Democracy through Law (known as the "Venice Commission") ; the partial open agreement on forecasting, prevention and assistance in the event of natural disasters and technological disasters. This will soon also be the case for the European Support Fund for the co-production and distribution of cinematographic and audiovisual works ; for the European Audiovisual Observatory ; for the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport by the Council of Europe ; for the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes and for the Observatory for History Teaching in Europe.

## **President Putin bans oil sales to EU and Australia**

President [Vladimir Putin](#) issued a decree prohibiting the export of petroleum and petroleum products to countries applying price caps. Currently only the European Union and Australia cap the price of Russian oil at \$60 per barrel. This decree will come in force from February 1 to June 30, 2023. Derogations may be authorized on a case-by-case basis.

## **Rings to symbolize the CEI**

At the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) summit, President Vladimir Putin presented a gold ring with New Year's wishes engraved on it. On this occasion, he acknowledged that some differences existed between the participants, but that all washed their dirty linen in private. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko immediately put his ring on.

## **Tatarstan fully integrates into the Russian Federation**

The Parliament of the Republic of Tatarstan has decided to change the title of its leader starting from its next election. He will no longer be "president", but "raïs" as in Arab countries. Tatarstan joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in December 1991, but refused to sign the March 1992 Treaty which was to regulate ties within the Russian Federation and instead voted by referendum of 62 % its sovereignty. In the end, Tatarstan had negotiated greater autonomy than the other regions, giving rise to a separate Treaty in 1994. This was not renewed in 2017. The abandonment of the title of "president" puts Tatarstan in phase with the other regions of the Russian Federation which have ceased to elect their leader directly. Now they are elected by their local Parliament on the proposal of the Federal President.

## **Sabotage in shipyards**

Sabotage occurred during the repair of the only Russian aircraft carrier, *Admiral Kuznetsov*. A fire broke out while she was in drydock.

## **Russian Navy world champion in nuclear submarines**

The Russian Navy received a nuclear-powered submarine, *Generalissimo Suworov*. This is the 6th submarine of the Boreï-A class, without equivalent in the world. These submarines are equipped with 20 *Bulava* strategic ballistic missiles, each one carrying 6-10 warheads which can be conventionally or nuclear loaded with 100-150 kilotons each.

## **AFRICA**

### **Algeria recovers \$20 billion embezzled by the clan of Saïd Bouteflika**

President Abdelmadjid Tebboune revealed during his end-of-year speech that he had

recovered \$20 billion in property from corrupt personalities of the occult regime of former president Saïd Bouteflika. Faced with the skepticism of his constituents, Minister of Justice Abderrachid Tabi released 1,400-page catalog listing 4,200 properties and 6,000 bank accounts that the authorities claim to have seized. The report also includes 2 planes as well as several yachts, more than 11,000 vehicles plus jewelry, luxury watches and cash.

However, the Algerian authorities are still in negotiations with the courts of friendly countries to seize property that has fled abroad.

### **Algeria bows to US pressure**

President Abdelmadjid Tebboune told French newspaper [Le Figaro](#) about the Russian private military company Wagner in Mali : "The money that this presence costs would be better placed and more useful if it went to the development of the Sahel". His trip to Moscow was immediately canceled. Algeria's 2023 budget shows a 20% drop in funds allocated to the armies due to the suspension of US aid.

### **Clashes in South Sudan**

Clashes between the Nuer and Murle tribes left at least 57 people dead in the Greater Pibor region. 30,000 people have been displaced. This incident follows one that took place in Upper Nile State in mid-November.

According to the United Nations, 9.4 million of South Sudan's most vulnerable people will need urgent life-saving assistance and protection in 2023.

### **Foreign editions**

*Voltaire, international news* is now published in six languages :

- [Dutch](#),
- [English](#),
- [French](#),
- [Italian](#),
- [German](#),
- [Spanish](#).

