

III. International

INTERVIEW: Jim Jatras

Only a Systemic Change Can Save the U.S.

This is an edited transcription of an interview with Jim Jatras, conducted by Mike Billington on Jan. 14, 2022. Mr. Jatras served in the State Department in Mexico and on Russian affairs. He also served for many years as an adviser to the Republican leadership in the Senate. He then worked in the private sector, while establishing himself as a leading analyst on political issues internationally. Subheads have been added.

EIR: This is Mike Billington with the *Executive Intelligence Review*, the Schiller Institute, and The LaRouche Organization. I'm here speaking with Jim Jatras. Would you like to say anything else about your career, Jim?

Jim Jatras: No, I don't think so, except to say that the extent to which somebody can be in the belly of the Beast for 30 years and come out relatively sane, I hope so. I guess we'll let the viewers decide that.



Courtesy of Jim Jatras

James George Jatras

'It's Later Than You Think'

EIR: You presented a [speech](#) to a student seminar at the Ron Paul Institute last September titled "It's Later Than You Think." What did you mean by that?

Jatras: Well, we tend to think of political and economic developments in a kind of isolation—what are good policies, what are bad policies, what are constructive, what are destructive—rather than looking at the underlying health of society itself and macro historical trends that make such policy choices viable or not.

My concern was, and is, that we are approaching some kind of a crunch, some kind of a major crisis, not only in America but globally, that not only could totally remake what it means to be an American, but maybe means the end of the American nation and the republic itself. I would even go as far as to say, I don't think the American Republic, as we've known it, really exists anymore. I'd like to ask the question of people: how many republics have there been in France? Well, this is the Fifth Republic. Yet the French nation still exists.

Many Americans are so wedded to the notion of our constitution, our political structures, that they lose sight of the fact that that's all they are—they're just structures. Those structures are going through the biggest crisis, certainly since the Great Depression and possibly since the Civil War. And we don't really know what's going to come out on the other side of it. I think the problems America faces today are not going to get solved by an election or a political party or a political movement—we're going to have to go through a great destructive ordeal of some sort. And we cannot really envision what comes out on the other side.

On the Recent Russia-U.S. Diplomacy

EIR: The talks this week between Russia and the United States, while not an absolute failure, were described by Russians as the West having failed to budge an inch on the fundamental issues of guarantees for Russian security. Nonetheless, several leading Rus-

sian experts, including Gilbert Doctorow and Dmitri Trenin, have described the talks as a victory for Russia by forcing the U.S. to admit that they would not conduct a war with a nuclear armed Russia over Ukraine. You have headed an organization called the American Institute in Ukraine and have insight into this. What's your view of this week's diplomatic efforts?

Jatras: I'm basically in agreement with the analysts you cited, I think sometimes there's too much of a focus on, you might say, the CNN headline—which is: “Will Russia invade Ukraine?”—when that is not really what this is about. In fact, it's not even primarily about Ukraine, in the sense that it's really about NATO expansion and the United States and our satellites. Let's not even call them allies, they are satellites, basically on Russia's doorstep, its front porch, its back porch and everywhere else, threatening its vital security interests. And the Russians have basically signaled that they've had enough. As President Putin said, “We have no place left to retreat to.” So, I think they're coming back to say, “All right, we're giving you one last chance to address our security concerns seriously, to provide us with guarantees.”

I don't know what those guarantees would look like, by the way, since the West can never be trusted to keep its word. But, nonetheless, I think they're making one last chance to say, “Will you take our serious concerns seriously? Here are two draft treaties. Do we have a deal or not?” And I think the West is coming back and saying, “No, we don't have a deal.”

We can delay Ukraine's accession to NATO for about 10 years. Maybe we can have some more confidence-building measures in Europe, things of that sort. I don't think that's going to wash with the Russians. As you mentioned, Gil Doctorow, as he's pointed out, thinks that the Russians are ready to act in some decisive and dramatic way, stationing advanced hypersonic weapons close to the United States that would give them the same flight time to our major cities as we are posing a threat to Russian cities. Maybe some kind of surgical strikes within Ukraine against hostile forces that would force NATO to wake up and smell the coffee and say, “We have to accommodate these concerns or else the pain level is going to keep getting ratcheted up.”

NATO is no longer the master of all it sees in Europe, as we were, say, in the 1990s, and the Russians are in a position to act. They're acting unilaterally, and

there's really not much we can do about it unless we want to start a major war.

Unfortunately, what I'm seeing from most of the establishment—there was an absurd discussion at the Atlantic Council, (which, just saying Atlantic Council almost tells you how absurd it was going to be), where the most reasonable person on the call, if you can believe it, was Evelyn Farkas—who had this horrible piece in *Defense One* basically talking about how we need to fight a war with the Russians in Ukraine. But she was the only one who took that seriously. The rest of them were all saying, “No, no, the Russians are just bluffing. We just need to crank up the weaponry going into Ukraine and crank up the sanctions threats, and the Russians will back down.” That's what I think is the dominant view within the establishment.

