

PAKISTAN TELEVISION

On the Eve of the OIC Emergency Summit on Afghanistan: Helga Zepp-LaRouche and Hussein Askary

Dec. 17—This is the edited transcript of Helga Zepp-LaRouche and Hussein Askary in discussion with Faisal Rehman, host of Pakistan Television’s “PTV World” in a panel ahead of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation’s Extraordinary Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on Afghanistan on December 19.

The two-part broadcast included in-studio guests, former Ambassador Naila Chauhan and defense analyst Lt. Gen. Talat Masood (ret.), with Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche online from Germany; and in the second part, defense analyst Lt. Gen. Raza Muhammad Khan (ret.) and Pakistan’s former Ambassador to China, Naghmana Hashmi, in studio, with Schiller Institute analyst Hussein Askary online from Sweden. The host began the program with a report on Afghanistan, which we have included here. Video of the full program is available [here](#).

Faisal Rehman: You’re watching PTV World, and I’m Faisal Rehman with a special transmission on this very important OIC [Organization of Islamic Cooperation] conference that is being held in Islamabad. And as we all know, the main reason is about the Afghan crisis. This is in fact the largest gathering after the 15th of August, when the Taliban took over the regime in Afghanistan.

As we all know, winter has approached, there are a lot of crises, whether we talk about the economic upset that is there, or we talk about the banking collapse; there is lack of flow of money, so the government in Afghanistan currently can’t even pay the salaries of the government employees. And having said that, the crisis is so huge, that it is believed that 60% of the total population of Afghanistan is at the verge of starvation. There are no medical facilities as such, and the people are really depending on the neighboring countries, such as Pakistan, and Iran, perhaps; and on the northern side, the Central Asian countries as well.

But having said that, now the issue is so huge that Pakistan in fact took the initiative and called the OIC members to attend this very important summit, so that this particular issue could be taken care of.

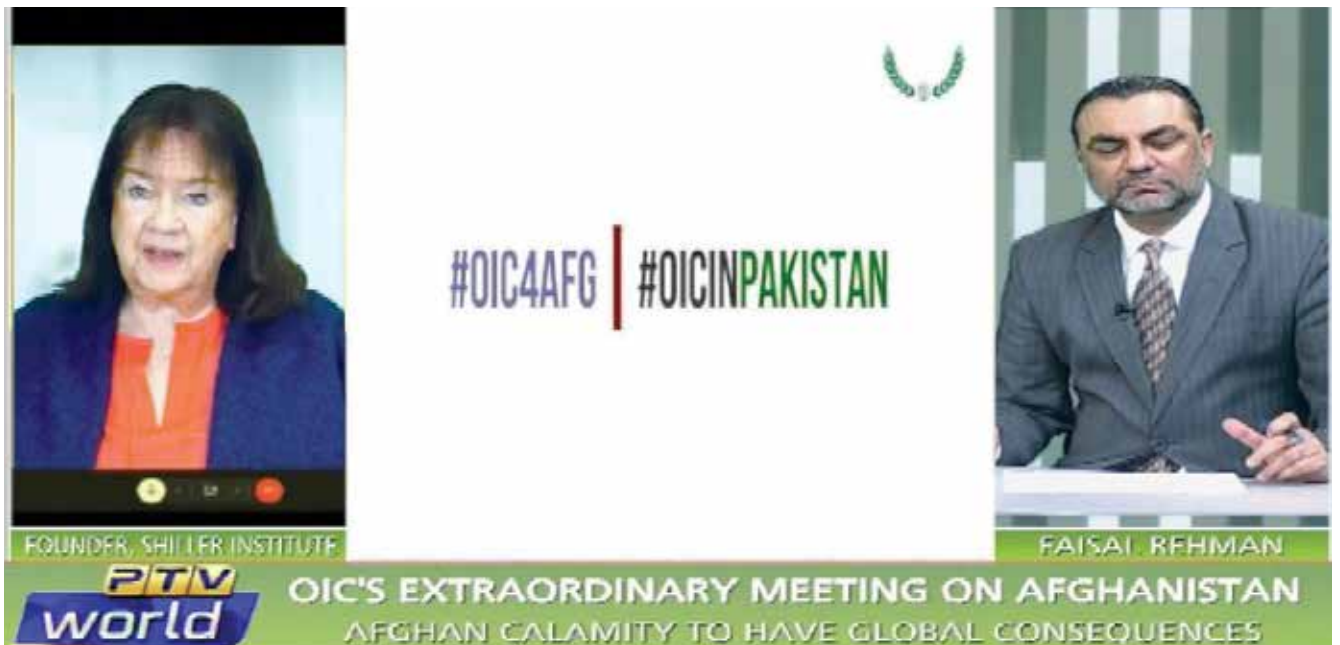
And we all know the Western world isn’t supporting as such—the Americans have frozen Afghanistan’s \$9.5 billion [in] U.S. dollar reserves that is much needed for the revival of their economy. And so the case is, from a lot of European countries as well. In fact, the Europeans initially had planned to help, but nothing has arrived so far.

