

## Closing Discussion

*This is an edited transcript of the discussion following the presentations to the May 26 Schiller Institute Conference, “U.S. and European Military and Security Experts Warn: The Insanity of Politicians Threatens Nuclear War.” Participants were Dennis Speed (moderator), Ray McGovern, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, and Col. Richard Black (ret.). The video of the entire conference is available [here](#).*

**Dennis Speed (moderator):** Thank you, Ray. I want to thank everybody for staying with us and participating as people have. There are many questions, and we’d like to bring up our panel as a whole. Helga, Colonel Black, and Ray. Helga, you see your friends here. Go ahead and give us any kind of response that you’d like to as to what you’ve heard as a whole first.

**Helga Zepp-LaRouche:** I think we should get the message out as quickly as possible to as many people as possible, because it is quite significant that the people with military backgrounds are against the war, and the politicians are the reckless ones risking the existence of civilization. That’s my most important comment. And I am very happy that Ray picked up on my last thought, because I think if there is not an emotional change then the danger is that this goes completely wrong. I’m really horrified when I see how “*gleichgeschaltet*” [the term meaning coordination, which was used in Nazi Germany, to impose Nazification on the institutions —ed.] the media and the official mainstream politicians are, at least as far as I can see it in Germany and English-speaking media. The hatred has taken over. And I think that has to be indeed replaced with love, and that is not some romantic idea, but it is the question of, are we human or not? Human beings are capable of creative reason, and therefore we should be able to find a solution.

Now, I know that what we are proposing in terms of the solution, the international security architecture, including Russia and China, sounds like very far away from what is possible right now. But I think that in my view, it’s not enough to have a European security architecture. I think it has to involve the United States and China, and the United States and Russia, because I think that anything less than that is not going to work. That does require a change in attitude.

**Speed:** We have a lot of questions, and what I’d like to do is, I know Senator Black you may have something to say in addition, but there’s a question for you. So, I’d like to start us off with that:

“I found your bio and this paragraph: ‘Before he retired from the U.S. military in 1994, Colonel Black headed the Army’s Criminal Law Division at the Pentagon, developed Executive Orders for the President’s signature, and laws that were enacted by Congress. He advised senior government officials on issues of national significance, and testified before the U.S. Congress representing the U.S. Army on four occasions.’”

Now, here’s the body of the question:

“The Bush-Cheney administration invaded Iraq in 2003. Many experts in international law have concluded that that invasion constituted international aggression, and I agree with them. If you had still been the head of the Army’s Criminal Law Division in 2002-3, would you have advised your superior officers—Vice President Cheney and President George W Bush—that their long-planned invasion of Iraq would be totally illegal from Day One? The reason I ask this is because it’s clear to me that Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine today does not constitute an illegal invasion or international aggression, because Russia was acting in self-defense and collective self-defense. See Article 51 of the UN Charter.”

That is what he poses to you, Colonel Black.

**Col. Richard Black:** Let me just say, it’s a very good question. It is my impression that our war against Iraq was a war of aggression. There was no foundation for it, and I think over the years the facts have come out that this business about sarin gas was a pretext. There seems to be a page in the CIA manual that says if you want to establish a pretext for war, make it sarin gas. It’s odorless, it’s colorless; you can claim it even if it’s never been used. We had no basis for going in there.

You know what’s amazing? We talk about that it’s criminal that Russia has fought in this urban combat, which inevitably means blowing down buildings and so forth. We said, blowing down the buildings, that’s a war crime. People so easily forget what we used to call “shock and awe.” “Shock and awe” was when we would go in, and we would massively bomb, and we would destroy the entire electrical grid, the water supply, the

food distribution, the transportation networks. Everything that was required for human life was destroyed by “shock and awe.” In fact, to this very day, we’ve been fighting in Iraq for 30-31 years now, and the electrical system that we destroyed when we attacked back then has never been fully restored. Saddam Hussein ran a very fine electrical system, but we have never been able to replace it, because we could care less about the people of Iraq.

You compare the situation with Russia and Ukraine. Clearly, Ukraine entering into NATO was an existential threat to Russia, because once they were a member of NATO, any conflict on the border with Russia would trigger the provisions of the NATO defensive alliance, and would have brought the entire world into war. Here you have one of the most corrupt nations in the world, Ukraine, and suddenly they would have the power to light the nuclear torch. So, Russia could not afford that.

In many ways, they were in precisely the situation that we faced during the Cuban Missile Crisis. I was a boy back then, I hunted snakes in the Florida Everglades, which is very remote back in those days. It was early in the morning, during the height of the crisis, and I was driving through the Everglades on Route 27. Florida is not a very military state, and all of a sudden, coming over the horizon, was the greatest convoy of military vehicles I have ever seen in my life, including 32 years in the military. It was gargantuan. The U.S. was moving forces down to south Florida to prepare for an invasion of Cuba.