On Those Who Propose Nuclear War

EIR: This brings up the issue of some of the mad men who openly propose a nuclear war. The head of the U.S. Strategic Command, Admiral Richard, said earlier last year that because of the rise of Russia and China, nuclear war, which we used to consider unlikely, is now likely, which is literally madness. And Senator Roger Wicker directly calling for a first strike nuclear attack on Russia. Do you think these people have the power to influence decision-making on the questions of war?

Jatras: I think they can influence it. Even I don't believe there are people who are crazy enough to actually deliberately push the button and say, let's have a nuclear war. Maybe there are. They've got to be out there somewhere. But the bigger concern I have is that we are in a very dangerous period, especially since I think the Russians will do something fairly dramatic before the end of the month, my guess is.

Then you always have the risk of unintended escalation. Increasingly for the last few years, you have American and Russian planes playing chicken over the Black Sea or the Baltic Sea, or with boats—something unintended could happen, leads to an escalation, and then we don't really know what happens after that. So, the risk is there. The question is, can we find some way to come to an understanding of security in Eastern Europe, which basically means getting out of Russia's face, or can we not? I find it very hard to believe this establishment can accommodate them. So that risk will be there.

On the 2014 Coup in Ukraine

EIR: The Obama administration and the Trump administration and the Biden administration have all referred to the violent overthrow of the elected government in Ukraine in 2014 as a “democratic revolution.” You know the situation well. What can you say about that coup and its aftermath today?

Jatras: Let’s remember what triggered it. You hear, again, misreported in the Western media, that it’s because [President Viktor] Yanukovich was Moscow’s stooge and he refused to proceed with a deal with the European Union. All Yanukovich did—first off, he wanted his country to be non-aligned, not either part of a Western bloc nor part of a Russian led bloc. He very much wanted to be a neutral country, which many people, by the way, are even proposing now as a solution to the problem. Well, that solution has never been acceptable to the West. We want Ukraine in our camp, by hook or by crook, despite the fact that Ukraine is a very, very divided country.

If you look at the electoral map, you look at the linguistic maps, the only way to hold Ukraine together is by having it straddle both sides of the East-West divide. Anybody with any sense knows that, but that’s not good enough with Victoria Nuland and people like that. You have this almost Bolshevik mentality which says, “The people of Ukraine have chosen their historical path.” No, they haven’t. The people of Ukraine are certainly as divided as the people in the United States are. They haven’t made a choice of any historical direction at all. It was, as you say, a coup, and it was clearly planned for many years in advance. A lot of money being poured in there by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and other Soros organizations and other outside groups, to prepare for a color revolution, the overthrow of the Yanukovich government, similar to what we saw recently in Belarus and very recently in Kazakhstan, an attempt to do that as well. These things don’t just come out of thin air, whatever the local roots of those might happen to be. Yanukovich, unlike President Tokayev in Kazakhstan recently, dithered. He

couldn’t make up his mind whether to accommodate the demands or to try to defend himself and to crush what was an insurrection—a real one, not a fake one like we talk about a year ago here in this country. He ended up paying for it by being driven out of office. At that point, we had this triumphalism coming from the West. “Ukraine is ours! Ukraine is coming to the West! Ukraine is coming to Europe! NATO,” blah blah blah.

Well, the Russians felt they had some cards they could play in the Donbas and supporting the local people there who, remember, were the people who voted for Yanukovich in the first place. They saw their vote taken away by a violent mob in the streets of Kiev, and



CC/UnFrame/Mstyslav Chernov

A clash between protesters and internal troops, Kiev, Ukraine, February 18, 2014.

they were not willing to accept it. Certainly, the people in Crimea were not willing to accept it, and the Russians took steps to secure their interests and the interests of those people in Ukraine.

We saw, as you know, the Minsk agreement by which Kiev was given an opportunity to repair some of this damage by saying, “OK, fine, let’s have a federalization of Ukraine. Let’s give self-rule to these areas and eastern Ukraine. Let’s not repress the Russian language. Let’s try to put Humpty Dumpty back together by accommodating the diversity of Ukraine.” And of course, they and their Western sponsors had no intention of ever doing that, despite Kiev’s legal commitment to the Minsk agreement. So that’s where we are now.

In the meantime, the West has proceeded with NATO expansion. Right after Trump was elected, they swept Montenegro into NATO, even though the polls showed that, at best, there was an even split within the population about whether they should join NATO. I actually think the majority was opposed to that. They just swept in North Macedonia—a ridiculous name for a ridiculous excuse for a country.

Why are we doing all of this stuff? It has nothing to do with American security, certainly, but it does have to do with tightening a stranglehold around Russia, which has been the purpose of NATO ever since, supposedly, the Cold War ended in 1991.



Azov News

After the regime change, members of the neo-Nazi Azov Regiment of the National Guard of Ukraine in a public parade in Berdyansk, Ukraine, July 21, 2017.