Flawed Approach

As we will be running this transmission for the next three days, till Sunday, this is the beginning in fact. Let us now show you a report that our production team has prepared, and then I’ll introduce you to our panelists.

Narrator: The deepening humanitarian quandary of Afghanistan reflects the flawed approach of the international community toward Afghanistan, with tragic consequences. The crumbling healthcare system, the economic meltdown of an aid-dependent economy, a pandemic, food insecurity, access to water made worse by drought, and a harsh winter—all have combined to create a perfect storm for killing more Afghans than bullets. Raising further alarm, the UN envoy for Afghanistan, Deborah Lyons, said an estimated 60% of Afghanistan’s 38 million people are facing crisis levels of hunger in a food emergency that will likely worsen over the winter.

Deborah Lyons: Now is not the time to turn away from the Afghan people. We must find ways to prevent an imminent humanitarian catastrophe and the terrible loss of life that could happen over the winter.



PTV World

On the eve of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Extraordinary Ministerial on Afghanistan, as a special transmission, Faisal Rehman of Pakistan TV's "PTV World" program (right) hosted a panel discussion that included Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute, on Dec. 17, 2021.

Narrator: According to UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund), around 3.2 million Afghan children are acutely malnourished, and 1.4 million children are at risk of dying because of severe acute malnutrition, unless we intervene with treatment. Explaining the country's worst humanitarian disaster, Abdallah Al Dardari, the resident representative of the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) in Afghanistan, [said] some 23 million people are in desperate need of food. The \$20 billion economy could shrink by \$4 billion or more, and 97% of the 38 million population are at risk of sinking into poverty.

As an emphatic gesture, Pakistan has announced \$28 million in medical, food, and other humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan, while also authorizing the transport of food aid from India through Pakistan to Afghanistan.

The ensuing catastrophe is preventable as releasing the frozen funds, the Afghan Central Bank's \$9 billion reserves, most of which are held in the U.S., would alleviate the current humanitarian crisis. UNICEF official Samantha Markle noted that "This is no time for political brinksmanship. People in Afghanistan are dying, and they need our

support. Humanitarian aid is the last expression of human solidarity."

A Great Opportunity

Rehman: Let me introduce you to our panelists. We have with us in our studio, on my right, Naila Chauhan. She is a former ambassador, a senior diplomat. Thank you so much for your time. And we also have Lt.-Gen. Talat Masood (ret.), who is a senior analyst—thank you also for your time. And on Skype we have with us from Germany, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder of the Schiller Institute: Thank you so much, Helga Zepp for your time as well. A pleasure to have you on the show.

After discussion with his two other guests, Rehman addressed Helga Zepp-LaRouche.