At that time, and today looking back, I think we were fully justified in an invasion of Cuba had it been necessary. Why? Because Cuba presented a serious threat, a nuclear threat on our border; we could not allow that. Why can’t we understand that Russia cannot accept a much closer threat on its border? Cuba, after all, was 90 miles by sea. The Ukrainian border is right on the border of Russia; they cannot accept a nuclear-powered NATO member Ukraine. It simply must not happen.

I think what we need to do ultimately is to look to the Austrian solution. During the Cold War there was a treaty signed in 1955. The post-World War II powers, the Soviet Union, U.S., UK, France all agreed that they would remove all of their troops from Austria. And in exchange, Austria would modify its constitution and it would say two things. First that [Austria] would be a neutral, non-belligerent nation for eternity. Number two, that the [Austrian] constitution would prohibit the



DoD/Edward Martens

*In its illegal war of aggression against Iraq, the U.S. “shock and awe” doctrine destroyed everything required for human life. Here, U.S. Army soldiers and a Bradley Fighting Vehicle in Babil, Iraq, March 26, 2005.*

stationing of any foreign troops on Austrian soil. Austria, as a consequence of this treaty, was this island of tranquility at the height of the Cold War where we had thousands of tanks and missiles, artillery pieces.

I was part of NATO back then; I remember it very well. We were poised for an invasion at the Fulda Gap. Meanwhile, I managed to go into Austria, and I attended the Kris Kringle Market, and people were celebrating Christmas and the birth of Christ. There were lights and candles, and people were joyous and happy. Meanwhile, everywhere on the Iron Curtain, people were tense and faced off with bayonets and artillery pieces. That type of solution is what we need to impose in Ukraine.

At this point, I think realistically Russia is not going to give up the territory that they have acquired in very difficult fighting. But I think we’re going to have to recognize that these Russian-speaking areas will now become a part of Russia. But at the same time, there need to be guarantees. I think perhaps the guarantees could guarantee Ukraine that Russia would not take over the port of Odessa, so that they would have the ability to move their freight through the Black Sea. There are solutions, and we better start talking about them now, and stop talking about escalating towards nuclear war.

**Speed:** Thank you, Col. Black. I’m going to go to you, Ray, with something. First, a comment, and then a question.

The comment was:

“I can relate to everything being said but for one thing. You have talked about a Russian war of aggression.” This of course was more for, I think, the Italian Air Force officer. “The war of aggression was started by the Ukrainian government against the population in eastern Ukraine in 2014. The Ukrainian government fought a war of aggression for eight years. For eight years, the Russians demanded that Ukraine stop the war, or Russia would have to intervene militarily to protect that population. For eight years, the Ukrainians ignored the Russian demands and warnings. For eight years, Ukraine was not sanctioned by Western governments, and the population didn’t get help. They got no medical aid, no food, no relief, no money.”

And it goes on. So, that was the comment.

The question is from a Reverend, and I direct it in your direction, Ray, but others may have something to say about it. He says:

“There are some 4,000 lobbyist groups in the United States associated with the military-industrial complex, a complexity that Eisenhower warned about before leaving the office of President. Isn’t the expansion of NATO and the need for it to spend 2% of GDP on their military, a product of these lobbyist groups?”

**Ray McGovern:** Sure. Actually, I can present my acronym, the MICIMATT. It sort of rhymes with the Mickey Mouse—MICIMATT—it’s the military industrial congressional intelligence media academia think tank complex. I just note that think tank, we have Brookings coming out now in a way to support what Biden is doing in the most warlike way.

So, what do I mean? I mean that since the Eisenhower warning over 60 years ago now, his MIC—the military-industrial complex—has expanded. Now it’s the military industrial congressional intelligence MEDIA academia think tank complex. Why do I say media as if in all caps? Because media is the linchpin; without the media you can’t make it work.

So, obviously you need an enemy. I mean, Hello! Peace is very bad for the military-industrial complex. China is supposed to be number one, but for the nonce, Russia will do quite well, thank you very much. People are making money hand over fist. Raytheon and Lockheed are writing to their shareholders saying, “Man, the tension in Ukraine,” and this is a direct quote, “is very good for business.” So, the questioner of course is right on target: It is the military-industrial complex that is responsible for taking more than 50-55% of our discretionary tax money and putting it into wild ideas



*The “military-industrial complex” warned of by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his farewell speech of Jan. 17, 1961, has expanded into the “military industrial congressional intelligence media academia think tank complex” (MICIMATT), which now drives the nation to war without end.*

like F-35s that really don’t work all that well.

Let me just add something in addition to what my good friend Colonel Black has said. He’s quite right, of course, about the phony intelligence that was ginned up to “justify” the war in Iraq. A five-year study done by the Senate and bipartisan conclusions indicated that the intelligence used was “uncorroborated, contradicted, or nonexistent.”