On the Neo-Nazi Organizations in Ukraine

EIR: What do you think of the relations between forces within the U.S. and Europe with the overtly neo-Nazi groupings within Ukraine? Even Israel has complained bitterly that Ukraine is allowing these neo-Nazi organizations to parade with swastikas and with pictures of Stepan Bandera and so forth. What’s behind these institutions and how much influence do they have over actual policy?

Jatras: It’s hard to say, Mike, because we know that especially in the Republican Party—not exclusively—some of this kind of World War Two Losers Association stuff, goes all the way back to the 1950s, really, even in the late 1940s, where the CIA and MI6 and other—you may be familiar with something called the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations. This is something that was around largely led by West Ukrainian pro-Nazi elements that went all the way back to the late 1940s and was originally created by British intelligence and then was adopted by the Americans as well. But there were many groups like that. Now, some of them may have been simply people who were nationalists of various sorts and thought that their countries had gotten a raw deal on the territorial arrangements in Europe in both World Wars; others, I think, were very ideologically committed to something along the lines of fascism or Nazism.

And we do see some elements like that in Ukraine.

I would draw a parallel to the way the United States, especially the intelligence agencies, have used jihadists of various sorts as proxies in various wars, going all the way back to Afghanistan in the 1980s. We used them in Bosnia, we used them in Kosovo, we used them in Libya. We are still using them today in Syria. There is, I think, a very cynical attitude of the intelligence agencies toward extremist groups, whether they’re neo-Nazis or whether they’re jihadists. They say, “Yeah, these people are operational, we can use them with a degree of plausible deniability. If they get into trouble, too bad for them. ‘The secretary will disavow any knowledge of

your actions.’ But they can get the job done because they’re ruthless.” So, I think the degree of cynicism about groups like this is really hard for most Americans to believe, that their government would engage in this.

On the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and Russia

EIR: The coup in Ukraine also included an effort to separate the Ukraine Orthodox Church from the Russian Orthodox Church as part of this anti-Russian hysteria. You are a member of the Greek Orthodox Church and you’re active in issues regarding Orthodox Christianity. What can you tell us about what was going on in Ukraine and where that stands today?

Jatras: Well, a lot of this is “inside baseball” in the Orthodox Church. I’m of Greek origin, personally. The parish I attend most of the time is a Russian parish although it’s mostly full of just regular Americans. Some are Greeks, some Russians, some Serbs, Romanians and so forth, but it’s mostly just Americans. We’re still one Church at this point. We like to say the devil can never subvert our Church because he can’t figure out the organization chart. We have this feud going on between Constantinople and Moscow over Ukraine and what really was the status of Ukraine in the 17th century and all this sort of thing. But I think we shouldn’t

lose sight of the fact that, again, just as I was mentioning with regard to jihadist and neo-Nazi groups, for outside meddlers, religion is simply another lever that they can use to try to manipulate society and to try to even break down society.

For example, we're talking about specifically the Orthodox Church. Back in 1948, there was essentially a coup in Constantinople (Istanbul) that removed the patriarch then, Maximos, who was considered to be too friendly toward the Russian Church—which, let's be honest, at the time was under the control of the Soviet authorities—and replaced him with the archbishop here in America, Athenagoras, who was actually flown over there on Truman's plane and installed by the U.S. government, the Greek government and the Turkish government acting in concert, and [the Ecumenical Patriarchate] has been an asset of the United States, the State Department and the CIA, ever since 1948. Of course, this is also consistent with Constantinople's kind of "neo-papal" aspirations within the Orthodox Church, which is itself a-historical.

At the same time, you've got Russia, which—again in a very peculiar structure among the local Orthodox churches—is itself a majority of the entire Orthodox Church, a good chunk of that being in Ukraine.

Now in Ukraine, the Orthodox Church is called the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. It is an autonomous part of the Russian Orthodox Church; it is self-ruling in virtually all aspects. That church is the canonical Church in Ukraine. Its status has not changed.

What has happened is, with U.S. support, Constantinople has tried to create a rival Orthodox church in Ukraine from a group of—actually several groups of—schismatics that they tried to cobble together into a new church. That's where we stand right now. We have two competing Orthodox churches in Ukraine. The canonical one aligned with Moscow, which is very much the majority, and a much smaller one supported by the United States and Constantinople, which is not acceptable to most of the rest of the world—in Romania and Jerusalem and Serbia and Bulgaria and the other places of the Orthodox Church.



CC/Zaraza

Thousands of Rose Revolution demonstrators jam the square all night in front of the Parliament building in Tbilisi, Georgia, Nov. 23, 2003.