I still remember, when I was a kid, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, and there were a lot of people who migrated to Pakistan. And at the Eid time, I remember, during that particular time period, a lot of planes used to come from Saudi Arabia, and they would bring in meat for these people. So that is what we had seen during those crises. It's worse right now, but nothing is being done.

But let's see what Helga Zepp has to share with us.

Looking at the current Afghan crisis and the summit that Pakistan is having in Islamabad: What sort of hope do you have for the Afghan people, that yes, there is going to be some sort of help in terms of cash and kind, both.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Well, first of all, I think it's extremely important what Pakistan is doing right now by hosting this summit—by Pakistan taking the leadership in a situation where the West has morally completely failed. I mean, this is a declaration of moral bankruptcy. This is not a crisis which was not foreseeable. One week after the withdrawal of the U.S. and NATO troops from Afghanistan, it was clear that the country was in a complete shambles. And now, almost four months have passed since, and it is clear that more than 90% of the people are in danger of dying of hunger, of the cold in the freezing winter. And this has been known in the West for several months, but in the news, Afghanistan has completely disappeared from the Western media.

So I think this conference is a real chance to show who is the morally superior factor in the situation. And I'm so ashamed that the West is not capable. The money being withheld by the U.S. Treasury and the European banks, this money belongs to the Afghan people. We are leading a campaign with the Schiller Institute, both in the United States and in Western Europe, to demand that these monies be unfrozen right away.

Operation Ibn Sina

I would like to mention something which is a little bit more hopeful element: I have called for an Operation Ibn Sina. Ibn Sina was probably the most famous doctor in the history of mankind, the most famous physician. He lived about one thousand years ago. And right now, building a modern health system in Afghanistan, would be the beginning of overcoming not only the humanitarian crisis, but also starting real economic development.

And to give that the name of Ibn Sina, would bring forward—and I would actually hope that OIC countries, being the Islamic countries of the world, would adopt Operation Ibn Sina. Ibn Sina, the synonym for not only saving the Afghan people right now, in this incredible humanitarian crisis, with all working together to build up economically this country which has a very proud history. The whole region was once known as the Land of a Thousand Cities. Ibn Sina was not just a physician,

but he was one of the great universal thinkers, who contributed a lot to philosophy and many areas of knowledge.

So, I think this is a moment when history can change in a positive way. I think the West has failed, and now hopefully the Islamic countries, together with neighboring countries of Afghanistan can step in. It's unbelievable what is happening: that the world would know of such a humanitarian tragedy and not act. This is a moment people have to really think about what does that mean about the moral condition of the world? I think Operation Ibn Sina would make a tremendous change in the situation.

Rehman returns to the other panelists for response to Helga Zepp-LaRouche and further discussion.

America's Behavior Has Been Shameful

Rehman: To the lady in Germany: Helga, now a couple of important points. One is when Mr. Hamid Karzai was brought in, nobody knew him. He was there for two terms, because he was the blue-eyed boy of the Americans, but he made certain remarks, and then there was a change, as far as the leadership was concerned. And then two terms were given to Mr. Ashraf Ghani, who ended up running away, leaving the Afghan people.

And the interesting part was that in every election, it was believed that they were rigged. And they were so close that initially Abdullah Abdullah was made the Foreign Minister. Later on, again, since he had been running for President, he said, well, I'm the President; and he ended up becoming the CEO. And again, then in the second term, he was then again given another responsibility.

The point is: If it is acceptable to the Americans that Mr. John Kerry flies [in to Afghanistan] all the way from U.S.A., creates a new appointment, and settles things down—if that is acceptable, why is the Taliban regime not acceptable to the Americans? Is it because they're ashamed of their loss in Afghanistan? Or perhaps, they never expected the Taliban to take charge so quickly, within days, in fact?

Zepp-LaRouche: It is a shameful experience. The United States military is the strongest military on the planet, and combined with NATO, there is simply no other military force stronger—and to be defeated by essentially 65,000 Taliban fighters, is not exactly a heroic experience. I think some of the military who were in-

volved are still licking their wounds, and they are having a hard time digesting the fact that they really suffered an incredible defeat.