Wait a second. What does nonexistent intelligence look like? I think it means made-up stuff. A bipartisan five-year investigation by the Senate Intelligence Committee. So, the big distinction here, and I’m so glad that Colonel Black raised it, is between Cuba, where we had an existential threat to the United States, and Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, you name ’em. Can you tell me if any of those countries were, or are, or all of them together would be an existential threat to the United States? No. Cuba was.

One extra point to add to what Colonel Black said: We were very proud, we intelligence analysts, at having discovered the missiles in Cuba. We said, “Mr. President, here are some images. Those are the missiles.” He said, “Well, are they armed?” We said, “Well, um, ah, we assess that they’re not armed.” Now, Kennedy was too polite a person to say, “What the Hell does ‘we assess’ mean?” So, we got off the hook. Guess what? Some of you may know, they were armed! They were ready to fire. We didn’t know that until 30 years later.

What am I saying here? I’m saying that Colonel Black is exactly right, inasmuch as he portrays the situation facing Vladimir Putin. Now, there are missile

sites emplaced already in Romania near the Russia border, and almost complete in Poland near the Russian border. They are said to be ABM sites—anti-ballistic missile sites. But we know, Putin knows, he’s actually said this explicitly, “We know what the plans are.” They can be used for what Putin calls “Tomagawk”—there’s no H in Russian—Tomahawk missiles—and later, hypersonic missiles flying eight or nine times the speed of sound.

Now, you’re Putin, and you’re looking at these things, and you know that these anti-ballistic missile systems can be changed by slipping in a disc overnight to firing offensive strike missiles that can hit not only Moscow, but a good share of Russia’s ICBM force. And you’re saying, “Wow! How many minutes do I have to decide whether I should destroy the rest of the world?” If you’re a responsible leader, those are the kinds of questions you ask, right? Maybe nine minutes. If they’re hypersonic, five to seven minutes. That ain’t enough time.

So, what is the inevitable result? You automate these systems. You let some NCO down in the ranks decide, “Whoops! That looks like a missile going up there near Norway. Looks like a U.S. missile.” In reality, it’s a scientific research rocket. “My orders are to fire. Putin doesn’t have any time to make a decision, the decision has devolved to me. Maybe I ought to check with my Lieutenant Colonel. Lieutenant Colonel?” “Fire!” That’s the end of us, OK? What Putin is trying to do is very sensible.

I’ll add one other thing that really baffles me. Did the President of the United States promise Putin that he would not put offensive strike missiles in Ukraine? The Russians say he did. Nobody on the U.S. side acknowledges that he did.

Very briefly, on December 7, 2021, Biden and Putin talked by telephone. Putin and Biden said, “OK, we’re going to set up this negotiating process.” Biden, to his credit, heeded the note that this was somewhat urgent. “We’ll do it on the 12th of January, 2022.” Then, all of a sudden, Moscow makes it known that Putin needs to talk to Biden right away, before the end of the year. So, they talk on the 30th of December; they talk by telephone.

Now, we don’t know from the U.S. side what was discussed. But the Russians had a read-out, and they said “Joseph Biden, the President of the United States, said, ‘The United States has no intention of putting offensive strike missiles in Ukraine.’” Period, end quote. There was rejoicing in Moscow, there was a lot of publicity! Putin’s main aides made a big thing out of this. What did the U.S. do? You won’t find much



DoD/Nicholas Vidro

*An existential threat to Russia in the form of ABM sites is already in place in NATO countries near or bordering on Russia, which can quickly be repurposed for Tomahawk and later hypersonic missiles for strikes against Moscow and Russia’s ICBM force. Here, an AN/TWQ-1 Avenger air defense system firing a missile over the Black Sea from Romania, July 19, 2017.*

mention of this at all. I haven’t even checked; I’ve not seen anything in the *Times* or the *Washington Post*. There was nothing in the U.S. read-out. Did the U.S. say, “No, no, you’ve got that wrong? The Russian read-out is erroneous”? No, they didn’t.

So, I’m left as an analyst to say, “Wow!” Biden, one-to-one personally, on a telephone with Putin promised to do something, and then it slipped through the cracks. Or, then he woke up the next morning, Biden did, and his advisors said, “Joe! For God’s sake, that’s a big high card we have in our hand there. You can’t promise not to put offensive missiles in Ukraine.” All I know is, that happened. All I know is that Russian read-outs are almost always accurate on such things, and I know also it was not disputed by anybody else.

So, what happened to it? All I can say is, if I’m Vladimir Putin, I’m saying “Whoa! The President of the United States can promise me something, personally, one-on-one, and then, apparently, he goes back on his promise, or he figures he can’t really do this because of the hostile forces of the inner circle. His domestic politics won’t allow him to do it. So, how can I trust Joe Biden?” That has to be addressed, and all I’m saying is, this is a real, real existential problem.