### **ASIA**

#### **Benjamin Netanyahu's commitments**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has publicly made the following commitments with his allies :

Remove clause 7a from the Basic Law prohibiting overtly racist parties from contesting elections.

Amend the Anti-Discrimination Act to fund gender-segregated events or structures and to allow denial of services based on faith.

Compel local authorities to fund ultra-Orthodox schools, even if they are not under the control of the central administration and do not follow its curricula and refuse to teach basic secular subjects such as mathematics and English.

Withdraw the allocation of food stamps from the Ministry of Social Aid and entrust them to the Ministry of the Interior. He will apply as a criterion for distributing them the fact of not paying taxes, knowing that the ultra-Orthodox are exempt from it whatever their resources.

However, the Prime Minister wanted to distance himself from his allies. Thus, he declared that he would never authorize that one can evoke his faith to refuse services to an Israeli citizen.

"There will be electricity on Shabbat. There will be [mixed] swimming beaches. We will maintain the *status quo*. There will be no country [governed] by halakha"

"There will be no amendment of the law of return" (the Prime Minister's allies demand that

any returnee must prove that he has a Jewish parent in the strict sense of the word).

He disavowed his son, Yair Netanyahu, for whom the judges who indicted him while he was still prime minister are traitors and must be punished as such.

Finally, he elected the only openly gay deputy, Amir Ohana, president of the Knesset.

### **Sephardi rabbis against Knesset speaker**

Rabbi Meir Mazuz, head of the Tunisian community in Israel, said Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana was “infected with a disease.” Former Sephardi chief rabbi Shlomo Amar denounced MPs who voted for the nomination and said it is “an unprecedented disgrace”.

### **The Minister of Foreign Affairs is not the one you think**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs falls to the former Minister of the Economy and later of Intelligence Eli Cohen for one year, then to the former Minister of Intelligence and later of Finance Yisrael Katz for the following two years, and again to Eli Cohen if the government remains in place until then.

In practice, it is former ambassador to Washington Ron Dermer who will control it from the Ministry of Strategic Affairs. This department, which had been dissolved by the governments of Bennett and Lapid, officially deals only with the fight against the BDS movement (*Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions*).

### **Change the status of the Chief Military Rabbi**

A bill from the government coalition plans to no longer place the chief military rabbi under the orders of the chief of staff of the armed forces, but of a civil committee of rabbis. In addition, he would be promoted to the rank of major general, which will be equivalent to making him the equal of the chief of staff. At the same time,

the law should exempt all young Haredi men from military service.

### **Netanyahu government will not ratify Convention on Combating Violence Against Women**

The new Netanyahu government will not ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011), known as the “[Istanbul Convention](#)”.

It was adopted by 45 States and the European Union, but Türkiye withdrew from it.

The government coalition disputes the following points : the granting of residence status to victims of violence who do not have it ; the obligation for the State to compensate victims of violence in situations in which neither the perpetrator nor the insurance company pays compensation ; the possibility of terminating violent marriages ; the granting of asylum in gender-related cases ; finally the definition of the zone of application of the Convention, knowing that the West Bank is not under Israeli sovereignty.

### **Noam draws up lists of bad citizens**

According to the *Yedioth Ahronoth*, the Noam party which campaigns against all those who threaten the ultra-Orthodox Jewish conception of the family has compiled a list of gay people working in the media and another of Justice Ministry employees who have undergone training with NGOs advocating the integration of Arab Israelis (Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), The Nazareth Nurseries Institute, Israel Women’s Network, Center for International Migration and Integration, Israel Union for Environmental Defense (Adam Teva v’Din), Movement for Quality Government in Israel and Kav LaOved).

## **Israel lost its contract with Pfizer**

According to [i24news](#), the Ministry of Health claimed in court that it was unable to locate the agreement signed with the pharmaceutical company Pfizer regarding the sharing of epidemiological information on coronavirus vaccines, and even said it did not know if the agreement had been signed. "We did not find a signed agreement," said attorney Ahava Berman of the prosecutor's office, on behalf of the Department of Health. "We searched every place, including the CEO's office and the legal department."