Again, I know this is very complex “inside baseball,” but what it shows is frankly a degree of sophistication, and again, cynicism of the Western powers that they're willing to manipulate this in order to make some kind of a political game. Because I think the way they see it is, just as the Maidan in 2014 was a political coup to try to separate Russia from Ukraine, this is, if you will, a spiritual coup to try to accomplish the same thing: to take two very closely kindred people in language, culture and especially religion, and set them at odds against each other. It's not working, it's not successful, but it is creating a lot of discord, a lot of unhappiness and hurt, and even to some extent, violence.

On the Various ‘Color Revolutions’

EIR: Georgia is yet another country where the NED/Soros apparatus ran a color revolution in 2003, the so-called “Rose Revolution,” which saw the mobs connected to Mikhail Saakashvili overthrow the government of Eduard Shevardnadze, who himself had been the Soviet Union's Foreign Minister before becoming President of Georgia, a position that he kept after the falling apart of the Soviet Union and Georgia became independent. Then in 2019, you've pointed out, that there was a second color revolution—you could call it a “rainbow revolution”—which was unleashed by the Soros organization, and some people in the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, demanding support for an LGBTQ parade, a Pride parade, against the strong op-

position of the 80% of Georgia's population who are Orthodox Christians. Where did this lead and what is the status of that at this point?

Jatras: I think to a large part it is simply the application on the local level of what is a huge, huge part of Western policy, which is the promoting of— [pause] I'm trying to think of a socially and morally destructive force the equal of LGBTQ. As I like to say, there's no trans-Atlanticism without transgenderism. This is a huge part of American and Western democracy promotion and human rights promotion.

There's a great meme out there of an American soldier with an automatic weapon and a flag and a skull mask saying, "Until I'm out of ammo or out of blood, I will fight for homosexuality in Botswana." This is one of the great causes for which Americans are willing to shed blood and treasure? Evidently so.

I think part of it has to do with the fact that if you look at maps of social attitudes like, for example, towards same-sex marriage or toward the role of religion and public life and things like that, you will notice a rather odd thing—that is, that Eastern Europe, the areas that were under communism, are much more conservative than the countries of Western Europe. Maybe it was because as a progressive Promethean force, communism was such a failure that the underlying social attitudes are actually much more pre-modern conservative when it comes to social and family values and religious values than Western Europe, and presumably the United States, which have been corrupted by decades of consumerism and all these other materialist forces.

I think that the Western policymakers instinctively understand that if we want to conquer these societies, we need to break down their social attitudes. And one way to do that is to tell them, "Hey, if you want to be part of the West, you want to be part of the EU and NATO, you want to be part of the democratic club? It's a full package. You have to take this as well." I think that's what they were doing there in Georgia, but they also do that in Ukraine.

I even remember there was one of the priests from the church in Odessa, after they had a big Pride parade there, he went out afterwards with holy water to re-sanctify the streets after the parade had passed through. People there don't like this sort of thing, but nonetheless, the Americans and the U.S. embassies with their rainbow flags and all that, they're all over it. They're being forced to do this because, well, "this is democ-

racy. This is the West. You have to get used to it."

On the Changes in 'Western Values'

EIR: I'm reminded that Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov once said, regarding the so-called "Western values" that you hear spoken of so often, that the West insists on defending, are not the values of their grandfathers.

Jatras: No, they're not. And by the way, I can remember back in the 1990s, when I was at the Senate, there was a big issue about giving observer status to some big coalition of LGBT organizations, which included groups like NAMBLA, the North American Man/Boy Love Association, which is a pro-pedophile group. This was a very controversial thing at the U.N. This was under the Clinton administration.

North America, the U.S., Canada and all of Western Europe were really promoting this, and the countries in Eastern Europe—this was the 1990s—newly liberated from communism, were saying, "What is going on here? We have to accept *this*?" I mean, the communists there never would have accepted anything like that. So, you really had this kind of weird thing, where these Western countries, the paragons of democracy, are promoting this kind of depravity.

Latin America was opposed to it. The Islamic world was opposed to it. The Far East, I think, was mostly puzzled by it, by "what kind of people are these?" And then you had Eastern Europe, which was sort of on the fence, because they knew they should be integrating in with the democratic West, but at the same time they couldn't figure out why in the world we would be pushing something like this.

On the Balkan Wars

EIR: You've noted often that the leaders in both parties—you've named in particular John McCain, Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton—have never seen a war they didn't like. Biden's push for the war started by George W. Bush and Tony Blair in Iraq is well known, that he strongly promoted it. But less well known is that Biden led the effort to launch a war on Serbia in 1999, which led to 78 days of bombing, without U.N. authorization, laying waste to much of that country. Biden also backed the al-Qaida-linked Kosovo Liberation Army in that conflict and the independence of Kosovo. You were involved in some of this; if you could explain that?

Jatras: At the time I was the analyst at the Republican Policy Committee in the Senate, and the Clinton administration had decided on—"intervention" is a nice word—I would say on "aggression" in the Balkans, not only in Bosnia, but also in Kosovo. I tried, to whatever extent I could, to inform Republican Senators and their staff, which it was my job to do, as to what was the reality behind some of the claims of the Clinton administration. That was a little difficult to do when the leader of the Republican Party in the Senate at that time was Bob Dole, who was on the same program as Biden and the Clinton administration.