I have my own experience with the Cuban Missile Crisis, that’s why I look a little older than Colonel Black. I was in uniform at the time, and I can tell you how there were no weapons at Fort Benning, Georgia because they were all down in Key West.

**Speed:** Thank you, Ray. I wanted to go right back to

Helga, because we have limited time. Helga, there are several questions which all sort of converge upon your view, and also this issue of Europe and the United States. Some are talking about the question of American exceptionalism, and what Europe can do about that problem. Some things are just a question about the issue of nuclear war and the problem of the commitments made because of the Green New Deal. There are several different small questions like that. But I just also wanted to see if you had any reaction, any response to what Ray was just saying, and Colonel Black earlier.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Well, I would hope that an Austrian solution kind of outcome would be possible.

Right now, there is all this talk that Putin cannot be allowed to win, meaning that the West has to win over Russia. In the best case, that would mean to fight until the last Ukrainian, and the Ukrainian people would be just completely, absolutely smashed and the victims of this whole thing. But I have another concern, and that is that even if one gets a negotiated solution for Ukraine, which I think is absolutely necessary, there must be a ceasefire right away. Then, everything else can be negotiated, territorial questions, other questions.

But even if that would succeed, we are not out of trouble. Because the intention of NATO and the United States and Global Britain, and unfortunately to a certain extent such people like Ursula von der Leyen [President of the European Commission-ed.] in the EU, they are determined to make sure that China is not rising.

If you look at all the activity: Blinken running around in Asia; Biden is now in Asia; von der Leyen was in India. There will be a huge NATO summit in June in Madrid, which will discuss new NATO strategy, Global NATO. The aim of all of this is to prevent the rise of China, to contain and encircle not only Russia, but also China, to prevent other nations from lining up with these two who have now a big strategic alliance. This is not functioning because many countries, even Brazil under Bolsonaro doesn't take an anti-Russia position; Argentina; Indonesia; India; Thailand; Nigeria; Egypt; all of these countries go back to their Non-Aligned tradition. The problem is not solved in just ending the Ukrainian war, because the effort to contain Russia and China would remain.

Furthermore, we are still in a hyperinflationary blow-out of the financial system, which is the real locomotive for the war danger, because that is what motivates these people, because rather than reforming and recognizing that the neo-liberal system is finished,

they would rather go to war. Therefore, as long as you don't address the underlying reason, which is the collapse of the financial system, I don't think there will be a solution.

I absolutely think that what I have said in terms of the international security architecture and development architecture is the only way. And that brings up the big question: Is there any hope to get the United States to change its course? To take up the offers of Xi Jinping, of a win-win cooperation? Xi Jinping has made two very important initiatives in the recent weeks which absolutely are echoing what we are saying. Namely, he has put on the table a Global Development Initiative which is a plan to overcome poverty worldwide in cooperation with all these countries, and a Global Security Initiative.

Yesterday we had a [forum](#) with Stockholm and Copenhagen, where a Chinese speaker [Prof. Li Xing] basically said that for the Chinese there is no peace without development, and no development without peace. Therefore, these two initiatives have to go together—the Global Development Initiative, and the Global Security Initiative.

I really think that the United States would gain much more in terms of the real interests of the United States, if they would join that. Chas Freeman told us a while ago, “Let the Chinese build railroads; and we just put American cars and American locomotives on the rails which the Chinese build. Let the Chinese build airports. We can use them for our purposes and cooperate.” I think that is the direction we have to go, and I think if the United States military-industrial complex and the other entities—some of them are pretty useless—but if they could be convinced that they could earn more money, or just be of use and not have World War III if they would join with these initiatives and countries.

I know that that is a big question, but I still would like to hear from Ray and Colonel Black what they think at some point.

**Speed:** OK. Let's ask right now, and there are a couple of other questions, but we can pause for a minute. So, Colonel Black, any thoughts?

**Col. Black:** Let me just add to what Helga has said. I think it really is very important that we work with Russia, with China. We need to recognize we have a multipolar world; it is emerging. She is definitely correct that at the heart of what drives and what worries all

of the deep state actors is the instability of the Western financial system today.

But let me just point out, the illusion of Russian and Chinese aggression around the world. You hear this repeated many, many times, that any day, Russia is going to take over the entire world; China is taking over the world; they're doing all this stuff. If you look at the number of foreign bases, between the U.S. and the U.K., we have about 900 overseas military bases, bases where we have troops stationed in foreign countries. The total bases of the Russians and the Chinese? About 35 in total. China only has 5 overseas bases, compared to the 900 or so of the U.S.-UK.

We've created this bizarre illusion because the deep state, the war industrial complex, must have enemies. You cannot manufacture weapons when you don't have enemies. So, we create this illusion that they're coming to get us; they're on our doorstep. The fact of the matter is, that China is out to make a buck—they want money. Yes, the Belt and Road Initiative is very important, but they have a different paradigm.