6 million Israelis received free injections of Pfizer mRNA in exchange for the transmission to the pharmaceutical laboratory of their health data hitherto covered by medical secrecy.

## **Ben-Gvir in Sharon's footsteps at Temple Mount**

Violating the rules of the place Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir went alone for ten minutes on the Muslim part of the Temple Mount / Noble Shrine, on January 3, 2023.

The Muslim part of Temple Mount / Noble Shrine is under the jurisdiction of Jordan and not of Israel. It is only accessible to Muslims and their guests just as the Jewish part is only accessible to Jews and their guests. In the minutes that followed, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Egypt, France, Jordan, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Palestine condemned the operation. Sephardic Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef wrote to the Minister to remind him that the Chief Rabbis had strictly prohibited this violation of the rules of the place of worship. Hamas had announced in advance that it would respond to this provocation with "explosive" violence. Islamic Jihad, for its part, proposed to arm every Palestinian with handheld weapons and ammunitions to resist the new Netanyahu

government.

On September 28, 2000, the visit of MP Ariel Sharon provoked the second Intifada.

## **The UN requests its internal court to rule on the legitimacy of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tweeted : "These are the fundamental directives of the national government that I lead : the Jewish people have an exclusive and indisputable right to all areas of the Land of Israel. The government will encourage and expand settlement in all parts of the Land of Israel – in Galilee, in Negev, in the Golan Heights, in Judea and Samaria." He shouldn't have.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution (A/77 /400) by 87 votes in favor (around Russia and China), 26 against (including the US, the UK, Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany and Italy), and 53 abstentions (including France, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine), asking the International Court of Justice (i.e., the internal tribunal of the UN) to rule on the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

The text asks : " a) *What are the legal consequences of Israel's persistent violation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, of its occupation, colonization and prolonged annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, in particular measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and the adoption by Israel of related discriminatory laws and measures ?*

*(b) What impact do the policies and practices of Israel referred to in paragraph 18(a) above have on the legal status of occupation and what are the resulting legal consequences for all States and the United Nations Organization ? »*

The response of the ICJ leaves little doubt. In 2004, the International Court of Justice declared the illegality of the Israeli colonies on

the Palestinian territory and that of the parts of the Separation Wall located on the same Palestinian territory. Therefore, it should declare illegal the occupation of the Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem. Responding, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said : "The Jewish people are not occupiers of their own land and are not occupiers of eternal capital of Jerusalem. No UN resolution will distort this historical truth." Jewish Force MP Zvika Fogel concluded : Now "The occupation is no longer temporary, it is permanent".

### **Surrounded by numerous police investigations, Riad Salamé remains governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon**

European justice, which is investigating embezzlement of \$330 million and €5 million of Lebanese funds committed between 2002 and 2021 will send attorneys and police officers to investigate in Lebanon.

Currently, Eurojust has already seized €120 million in Germany, France, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Switzerland. The investigation revolves around the governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon and his countless lovers who serve as his nominees. In Lebanon where he was indicted Riad Salamé enjoys a privilege of immunity. He refuses to respond to Justice which he accuses of being politicized. Last week investigators in charge of the case arrested at the airport actress and MTV host Stéphanie Saliba, deemed "close" to the governor. A little before it was Anna Kosakova, a former lover of Riad Salamé's who had been auditioned.

The European mission is based on the United Nations Convention against Corruption. It should take place under the control of Lebanese judges who alone have the power of summons and hearing. Salamé who belongs to the Hariri clan was considered an exceptional governor. However, in 2021 his name appeared in the Pandora Papers along with that of other

Lebanese personalities (banker Marwan Kheireddine, Prime Minister Najib Mikati, Vice-Governor of Bank of Lebanon Muhammad Baasiri and former Prime Minister Hassan Diab).