But that doesn't take away the responsibility—In the history of military affairs, if you defeat an enemy, you have a certain responsibility for what happens. In the same way, even if you lose, the fact that the West, NATO and the United States, and the German *Bundeswehr* and many others, were for 20 years fighting in Afghanistan gives them a moral responsibility to deal with the people. What is happening now, by sanctioning Afghanistan, by withholding the funds, they're punishing the Afghan people! The argument that the Taliban do not respect women's rights may be true, but if you starve more than 90% of the population, you are doing much worse to the women. And the pictures of the dying children and dying babies—I would really like that these pictures should haunt the people who are withholding the help! This is bordering on genocide! Because the effects are all known. Withholding money right now, is the biggest crime I can imagine! So I think we have to really arouse the world public much more. What you do, by doing this, you force the Taliban practically to go back to the drug production and the drug trade. The Taliban do not want to have drug production, it goes against their religious beliefs.

And in 2000, UN representative Pino Arlacchi was negotiating with the Taliban, and they gave up drug production. The explosion of the drugs occurred after NATO came into the country. And now, by withholding the funds, you are forcing the Taliban to get money from somewhere. And those opium products sold on the streets of other nations will mean an incredible amount of death within Europe, in Russia, and China, where the drugs will find their way.

It also means, if you say you have to have an opposition to the Taliban, well, you're encouraging terrorism. I mean the refugee crisis. If this is not remedied very quickly, you will have millions of people trying to escape hunger and disease and the cold. You will have a tremendous refugee crisis which will burden the neighboring countries. These refugees will then try to get to Turkey or to Europe. There is no credible explanation for what is happening right now, nothing which has any rationale or justification.

Hope from Afghanistan's Neighbors

Hopefully this conference taking place in Islamabad right now will send a message to the rest of the world, will get them to open their eyes. We are at a branching point, where you either go in the direction of becoming more human or becoming more barbarian. And right now, the West has clearly decided on the latter. And I think that has to be remedied.

Rehman: According to our foreign minister, the Afghan interim foreign minister is also going to attend this conference, along with the Chinese delegation and the Russian, as well as the American. Now, the American presence will be there. Ma'am, do you think that [if] the OIC members do reach agreement, there will be a favorable response? Let's suppose if they agree that countries like Saudi Arabia can provide fuel for a certain time, let's say, for a year on deferred payments or something of that sort. A few countries, like Russia can provide wheat, because the wheat consumption is a lot in Afghanistan, so is the case with rice. Certain countries—Pakistan might, let's suppose—end up agreeing that the Indians can bring in food supplies via Pakistan to Afghanistan. You know, these decisions—because this is also going to be some sort of a negotiation. That if India wants to help, we will let them help. But there has to be some sort of condition then; this is the way it should be. Because there is a lot of trust deficit also.

Similarly, when we talk about this important point, we're not saying let's accept the regime, but at least talk to them! Do you think this is the basic point from where we can start the negotiation?

Our foreign minister was also throwing light on this very important aspect of humanitarian crisis. He said that we will try our level best to sort this issue out, and he also said he had a meeting with the Secretary General of the OIC which was very productive.

No Reportage in Western Media

As far as the media is concerned, because you were saying there is no news about Afghanistan these days in the Western media, in Europe, is this story regarding this particular mood of the OIC members, in this meeting in Islamabad, is that also a story on your television channels, or in the papers, or on the Internet?



PTV World

Hussein Askary (left), the Schiller Institute's Coordinator for Southwest Asia, was included in the special panel discussion on Afghanistan on Pakistan TV's "PTV World," hosted by Faisal Rehman. In the middle, representatives of the 57 member nations arrive for the OIC Extraordinary Ministerial Conference.