Our paradigm is, we go into a country, we set up NGOs, we take over the government by coup; if we can't, then we just bomb the place to smithereens half the time. You compare that with the foreign policy of China, which is: You go in; you work with whatever government is there; you're not judgmental, but you make hard business decisions; you make investments. I think for people who are comparing the foreign aid paradigm of the U.S. and China, they're saying, "My likelihood of surviving is much higher if I follow the Chinese paradigm."

So, we need to just get away from this feeling that we have to constantly be at war with the entire world. Great Britain has the 21-mile English Channel that separates it from Europe. That 21 miles has kept it quite safe from invasion over many centuries. There have been a couple of exceptions—the Vikings came in, and bigger ones than that. But in any event, they're basically safe; 21 miles of ocean.

You look at us. We've got 5,000, 6,000 miles of ocean separating us from the nearest threats that we perceive. So, we probably have less reason to be militaristic than any great nation on Earth. And yet, here we are. Our budget, the last I checked, was as large as the next largest 11 defense budgets, the biggest defense spenders in the world. So, we cut a single check to Ukraine that is as big as the entire military budget of Russia for a year!

So, we need to escape from this illusion that they're

out to get us. They're not out to get us: There is nothing aggressive either in the policy of China or of Russia. The only aggression is with the U.S.-UK, NATO countries. I look at the history of the wars of the Russian Federation. You have the tiny, tiny war in Georgia. You have the war in Syria, which they didn't get involved in until four years after the terrorists had been there. Finally, at the last moment, they agreed to go in at the request of Syria, because ISIS and al-Qaeda threatened to overwhelm the country. A very reluctant, somewhat limited involvement in Syria. Now, you have the situation in Ukraine.

You compare that to our situation where we've fought multiple wars against Iraq. We fought in Somalia; we fought in Bosnia; we fought in Haiti; we fought in Kosovo; Afghanistan; Yemen; Libya; Uganda; Syria. I've probably missed half a dozen wars that we've fought. We fight everywhere! You can literally have a soldier who retires with 30 years active service in the U.S. Army, and he will retire and never have served a single day, when the United States was not invading and occupying some country.

So, to compare that with the situation with Russia and China. Where has China fought? Who have they invaded? They've had a couple of little border disputes, but that's it. They don't invade people; we invade people. So, we need to get away from this illusion. If we could ever break away from the illusion that they're out to get us, which is totally false, then we could start chopping back on our defense budget. World tensions could reduce; and we could get back to making cell phones or whatever we do for a living and have a genuine economy that wasn't based on killing people in foreign countries. That's what we ought to do.

**Speed:** OK. Ray?

**McGovern:** I would agree. I would say that when you go back to the military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned against, he said there's only one antidote to the accretion of power, wanted or unwanted, by the MIC, and that is, a well-educated citizenry. That's what we lack here in the United States, we do not have a well-educated citizenry. That's why I applaud what we're doing here, trying to get the word out. We need to keep doing that, and as things turn as they are now in Ukraine, as Russia consolidates its pincer movement there in southeast Ukraine, people can come to the conclusion that we need to do something about this, we really ought to

negotiate and not fight to the last Ukrainian.

With respect to nuclear war, I think Biden really, really doesn't want nuclear war. I also think Biden is not very much in charge. I tried to adduce an example of that before. It doesn't matter what McGovern thinks, it matters what Putin thinks. If you look at Putin looking at Joe Biden, he's asking, "Who's in control of this country, anyhow? Biden makes a personal promise to me, and all of a sudden, it's forgotten. Who has access to the nuclear button? Well, I have to assume the worst here; I have to assume that we're going to have a situation where, if the tide turns against us Russians in Ukraine, I'm going to have to do something."

Now, what will Putin do? I don't think he'll resort to small nuclear weapons. He'll go to his Big Brother. There's been a tectonic shift in what the old Soviets used to call "the world correlation of forces." People talk about the end of a unipolar world, well that's clear. The U.S. is not in charge of everything anymore. But then they talk about a multipolar world. I see it as a bipolar world, in both senses of the word. You have the lily-white West—NATO—and then you have China, India, a lot of the Russians are people of color. The ones who look more like most of us, well they've been blackened so much over the last ten years that they can be considered people of color, too. You've got most of the world against the lily-white NATO. This is big. This is a dichotomy that really has to be addressed by more sensible policies.

If Putin's back is against the wall, he's going to go to his friend Xi Jinping, whom he, I believe, told about what he was going to do in Ukraine. Did Xi say, "Oh my God! No, no! You can't do this because our cardinal principle is non-interference in the affairs of other countries! We're the only ones faithful to Westphalia!" No, he didn't. What did he say? "I will give you an exemption from Westphalia, as long as—you're not going to do this before the Olympics are over, are you?" That's the kind of at least tacit endorsement that the Chinese gave Putin for breaking their fundamental principle stand against interference in the affairs of other countries.