According to his critics Riad Salamé has set up a system of laundering money from Latin American cartels. Through his niece he formed an alliance with a large Mafia family of New York.

### **France, the US and Qatar want to impose their presidential candidate on Lebanon**

France, the US and Qatar are preparing a meeting on Lebanon in Paris. It could choose the next President of the Republic, as was the case in 2008. The lucky winner would be endorsed at a meeting of Lebanese political parties in Qatar, then appointed by Parliament in Beirut. It could be either the army chief, General Joseph Aoun, or surprise candidate former finance minister Jihad Azour. The latter has recently featured in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. He will soon go to Egypt.

In 2008, France had pushed the candidacy of Michel Sleiman who was the subject of an investigation by the Justice in Paris and on whom it was therefore possible to exert political pressure. He had been enthroned in Beirut, not by his predecessor, but by the Emir of Qatar in Parliament in the presence of the French Foreign Minister seated, not on the benches of the public, but on those of the Lebanese government. This election violated the Constitution which imposes a deadline before an army chief can become President of the Republic.

The inability of the Lebanese Parliament to elect a President of the Republic affects the possibility of exploiting hydrocarbons in the territorial waters, despite the signing of the Israeli-Lebanese agreement. It interrupts the search for new resources. It disrupts the entire

region because the exploitation of hydrocarbons requires pipelines which can only be built once all the players are in place.

The Franco-US-Qatari plan has little chance of coming to an end, even if Gibran Bassil, the son-in-law of President Michel Aoun approves the candidacy of Jihad Azour.

Indeed, secretary general of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah called on January 3 for a Lebanese solution validated by foreign countries and not the contrary. To the precedent of Michel Sleiman, he thus opposed that of Michel Aoun.

### **\$858 million to pin Captagon trafficking on Syria**

On December 23, 2022, President Joe Biden signed into law the *Countering Assad's Proliferation Trafficking And Garnering Of Narcotics Act*, aka "CAPTAGON" (HR 6265).

Officially, the goal is to stop the traffic of this synthetic drug between Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Unofficially, the goal is to find a new pretext for the fury of the US against the Syrian Arab Republic. Over the past two years, as the UN secured aid from Syria against traffickers a slew of press articles linked Lebanese Captagon trafficking to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. This drug was introduced into the Middle East by NATO in order to provide a feeling of invincibility to jihadists. It consists of an amphetamine molecule joined to a theophylline molecule by an ethyl bridge. After losing the war they were waging through the jihadists, the US initiated a new war, this time economic, to the Syrian Arab Republic on the pretext that it would practice large-scale torture (*Caesar Act*). The country is under siege so that it is impossible even for humanitarian NGOs and the UN to import anything there. Since supplies from Russia were cut off by "sanctions" against Moscow, the Syrians have run out of fuel, of electricity (except 2 hours a day) and are starting to suffer from hunger. It is therefore not possible to send the Captagon components there. It is

unclear in these conditions how the "regime" could manufacture it.

The CAPTAGON act provides for an international press campaign to associate against all logic this drug with President al-Assad and to popularize the idea that the Syrian Arab Republic is only a narco-state. In addition, the US administration will have to produce reports on this subject. This intoxication campaign was given a budget of \$858 million.

### **Imminent Turkish-Syrian normalization**

Turkish and Syrian Defense Ministers Hulusi Akar and Ali Mahmoud Abbas met in Moscow in the presence of their Russian counterpart, Sergei Shoigu. The talks focused on "ways to resolve the Syrian crisis and [on] the refugee issue," as well as "joint efforts to combat extremist groups." This is the first Turkish-Syrian ministerial summit in 11 years.

Since September the heads of the secret services of the two countries, Ali Mamlouk and Hakan Fidan, have met several times in Damascus. They were attending the summit in Moscow. In November, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan considered possible a summit with his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad.