But I did my best to try, to say, "Look, here are the open sources. Here's what they're saying. Here's the various al-Qaida and other groups that are involved here in terms of the human rights and other claims. Here's what's really going on. Yeah, we've unleashed a brutal inter-communal war between Serbs and Muslims and Croats and Albanians. Rather than trying to find some way for a peaceful resolution, we're trying to aggravate it, in a conflict that was kind of a rock-paper-scissors thing." Well, the Serbs were always the bad guys, they said—let's just start with that and work from there.

And by the way, some of this goes back to what we were talking about earlier, as I mentioned, the World War Two Losers Association. If you look at a map of occupied Europe in the Balkans in 1943 and compare it to the way we carved up Yugoslavia, the two maps look awfully similar. We essentially adopted all of the Axis clients from during the war and said, "Oh, these are now democratic NATO clients." So, you know, again, the roots of these things tend to go back a long way.

In any case, obviously I was unsuccessful in trying to enlighten people about what was going on, although I will say that when the vote on the Kosovo War occurred in Congress, the Republicans voted primarily against it. Maybe a lot of it was just partisan because it was the Clinton administration, a Democratic admin-

istration. But even with Bob Dole in the Senate and Henry Hyde, at the time the Republican leader in the House, whipping votes in favor of the war, the Republicans in the Senate voted, I think very heavily in the majority, against the war, and in the House, not only a very heavy majority of Republicans voted no, they even voted down the war resolution. It failed on a tie vote in the House of Representatives.

Nonetheless, Clinton proceeded with the war, which tells you something about the integrity of our constitutional process, when a war can take place not only against international law, in violation of the U.N. Charter, aggression against another country, but even against American domestic law: When the Congress says "No, you do not have the authority to go to war," and they said, "Yeah, well, I'm going to do it anyway." And so, there are many things that are all wrapped up in these things.

The long and the short of it is that it is amazing to me how many people, even who are essentially anti-war and against these wars—You remember there was a great series by Oli-

ver Stone about the history of American wars and aggression around the world. I notice he skipped over the Balkans. He sort of forgot that war. These are the wars everybody wants to not really pay attention to because they sort of went down in the history as the place where NATO, the West came as the cavalry with the rescue. We were there for mom and apple pie and human rights and democracy. Well, it really wasn't that way. Nonetheless, that then set the stage and the precedent for places like Iraq and Libya.

On Kosovo and the 'Rule of Law'

EIR: On Kosovo: Secretary Tony Blinken and other U.S. officials have insisted that under the so-called "rule of law"—which means their own made-up rules—nations cannot change the borders of other nations by force. Maria Zakharova, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, responded to that statement by



CC/Tomislav Jagušt

Damage to the Defense Ministry building in Belgrade after NATO bombardment in 1999.



CC/Darko Dozet

Smoke fills the air after a NATO bombardment of Novi Sad, Serbia, March 18, 1999.

saying, “Do we get it right? That Washington no longer supports Kosovo’s sovereignty?” You were directly involved in much of this. What is Zakharova referring to?

Jatras: Let’s remember, under U.N. resolution 1244, which ended the war in Kosovo, Kosovo was supposed to remain part of Serbia, and there were supposed to be negotiations about its status with the fullest possible autonomy, which is what Belgrade was offering. They were willing to jump through any hoop requested of them in terms of whatever autonomy could ever exist anywhere on Earth, for any part of any country, they were willing to offer that to Kosovo. But the Western powers, especially Washington, had decided *ab initio*: “No, no. The only possible solution is independence.” Well, the U.N. resolution doesn’t say that.

At that time—I was in the private sector—I was involved in lobbying on behalf of the Bishop of Kosovo, Bishop Artemije, against the American policy of pushing for independence for Kosovo. I would say we met with some success. That was supposed to be resolved by the end of 2006. It wasn’t. It was dragged out until the beginning of 2008, when I think the Western powers thought they were losing support, so they needed to push the button they needed to move quickly on unilaterally recognizing Kosovo as an independent state, even though there was no legal mandate for that at all. And certainly, there was no negotiated solution to that effect.

I think that’s one reason why we have a stalemate now where you have about one hundred and ten coun-

tries at last count that recognized Kosovo, but a lot of those are micro-states. The vast majority of the world’s population—India, China and so forth, not to mention Russia—even still today, five members of the European Union—Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Spain and Slovakia—have not recognized Kosovo’s independence. So it’s not an acceptable solution for anybody, but that’s where we are right now.