Now they no longer say that very much. What they say now is, "We judge every situation on its specific merits, and then we react." They said that to Biden; they said that to the head of the EU; they said that to the head of NATO. It's right there in their statements. "We judge these things, now, based on the specific merits of the situation."

So, that's what Putin's going to do first. If the Chinese

say, "Well, now we don't want any part of this," then I think we do have a real chance of the consideration of nuclear weapons. I don't think it's going to come to that, but if it comes to that, then we really do have to worry, because Putin knows that our generals and admirals treat this possibility with incredible nonchalance, and think that they can perhaps limit a nuclear exchange. Which is, again, crazy. Everyone knows that except apparently these generals and admirals. And as long as Biden can keep them in check, which is a real question, then I think we're going to be OK. We'll be able to negotiate, or ask Zelenskyy to get more sensible, and negotiate a way out of this situation in Ukraine.

**Speed:** Let me ask, Helga, if you have any response to what you've heard them say? If not, I can go on with other questions.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I think you should go on with other questions. Even so, I don't think my question was really answered, totally.

**Speed:** OK, well, there'll be plenty of other chances. Actually, there's a general question for everyone, and it may help.

"Dear Speakers: Do you have any further information on the possible Polish peacekeeping mission in western Ukraine, which is tantamount to a de facto occupation? From my point of view, Zelenskyy has promised to grant Polish citizens a special status and allow them to hold political office in Ukraine. It speaks very much in favor of this future development."

Then he goes on, and has some speculations, which I'll include because they're part of the question:

"I suspect that Russia will advance now as far as Kremenchuk in central Ukraine, and the regions or cities of Dnipro, Kharkov, as well as the entire south of the country, including the annexation of Transnistria will probably become a permanent Russian territory" and so forth. "In my view this could all have been prevented if the Minsk agreements had been sincerely implemented at an early stage, or at least during the negotiations of recent months. I also assume a securing of borders by a new wall in Europe, nuclear missiles. This will leave Ukraine as only a narrow strip between Poland and the Russian Federation."

He's basically asking what the panel thinks of any of these scenarios, "are any of these realistic, what do you think?" Helga why don't we start with you first, and then go to the others.



CC/Mstyslav Chernov

*From the 2014 coup in Ukraine until 2022, Kyiv forces continually attacked the ethnic Russian population in the Donbas region, leaving more than 14,000 dead. Here, a tank near the ruins of the Donetsk International Airport, the scene of heavy fighting between the forces of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Ukrainian military, June 9, 2015.*

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I would like to ask Colonel Black to answer first.

**Col. Black:** OK, it is interesting, the involvement of Poland. There are very credible reports that Polish troop units have been inside of Ukraine. I'm not sure how far to the east they are. They're not, to my knowledge, engaged in active fighting with Russian troops, but they certainly are in the western parts; they may be doing logistics things—I'm not sure. But Zelenskyy is very pleased to have them there, and he seems to be offering them almost citizenship in his country, which is a rather a bizarre thing, because you don't usually just welcome foreign troops into your country like that.

It is threatening, because Poland has been unusually aggressive during this war. They have sought nuclear weapons; they have asked for U.S. military bases to be established in their country. That's one that bears watching, and I hope it doesn't continue to develop too far. Because this is the kind of thing—this is the risk that we run. NATO is playing this enormously reckless, high-stakes game, where something happens, somebody says, "well, let me do this: I'll insert these troop units," and the next thing, you have some conflict between Russians and Polish troops in Ukraine, and Poland begins to flood troops in; Russia does, and one thing and another. So, it's very dangerous, because Poland is rather aggressive about this.

Now, you mentioned the Minsk Agreements. The Minsk Agreements were signed back in 2014, 2015, and

they were designed to resolve the military conflict, where Ukraine was attacking the two Donbas republics that had declared their independence. These were Russian-speaking areas, very heavily ethnic Russian, and so they were agreements which were facilitated. Germany, France, various countries were involved, and the idea was to exchange prisoners, have a ceasefire, and then develop a situation where you would have a semi-autonomy granted. That was never carried out other than the prisoner exchanges, and that has been problematic.

**Speed:** OK. I have two questions for you, Colonel Black. I have a question for you Ray, and one for you, Helga. And I'll probably do that in that order, since we're converging on time. And there are a lot of questions still coming in.