Türkiye has warned the Syrian opposition organizations taking refuge on its territory that it will soon withdraw from the Syrian territories it occupies, those who oppose this reconciliation have been asked to leave. A joint action by Russia, Syria and Türkiye against the PKK terrorists is expected, and finally a summit of the two heads of state.

Through Oman, the US offered Syria to partially lift the sanctions against it if it interrupts its talks with Türkiye. Damascus refused.

### **Bashar al-Assad receives Abdallah bin Zayed al-Nahyan**

Despite the US ban, Emirati Foreign Minister Abdallah bin Zayed al-Nahyan traveled to

Damascus to meet Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

The Emirates provide very important support to Syria. This summit comes as the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, scheduled for last week, has been “postponed”.

### **Qatar plans to stop exporting gas to the EU**

Qatar plans to cut its gas supplies to the EU in retaliation for the Belgian anti-corruption operation in the European Parliament. The gas demand in Asia is sufficient for Doha to change customers.

### **Qatar enters the Yemeni conflict**

While Saudi Arabia is secretly and directly negotiating with the Houthis in the absence of the Yemeni government in Oman, Qatar is organizing a conference on January 9 in Washington entitled "[Towards a lasting peace and democracy in Yemen](#)".

It will be officially set up by the Tawakkol Karman Foundation and Democracy for the Arab World Now organization. The Muslim Brotherhood will participate extensively. At the same time, Qatar’s international media (with Al-Jazeera leading the pack) assure that everything is falling apart between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

### **Türkiye restores relations with Israel**

Israel and Türkiye have reestablished their diplomatic relations which were interrupted four years ago. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan received Ambassador Irit Lillian and asked her to convey his country’s congratulations to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on his election. In 2018 Ankara broke with Tel Aviv which was bombing the Hamas Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza. Today, Türkiye is reinterpreting its Ottoman heritage. It no longer thinks of itself as the leader of the Brotherhood but as the protector of the Turkish-speaking peoples and

has therefore abandoned its main ambitions in the Arab world.

### **Iran adapts to China’s arrival in the Arab world**

Riyad’s Sino-Arab rapprochement sounded like a clap of thunder in Tehran. Admittedly, China is an age-old ally of Iran and supports it today in nuclear matters, but it is not blind. China leaned on the Arab side in the conflict on three Gulf islands between Tehran and Abu Dhabi. Furthermore, Beijing decided to expand its Silk Roads throughout the Arab world regardless of the Persians.

### **India begins to organize without the dollar**

India is beginning to organize its international trade in rupees and no longer in dollars. The Central Bank of New Delhi has set up a special department to mobilize the cashflow necessary for these transfers.

### **Rahul Gandhi lines up behind Washington**

Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi said that China has adopted the same attitude towards India as Russia has towards Ukraine. The former Congress Party chairman accused Narendra Modi’s government of failing to discern China’s ambitions. According to him, China is preparing to change the geography of India in Ladakh and Arunachal (Pradesh).

### **Myanmar releases 7,000 prisoners**

On the occasion of 75 years of independence, the Myanmar army staged a show of force in Naypyidaw. The release of 7,012 prisoners was announced without it being known whether they were common law or political prisoners. General elections have been announced, without specifying whether the current electoral mode in one round would be maintained. The US preemptively called them a “sham”. Medals

were given to personalities, including the Buddhist monk Wirathu, herald of the non-Buddhists massacres.

In 2020, the National League for Democracy (NLD) won the elections but these were immediately canceled and its president special adviser Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested. She was sentenced behind closed doors on December 30 to 33 years in prison. She is still incarcerated ; however, she could again be placed under house arrest.

### **North Korea is getting stronger**

North Korea fired 3 medium-range missiles just before the end of the year. They rose 100 kilometers high and fell 370 kilometers off the coast in international waters.