I think the point that Zakharova is referring to is that you say you can’t change borders by force. Well, what do you think the West did in 1999 in the war and then 2008 in recognizing Kosovo’s independence? We did

precisely that without any legal authority at all. We detached part of a state, or at least claimed to, and say this is now a new country. Well, OK, you know, some things, once you break them, stay broken. Once you have a principle like the inviolability of borders, and say, “Oh, well, *we* can break them when we want, but *you* can’t.” Well, the other side says, “Oh no? Watch.” And then, if you want: might makes right. If you want the law of the jungle, if you want to say that the U.N. guarantees of the inviolability of borders and state sovereignty no longer matter, OK, they don’t matter anymore, I guess. Well, who asked for that?

On Construction and Destruction

EIR: On China’s role in all of this: the Belt and Road Initiative, which is taking the economic miracle within China over these past decades through massive infrastructure, lifting the productive platform of the nation as a whole. They are taking that to the rest of the world. They are also very active in Eastern Europe in huge amounts of trade through the thousands of trains that now traverse the new China-Europe Silk Road routes; and also through investments in infrastructure across the region, especially in Eastern Europe. How do you see the difference between China’s approach to international relations to that of the United States?

Jatras: This is something we’ve discussed before, especially with regard to some of the ideas that Mr. La-Rouche was championing for many decades. It really comes down to construction versus destruction: Are you going to build? Are you’re going to integrate—a rising

tide raises all boats? Or are you going to try to look at the other people trying to do that and say, “Let’s beggar thy neighbor, let’s try to throw roadblocks into that. Let’s try to break it down.” We’ve talked about this in the past.

For example, why don’t we have a land bridge across the Bering Strait, with trade between Eurasia and North America? Why are we not building our own Belt and Road Initiative here in the Western Hemisphere? Why are we not trying to come up with a way that countries can act in a cooperative way to build up their economies and to maximize their mutual advantages in the way that I think the Chinese and the Russians and the other countries behind Eurasian integration are doing that.

Our response is what? To try to give the Chinese the hotfoot in Xinjiang, to try to give the Russians a hot foot in Kazakhstan with a coup there, rather than trying to find a way to build up the world economy, build up standards of living. We’re trying to find a way to play “dog in the manger” by trying to retard those efforts if it’s being done by somebody else, while we neglect to do it ourselves. We’re not doing any of these things.

To put it in a nutshell: that is the distinction between construction and destruction, and it’s a really sad thing. But that gets back to what we’re saying about the nature of our ruling class and the duopoly in this country. They seem to see eye to eye on these things, about preserving American hegemony, primarily based on military power *ad infinitum* and using whatever dirty tricks in the book they can, to try to preserve that and to keep the other guys down.

On the Trump Administration as a ‘Missed Opportunity’

EIR: President Trump insisted—one of the reasons he got elected—that he was going to rebuild the American industrial economy, and Wall Street basically said, “Forget it. We have to bail out the bankrupt financial institutions,” and as a result, really nothing, nothing has changed. We continue to see no infrastructure and no development within the U.S. Do you have thoughts on that whole financial situation?

Jatras: I’m not an economist. I’m not an expert on financial matters. As I say, I do understand the differ-



White House

U.S. President Donald Trump, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit, Nov. 2017.

ence between construction and destruction. I think Trump did want to do that. I think he did have a concept of a national economy.

When it comes to China, yeah, I do think our China trade relationship with China is terribly lopsided. It seems to me that is because, frankly, it’s beneficial to a lot of corporate America to hollow out our industries, our production, and ship those operations to foreign countries. China, certainly, but many other countries as well. And then, of course, bring their goods back in the United States, duty free, basically undermining our national economy.

At the same time—I was saying this back at the time of the Trump administration—there’s a natural deal here between the United States and China, to where we rebalance our trade relationship to favor American production and the American industrial base, but at the same time, we get out of China’s face in the South China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and so forth, the same way that we should be getting out of Russia’s face in Eastern Europe; that it seems to me there’s the making of a deal there.

I don’t know that Trump really saw that. It seemed to me a lot of people in his administration had a strong animus against China across the board, that not only did they want to address the trade issues, which I think is legitimate, but also wanted to threaten them on some of the security issues, which I thought made no sense whatsoever.

But that’s where we are. I do think Trump, on some

level, at least in his gut, had a sense that we need to build up our own national economy, get control of our borders, get control of our trade. Unfortunately, like many other things, I don't think he really had any idea how to do that. He certainly populated his administration with all the wrong people when it came to getting any of his agenda from 2016 done. When you turn to the Heritage Foundation and the Republican National Committee to hire a bunch of Bush retreads for your administration, hey, you're going to get your tax cut, which any Republican president would want to push through the Congress, but you're not going to get an infrastructure bill, you're not going to get any of the other things you want.

I think looking back on it, Trump was a great missed opportunity and perhaps in some sense, the last missed opportunity for an America that, maybe, could have been revived.

On American Political Theory

EIR: As to the two-party system, you were an adviser to the Republican Party in the Senate, as you mentioned, for many years. You have insight into the two-party system that we have today—what Lyndon LaRouche referred to as the “two potty” system. What is your view on democracy in America today, which the war party claims to be defending in their wars around the world?