So, Colonel Black, two questions: This first one is:

"Colonel Black, I have experiences in the Marine Corps from the 2000s, that reveal the role of—" and he names some people—"to grow NATO for war with Russia and China, without triggering an arms race. I also learned about the end-game strategy which appears to be going as planned. I heard this from our former commandant while he was the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO in Europe, and other high-ranking Pentagon officials. I did not collect evidence when I had the chance, but I know where to look. Is there a Freedom of Information Act request strategy that we can use to reveal this? Is there a way we can get enough veterans to come forward to work for peace? We need more Smedley Butlers and Dick Blacks."

I'm going to ask the second together with it, which was directed to you, and you'll see why.

"Colonel Black, what is the discretionary power of the American President in terms of taking war decisions? Would it be the case that the military, industrial, industrial and media complex has 99% of war and peace power decisions, or does the President have any veto on that power?"

In general, he's asking about the chances for nuclear war. That's the second question.

**Col. Black:** I may black out here, sometime shortly, because my battery has run low, so I'll just get in here. First, I want to address the discretionary power of the President: In theory, the President is the commander-in-chief. He makes the decisions on war and peace and treaties, and all of this sort of thing, with advice and consent of the Senate.

In practice, as we saw with President Trump—



Trump took office with a view toward withdrawing from NATO. You recall, he didn't initially say, "we want to just have everybody spend more money." He said, "we need to just get out of NATO." And you could see, immediately, there was a plan set in place to overthrow him, and it was at least partially successful. President Trump ordered withdrawal of troops from Syria, and in response, the Secretary of Defense resigned to throw the chain of command into chaos, and meanwhile, John Bolton flew off to Tel Aviv, and countermanded the President's order on television in the Middle East. President Trump was most patient with his national security adviser. Had I been President, he would have had the most stinging public rebuke that any official had ever had!

However, it is clear that the President has less than full authority over the forces of the U.S. and this is very dangerous in some ways. So that's the situation we have.

As far as the expansion of NATO, I have no question that the U.S. looks at NATO as a global tool. It started off, when I was over there, it was a defensive alliance. In 1991, when the Warsaw Pact dissolved, it became a very offensive alliance. It has been involved in wars of aggression in places like Syria, in Libya, other places. And so, it is a dangerous thing, and we are using it as a tool, and we are trying to expand its use in Asia, where what we've done—we have the UK making defense alliances over there. We have Japan being sort of like a friend—[cut off]

**Speed:** Oh. Does that mean that his battery literally ran down? I guess that's what he was telling us! OK, he seems to have been cancelled due to electronic interference. We'll leave it up to Ray to tell us whether that was done by intelligence agencies. And we obviously want to thank Colonel Black for everything he contributed. There were other questions for him, and we'll forward those to him.

What I'll do now, is I will go to you Ray. The question is:

"My understanding is that the military-industrial complexes and pro-war lobbies, which are influencing U.S. politicians as well as NATO policy, that mainstream media parrot the lies of the CIA/FBI and they indulge in cultural wars, to distract regular U.S. citizens from real issues. What can a regular citizen do?"

**McGovern:** Well, a regular citizen needs to seek objective information elsewhere. You can't rely on BSNBC,

or CNN. You can't rely on the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*. The problem is, a lot of Americans are working two jobs, come home, they feed the kids, and they put their feet up, and want to be entertained and they turn on Fox News or something even worse.

So, it requires a degree of responsibility. It requires a degree of earnest searching for the truth. But that's why I welcome sessions such as this: I think what you've heard is a lot of truth this morning and this evening. And I would just say to S., hang in there! Make sure you know where to look, and I would be remiss, if I didn't say what my youngest son says that I need to do every time I'm on the air—mention the website that he runs for me: raymcgovern.com, not a lot to remember. And he always says, "Now, Dad, when you say that, when you say raymcgovern.com, always add, 'If you don't get it, you don't get it!'"

**Speed:** All right. Helga, let me ask this question, and then we can have any final comments from you. This is a question from Peru. He asks:

"I am a Peruvian citizen of more than 40 years, and I have witnessed with astonishment, since the bombing of Yugoslavia, the false-flag attack on New York, the preventive wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, and now the use of Ukraine as a pretext to weaken Russia, all these attacks have been directed by the interests of the Western banking industrial military complex, using NATO as an executor. And contrary to these deplorable actions, I've progressively observed how the international press, political organizations, governments fundamentally of the West, and organizations of the United Nations itself have been diminishing their critical position against these actions. Now, it's almost nonexistent. Much worse than almost nonexistent indignation of the population.

"We are facing the success of a process of social engineering, for kind of control of public opinion, and we are subject to the interests of the elites. And again, what can be done?"

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I think the good thing, and I think Ray indicated it already to a certain extent, that you have right now a realignment in the world, where the West—I mean, I can only say that from Germany, but, the West in general—the Western establishments are so arrogant, they think they are the finest and the best and the smartest; you have U.S. exceptionalism, but you have European arrogance which is no less exceptional, for that matter. They don't realize—they keep saying

that if they only go ahead with their policies, sanctions, crushing this country, crushing that country, that they will somehow bring all of these other countries into submission. But it is not happening.