In 2022, North Korea fired three times as many missiles as the previous year. It took advantage of the tension around Ukraine to significantly upgrade its arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons, new intercontinental ballistic missile, hypersonic glide warheads, nuclear-powered submarines and reconnaissance satellite. Supreme leader Kim Jong-un revealed on December 27 that he had adopted a new security strategy, but it has not been published yet. On January 1st, he called for an "exponential increase in the nuclear arsenal" to deal with the growing Western threat.

### **China changes its Covid policy**

The Chinese Health Agency announced on December 26, 2022 that it will downgrade the Covid-19 infection from class A to class B from January 8, 2023. There will be no more quarantine for people entering the country, no more mandatory confinement for Covid-19 patients and no more isolation of high-risk areas.

The Chinese central administration estimates that two weeks are needed for its national directives to be applied at the local level.

### **Joint Sino-Russian maneuvers**

The Chinese and Russian Marines conducted a joint drill in the China Sea called *Joint See 2022*. The destroyers *Baotou* and *Jinan*, the frigates *Binzhou* and *Yancheng*, the supply ship *Gaoyouhu*, a submarine, fixed-wing early warning planes, anti-submarine patrol planes and on-board helicopters took part on the Chinese side ; and on the Russian side the missile cruiser *Varyag*, the frigate *Marshal Shaposhnikov*, the corvettes *Aldar Tsydenzhapov* and *Sovershenny*, as well as planes and helicopters.

### **Taiwan extends military service**

Taiwan will extend compulsory military service from the current 8 months to 1 year at the end of 2023. The rebel Chinese province intends to prepare for a military operation by Beijing.

### **Four Kishida government ministers resign**

Minister for Reconstruction Kenya Akiba tendered his resignation on 26 December. He is the fourth Fumio Kishida minister to leave the government in two months, after Daishiro Yamagiwa (Minister of Economic Revitalization, resigning on October 25), Yasuhiro Hanashi (Minister of Justice, November 11) and Minoru Terada (Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications, December 17). All four admitted to either embezzling public money or being corrupted by the Moon sect.

### **Japan strengthens its Defense against China**

Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi canceled his planned trip to Beijing after Tokyo released its *National Security Strategy* naming China as "the greatest strategic challenge".

In 2005, the Japanese government attempted to amend the Constitution to expand the role of the Armed Forces internationally. However, this project was not adopted. After several attempts

and despite the unanimous opposition of the country's legal experts, the cabinet reinterpreted article 9 of the Constitution in 2014. From now on, it considers that it authorizes "collective defense operations". In this context, the Kishida government has decided to acquire "counter-strike" capabilities against China. It has also just reinforced the defense of the Nansei Islands, including Yonaguni, where it has set up a surface-to-air missile unit. This base is only 110 kilometers from the "Chinese rebel province" of Taiwan. Finally, the Kishida government has drawn up a list of 600 sites of strategic interest so that it can monitor them and their surroundings. It has just revealed the first 58 sites.

### **The Tokyo Olympics were corrupt**

Chairman of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games Committee Haruyuki Takahashi has been indicted for corruption. He was released on an 80-million-yen (€563,000) bail after four months of preventive detention. He's accused of having received 198 million yen (€1.39 million) from the civil engineering company Aoki Corporation.

## **OCEANIA**

### **Australia tries to reconnect with China**

Trade Minister Don Farrell said Canberra could withdraw its case against China at the WTO if Beijing lifts what he called "sanctions" against Australian products.

China does not practice "economic sanctions". It introduced tariffs on barley, wine, meat and lobster. Signs of an Australian-Chinese thaw are increasing : Prime Minister Anthony Albanese met President Xi Jinping at the G20 in Bali in November. Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong traveled to Beijing in December to meet her counterpart Wang Yi.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **New members of the UN Security Council**

The non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council are now :

For another year : Albania, Brazil, the United Arab Emirates, Gabon and Ghana.

For two years : Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland.

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Director of publication : Thierry Meyssan, [thierry.meyssan@voltage.net](mailto:thierry.meyssan@voltage.net)

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