Jatras: To be precise, I was an adviser to the Senate Republican leadership, which is a Senate office, not a party office. The structure of the Senate, as in the House, is partisan, but it's the Senate, part of the U.S. government. It's not the Republican Party *per se*.

I don't know, Mike, we might not be fully in agreement on these things. I'm a pretty retrograde guy when it comes to political theory. I do notice that the founding fathers did not intend to create a democracy. They knew their history, they knew their Aristotle, they knew how democracies tend to end. For the first 80 or 90 years of our republic until the Civil War, we had a confederal republic. And then after the Civil War, until at least in the post-World War Two period, we had a federal democracy.

But then, increasingly in recent decades, we've had a consolidated administrative state, a managerial state. I don't think you would even call it democracy anymore. This is the way democracies tend to end. Once you have: everybody has the vote, everybody can say,

“Well, I want, I want, I want.” You tend to vote yourself benefits out of the other guy's pocket. And that goes for the plutocracy, too. They say, “Well, we can manipulate the levers of this thing too, and we have our propaganda machine in the media” and so forth. So none of this should be particularly surprising where you get to a moribund state where a constitution on paper is simply honored in the breach.

It's honored with fingers crossed behind your back, and it really doesn't exist anymore. The fact that we have this entrenched duopoly, which is as entrenched in America today as the CPSU was entrenched as a one-party system in the Soviet Union, is something that is—I don't know that there's any coming back from that, except in the same sense that, well, when the Soviet Union collapsed, so did the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and something new arose from the ashes.

Unfortunately, I think that's sort of where we are now in America today, what that looks like, how bad it's going to be, with things like supply chain breakdown, collapse of the dollar. Who knows what else is going to come, whether it results in the breakup of the country or what level of violence? I don't think we really know. I explored some of this in the piece you mentioned earlier, the “It's Later Than You Think.”

I think unfortunately—and again, we might disagree on this, Mike—a lot of this is baked into the cake. I don't know that there's much any of us can do by shouting from the rooftops that “bad things is a'comin.” The bad things will come, and then we'll see how we get through it, who survives, who doesn't, and what comes from the ashes.

On the Human Factor in History

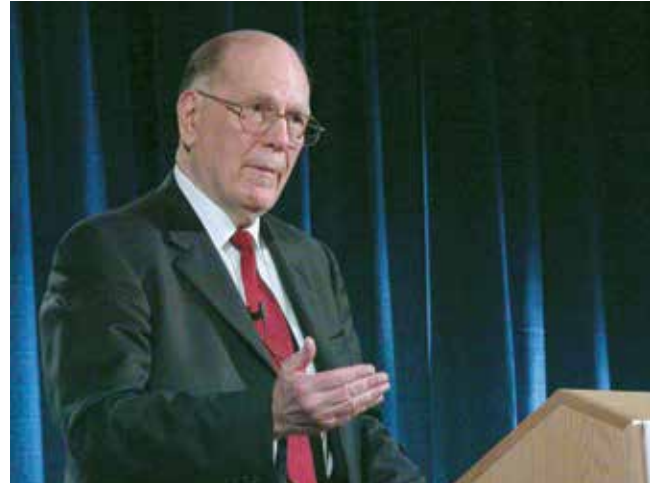
EIR: At the end of that talk, you gave to the students at the Ron Paul Institute, you said: “I think your ability to impact the big picture regarding any of this is slim to none.” That's somewhat like what you are saying right now. That's clearly rather pessimistic. As you know, LaRouche always told the youth, and others, that in a systemic crisis like we're in today—and you acknowledge it's a systemic crisis—the ability to make big changes is even greater than normal, rather than less, precisely because the old system is falling apart and people are forced to give up their delusions and look for new solutions, including outside of the United States, internationally. So how do you respond to that?

Jatras: Well, I would say that it largely depends on the human factor and the mechanisms. I remember during the 2020 election, so many people were saying—people who believe that the vote was stolen, and I’m one of those people—“Well look, the Supreme Court’s going to do this, or the state legislators are going to do that, or Congress is going to do this.” And I kept saying, “No, no, no. None of those things are going to happen, because those people who are in charge of the system, in charge of being the guardians of the system, will not do their duty even when the facts are plain.”

I think a lot of us have a kind of a naïve—and I’m not calling Mr. LaRouche naïve—but a lot of us have a naïve faith, in facts. If you throw the facts on the table—whether it’s about COVID or whether it’s about CRT [Critical Race Theory] and Black Lives Matter and Antifa, or whether it’s about foreign policy—that people will wake up and say, “Oh my God, you’re right, let’s do the right thing.” The trouble is that you have people holding all the levers of power who will not do the right thing. That means what you have is stasis. You have stasis until the collapse comes. Now what happens after that?