Zepp-LaRouche: No. The coverage of Afghanistan has practically disappeared. There was a big upset in the immediate aftermath, after the troops went out, and for three or four weeks it was the issue, but in the past three months, in Italy, in France, in Germany, you don't find any coverage at all. I think if one follows the media from within the region of Afghanistan, there are a lot of very promising signs.

For example, I thought the fact that India and Pakistan agreed to use the Pakistan route to transport food from India, this was a very important step, and I know for India what happens in Afghanistan is also extremely important. So one could only wish that the regional cooperation is overcoming older geopolitical conflicts. Also naturally the meetings which took place in the Central Asian Republics involving Russia and China. But I think the question of the Extended Troika should also be pushed, because I think the involvement of the United States in a constructive effort—that in my view is the breaking issue, because if the United States could be convinced to take a positive attitude, it would be an extremely important stepping-stone for an otherwise extremely dangerous geopolitical confrontation between the United States, and Russia and China.

So, in a certain sense, to get all the forces internationally together to help Afghanistan is in my view one of the absolutely important historical missions. In a certain sense, I think, the whole destiny of mankind is in a laser-like way, concentrated on what happens in Afghanistan. So I really hope that all the participating and affected countries will multiply their efforts to make saving Afghanistan an issue for the whole world, because right now it is not. All channels must be used: media, United Nations, conferences. There must be a drumbeat. There must be a drumbeat of awakening the conscience of the world. I think this is truly a judgment of our ability as a human species: Are we morally fit to survive or not?

So in one sense, I think the fate of Afghanistan and the fate of humanity are much more closely connected than most people can imagine.

Rehman: Very well said, Ma'am. Very well said. I hope, in fact, to close this segment of our transmission on this note. Ma'am, when we talk about U.S. President Joe Biden, he thinks he is the champion of humanitarian crises; he always talks about the issues all over the world, but doesn't speak much about Kashmir or Pales-

tine, for that matter. Neither have we heard much from him regarding Afghanistan. I think this is the high time that all human beings [be recognized to be] created equal, so I think this is something really important, and the Americans should take a lead, if they consider themselves as the global leaders or the masters in that matter, they should definitely come up with some sort of solution, proper remedy for this issue. Mrs. Zepp-Larouche, thank you so much for your presence. It was a pleasure having you.

We are talking about this very important OIC meeting that is being held in Islamabad, to make sure that the humanitarian issues should be taken care of that are posing a significant threat to the public of Afghanistan. As we know, they have the social issue, the economic problems, the bank which is at the verge of collapse. The [foreign held] accounts have been frozen, \$9.5 billion of the Afghan people's funds that is being held in the United States of America and other Western countries, that has been frozen and not released. There is acute shortage of food, and it is believed that 60% of the total population is at the verge of an absolute catastrophe. 1.1 million children can die if there is no appropriate help available at the right time; plus about 3.2 million children are at the verge of starvation.

So a lot of issues, and Pakistan has taken the initiative to have this meeting in Islamabad, so the issue of Afghanistan should be raised, and the Western countries should come forward and help the Afghan people.

Now, in our second portion of our transmission we are joined by Lt.-Gen. Raza Muhammad Khan (ret.), who is a senior analyst; ... and former Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi, senior diplomat and former ambassador. Ma'am, a pleasure to have you on the show. And from Stockholm, Sweden, we've been joined by Hussein Askary, who's an expert on international relations. A pleasure to have you, Mr. Askary.

Rehman continues with his other guests, and then turns to Hussein Askary.

To you, Mr. Askary: \$2.2 trillion being spent—wisely or otherwise, that's a separate question—20 years of war in Afghanistan. At the end of the day, millions of people got displaced, hundreds of thousands of them got killed. Around 55, 60 countries invaded. Not even one is there to support them now. So perhaps they were there to liberate, but they couldn't liberate, so from liberalization to starvation: 20 years, \$2.2 trillion:

What sort of economic equation is this, sir? Let's throw light on it.