Yeah, I think there are things that people can do. I’m not advising complacency by any means. I just don’t see the levers. I don’t see the pathways to changing national policy even in the middle of a crisis until the collapse comes. That doesn’t mean that the local, and to some extent at the state level, things can’t be done. I live in a rural county in Virginia. We did pretty good in this last election here. We’re very optimistic here at the county level, maybe even a little optimistic at the state level.

That may be a little naïve. But you look at states like Florida and Texas to some extent, maybe we have a kind of a soft secession going on in some of the states and localities in America where, yeah, a healthy America could still be sustained and provide the groundwork for a kind of a revival of the American spirit and something like an American republic in the future. But I think those pathways are not yet clear to us. I think being active at the local level, being active with your community, acting with likeminded people, and why conversations like this, I think are valuable, are something we should focus on. But not to expect that, “Oh great. The Republicans are going to take the House this year,” and that goodness and niceness will break out, because it won’t.



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

Lyndon LaRouche was a visionary, who still reminds us of what could be, if listened to. Here, he speaks to an international audience from Arlington, Virginia, June 9, 2006.

On Lyndon LaRouche

EIR: Lyndon LaRouche always, always represented himself as an American, supporting the American System of Hamilton and Lincoln and Roosevelt, but he always insisted he represented the human race as a whole, and fought for the human race as a whole, rather than for one nation. You have followed LaRouche for many, many years, and you’ve been involved in many of our discussions and forums and conferences. How do you see LaRouche, his role in history and his impact on the international situation today?

Jatras: I think he will be remembered as a visionary and maybe a reminder of what could have been; that if there had been people who were willing to listen to common sense at the right time, when opportunities had not been frittered away one after another, the outcome could have been different; that we would not have to go through this crisis or crunch or whatever you want to call it, which I think we will have to go through now.

I think one of the things that occurred to me, looking back on my comments at the time when we were asking about his exoneration to try to get a pardon and an exoneration for him from the unjust prosecution—persecution that he suffered, and that you and many others suffered, by the way, at the hands of Robert Mueller and the establishment. You think about that. What if those policies had been heeded at the time when they could have made a big difference, rather than them saying, “Let’s squash this guy,” which was the response of the powers at the time?

I think it could have made a big difference in the life of this country, but unfortunately that didn't happen. Remember, he was out talking about these things, how many decades ago? There were how many missed opportunities through all of those decades? And now here we are.

I'm not saying those ideas are not applicable now. As you point out, we do have to look at the rest of the world, that to a great extent some of the things he proposed, about a new Silk Road and so forth, are being followed by the Eurasian powers. I don't want to sound naïve in that regard. I'm sure the Chinese and the Russians and other countries are looking out for number one, the way, frankly, a national government should do.

I think, as we discussed a little earlier, we have so many people on the Right in this country today who are calling for the "China, China, China" alarm, the same way the Left fell for "Russia, Russia, Russia" during the Trump years: "Oh, the Chinese Communists, you know, they're behind everything."

Well, first off, despite the formality of the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] being the ruling party in China, I think it's pretty clear that it's not—I like to call it Han National Bolshevism. The bottle may be red and has a picture of Mao on it, but the wine inside the bottle is Han Nationalist and Confucian, and there's simply nothing really communist about it other than the name of the party. Now, it's authoritarian. In some ways, it behaves in ways that we would consider quite inhumane. But I think it reflects the long history of China as a civilization, and it is focused on China's national interest, but not in a kind of a "let's destroy everybody else" kind of mentality, but rather that China will have its greatest flowering and opportunity when other people do as well.

Why can we not see that in our leadership? I think it gets back to the level of corruption that has become almost ubiquitous at the upper ends of our system, or as, hopefully, at the lower end, the local level, maybe to a lesser extent on the state level, they are still healthy things there that can be preserved.

On Optimism in the Future

EIR: Thank you. Any further thoughts or last words for our readers and supporters?

Jatras: No, not really, I would just ask people, if they want to see what I have written—I have lost my muse for writing; I do try to do interviews from time to time, but I am an incessant tweeter—until they kick me off. So go to @JimJatras on Twitter if you want to see

my latest thoughts or dumb ideas.

I do want to say that, blackpilled as I do tend to sound—I am a Boomer after all—I am fundamentally an optimist in many respects. As I pointed out with respect to France, the fact that one republic is ending doesn't mean the nation goes away. I do believe there is an American nation. I realize that concept is not well understood or accepted in America today because we tend to think in "civic terms" rather than national terms. But I do think that there is a future for the American people as we come through this crisis, which still, I think, has another five to seven years to go. We'll see how bad it gets. But something, some phoenix, will arise from the ashes.

At the same time, even in a greater sense, on a moral, spiritual level, the hairs on our head are all numbered. God is in His heaven. Nothing happens without His allowance or His will. If we pray without ceasing and have confidence in the final triumph of good, it will sustain us through even very difficult times.

EIR: Ok, thank you very much, Jim.

Jatras: Thank you, Mike, for the opportunity.



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