Total Economic Collapse or Release of Afghanistan's Money

Hussein Askary: Your guests have correctly pointed to some very important things. I think Pakistan's efforts to alleviate the situation in Afghanistan are laudable. I read the letter written by Foreign Minister [Shah Mahmood] Qureshi as preparation, and he correctly pointed out that the danger is looming, and the urgency of nations, both in the Islamic world, but also internationally, to move quickly, to release the funds of the Afghan people. These funds, \$9.5 billion, have been frozen in the United States and European banks; these belong to the Afghani nation, they don't belong to the Taliban.

Your Foreign Minister also correctly pointed to the fact that there are millions of people in Afghanistan who are now thinking about taking their children and moving outside of Afghanistan, to Iran, Pakistan—wherever they can. This would be an even greater humanitarian crisis. The international institutions like the World Food Program and others, have correctly pointed out that there are millions, 20 million at least, who are threatened by starvation, and therefore the first step is to unfreeze the funds of the Afghan people, because that would be the quickest way to get food, medicine and other needs to the Afghan people—in addition, of course, to the humanitarian aid. But that's primary.

As you have pointed out, the crisis in Afghanistan is not caused by the Taliban takeover. It is caused by 20 years of failures of the trans-Atlantic world, with trillions of dollars spent, only on military operations, security operations. As your guests have said, they failed to build the capacity in Afghanistan to produce food, to have decent healthcare, to have the basics of life produced inside Afghanistan. So this is a massive failure. And now we have this cynical game, as your foreign minister has clearly pointed out, that if you now starve the Afghan people, which in itself is a crime, actually, against humanity—this collective punishment—what you will create is a chaotic security situation which will breed terrorism; it will breed mass emigration—the same things you claim to want to prevent.

So, this is a clear failure. But, we are now mobilizing

for every effort to be made to resolve the situation, to get people in the United States and in Europe back to their senses. The Schiller Institute is involved in an international campaign to push the U.S. Congress, to push European politicians and governments—and humanitarian organizations are also supporting this effort—to unfreeze the funds of Afghanistan’s people, and to start to work with the de facto government in Afghanistan, in Kabul, to start humanitarian aid.

The Bloody Era of Geopolitics Is Ended

One important thing your guests pointed out, is related to the OIC. The Islamic nations have been suppressed, but that is because we had an era of geopolitics which has just ended in Afghanistan. Even President Biden said that the withdrawal from Afghanistan marks the end of an era. Now whatever he means by that, what we mean by that, is that there is a new paradigm in international relations: the age of geopolitics, where you can pit one nation against the other, to make geopolitical gains—not really of any service to humanity—and in that geopolitical game of divide and conquer, Islamic nations, Muslim nations, were pitted against each other, like in Libya, then Syria, in Yemen, and it’s continuing until today!

It is time that we move away from geopolitics, including all the Muslim nations: They should not be involved in this geopolitical game of divide and conquer—and unite their effort to push the new paradigm which is exemplified by the Belt and Road Initiative. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the best vehicle to stretch the New Silk Road—this new strategy for reconstruction and win-win cooperation—into Afghanistan. And, all the neighbors of Afghanistan will benefit from this; the world will benefit from this.

This is the end of an era. Muslim nations have to unite their efforts, also with other, non-Muslim nations, like for example, in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. This will lead us, as your guests said, into both alleviating the immediate humanitarian crisis, but also pave the way to a long-term solution based on economic cooperation, building of infrastructure, and building a health platform, which our Institute, as the Chairman of our Institute discussed earlier: We have put forth Operation Ibn Sina, to create—starting with Afghanistan and Yemen—a health care platform, which is based on building the necessary infrastructure—water, power, transport,

education and so on—to bring modern health care to the people.

That’s the only way nations in the East and the West can work together, so we can close the chapter, the bloody chapter of geopolitics, which has extended now for 40 years—not only the last 20 years—and cost millions of lives, caused massive misery, mass immigration, as you experienced yourself in Pakistan.

This is an opportunity as well as a crisis time. We should seize the opportunity to unite the efforts both of the Muslim nations, but also the international community, to bring a more human solution to the situation.

Rehman: One quick comment before I return to our guests in the studio. Earlier we had a guest from Germany. She was mentioning the fact that there is no news about Afghanistan in the Western media. You live in Scandinavia, perhaps countries like Norway and even Sweden, or Denmark for that matter, Finland—these are the countries, the champions of humanitarian crises, and about the sufferings of the people, they’re always very vocal about it. What is the current scenario? Is this meeting also being talked about in the Western media, in particular in Scandinavia?

Askary: No, your guest from Germany [Helga Zepp-LaRouche] was obviously correct. Afghanistan has disappeared from media coverage. The only things that are reported are people shedding crocodile tears over the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, but they’re ignorant of the fact that these actions, the sanctions against Afghanistan, are killing women and girls and children in Afghanistan. We have a few humanitarian organizations that have actually made public calls for relaunching humanitarian aid in Afghanistan. We have many Nordic organizations that have been involved in Afghanistan for many years, which are now making public calls, but they get limited media coverage.

But remember that the governments and the elites here in Scandinavia, in Europe generally, and also in the United States are now united in their focus on what they call “stopping China and Russia.” Because those countries, most of them in NATO, failed in Afghanistan, they want to shift the attention from their failure and the misery they have created in Libya, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, and so on, to saying that the

problems of the world are because you have two authoritarian regimes, in Russia and China, and we have to stop them. And, this is complete madness, because what we will get is a World War III, fought not by regular armies, but fought with nuclear weapons. And this is a recipe for the extinction of the human race!

So those people in the media are supporting the war machine here, even in Scandinavia, focused on how to fight and stop Russia and China.

Now, Pakistan gets part of the blame in the situation here in the media, because they say Pakistan is supporting the Taliban, and this is really evil propaganda—

Rehman: —at the end of the day, the narratives are always set by the Western world. And these are those narratives.

A New Reality Is Emerging

Askary: Yes, narratives, but there is a reality on the ground. It is reality which will determine the outcome of things, not what people say in the media, not what these intelligence agencies are writing and sending to the media to tell the people. There is a reality. The world has changed. The power of the world, the economic power of the world, has moved to the East. We have massive social and economic problems here in Europe. We have an electricity crisis, right now here in Europe! We have a health care crisis, right here in Europe! So these realities will determine which way nations will go, not what people in the military-industrial complex and their media agents are saying on TV.

Rehman: Perfectly said, perfectly said.

Rehman returns to his other guests, and then goes back to Hussein Askary for closing remarks for the program.

Askary: Thank you very much. It has been a very enriching discussion here. On the question of India: It is ironical that it was on your television, or another pro-



PTV World

gram perhaps, that I suggested, a month before India decided to send wheat through Pakistan, that India and Pakistan should work together on economic cooperation. Forget about all the British geopolitics that have created the Kashmir problems and other problems. There's a way for India to come back to its geo-economic and cultural environment. India is not an Atlantic country. There is an identity crisis in India. They want to have one foot in Asia, but the other foot in the Atlantic. And that is creating big problems for India.

There is a reality which India cannot surpass, which is a geographical, cultural, historical situation. This is a very good case that geo-economics is superior to geopolitics. It was a welcome thing when I saw that your Prime Minister, Imran Khan, agreed to allow the Indian wheat to go to Afghanistan, as I had suggested a month earlier. But then, due to these, sometimes quite silly geopolitical and other games, this did not go through. This is a very good case where Pakistan's position in the region should be reinforced not by these games—

Rehman: —absolutely. Very important point, especially this particular action of Pakistan is also opening up so many avenues for both these countries to at least start talking, start negotiating.

Askary: And India has everything to gain from working with Pakistan—

Rehman: All right, thank you so much, Mr. Askary, for your discussion. That's all we have for this hour.