What is happening is that the weaponization of the dollar, for example, that the U.S. Treasury first stole \$9 billion from the Afghan people, and the Europeans stole a couple hundred million as well; then they confiscated more than \$300 billion of the assets of Russia. Now what that has done it has made having your assets in dollars very risky, and

many countries are thinking of how to get out of the dollar, because your money can be stolen at any moment.

What is happening right now, is that there is, between many countries of Asia, especially the Eurasian Economic Union, they will have a summit in two days in Bishkek, there will be a discussion about an alternative monetary-credit system. China is doing more and more trade with Russia in the ruble and renminbi; with India in rupees and ruble and renminbi.

What is emerging is a completely different system based on the BRICS. They just had a summit of the foreign ministers, where there are many countries that want to be part of the BRICS—Argentina is one of them; then I think Indonesia has requested to be part of it; several African countries, so the BRICS is growing. Then the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, they are also integrating more into many fields, and many other organizations of the Global South are tending to lean this direction. And as I said, there is an emergence of a non-alignment spirit.

Now, all of this is naturally taking place under horrendous conditions, because you have a runaway hyperinflation. Countries are going bankrupt. Look at Lebanon for example, it's just falling apart. Pakistan has an extreme economic crisis. Ukraine, the economy is completely collapsing. Afghanistan, an absolute horror show. This is what NATO left. They couldn't care less, and there are now reports that the West is, again, supporting the opposition to the Taliban, to undermine the Taliban in Afghanistan. But they lack very essential things, medicines, and food. It's an incredible situation.

All of this realignment is not taking place under peaceful conditions, but under conditions of hyper-



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

*The U.S. Treasury stole \$9 billion from the Afghan people, then confiscated more than \$300 billion of Russian assets. Having assets in dollars is now seen as very risky, causing many countries to think about creating an alternative monetary-credit system. Shown, the U.S. Treasury building in Washington.*

inflation, a world famine, of a world pandemic which is not yet gone, so it is very difficult to say. The only thing to do is to strengthen the principles of peaceful coexistence, of nonviolence, both in social life, but also at large, because the UN Charter is basically a nonviolent document. The Schiller Institute has started—actually, when the pandemic started, we were forced to go to these virtual conferences, and that had some disadvantages, because if you cannot meet people in person, it's not so good. But, on the other side, it also allowed us to expand into many countries, and actually potentially all the countries. So we are right now trying to build an alliance of forces of people who agree with this concept of a new security and development architecture.

I want to invite you, and your friends, and everybody who is listening to actively think about that!

Because an old order is falling apart, the old paradigm is completely dead. There is no way a unipolar world can be revived—zero! Not with war, not without war. However, what will be the shape of the new order is very much in flux. I think what is required is that there are a lot of people, good, well-meaning people, who think: what should be the principles which we as a human species should give to ourselves to guarantee sustainable, long-term survival of the human species.

Since I think that this will be forced on us by the circumstances, because we are going into a hot year, with famine, hyperinflation, supply chains not functioning—this will be a very dramatic situation, and this is the time when new things can be formed. To bring in more forces of people who think this way, and who think that peace *is* development, that the new name for peace is development, that we need to overcome poverty

forever! I mean, the idea that there are several billion people who are not able to eat more than a meager meal a day, going hungry to bed, dying eventually of hunger: That is not the dignity of the human species!

We have now reached a branching point in history, where we have to overcome the injustice, where only the “golden billion” as the Russians call it, the billionaires—I mean, the billionaires have become so stinking rich it’s absurd! While at the other side, billions of people are starving and not making it. And that has to be corrected. We have to have a world order where every human being on this planet has a decent chance to fulfill their potentialities, every baby which is born should have a decent education, develop its talents. Many of them will become geniuses. And that is the branching point at where we are.

So, I can only tell you: Go to Ray McGovern’s website, by all means, but also come to the Schiller Institute website, join our conferences, read our publications. We are publishing a weekly magazine in English; we have publications in Italian, Spanish, French, Danish, Swedish, German, naturally. We are publishing a [EIR Daily Alert](#). If you want to really be in tune with the best analysis you can get, on a daily basis, find a way of

subscribing to our *EIR Daily Alert*. And more importantly, join us as an organizer for a change for the better of humanity. And I think that is what you should be doing.

**Speed:** All right. Well, Ray McGovern, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, I want to thank you for being with us. And obviously, the panel has been summarized in the last message that Helga gave.

We also want to thank, of course, Col. Richard Black, Gen. Leonardo Tricarico, Eric Denécé for being with us, as well.

We’re going to put up also our [petition](#), that I think many people have signed or have seen, but many people have not. This petition calls for convoking an International Conference To Establish a New Security and Development Architecture for All Nations. I want everybody who is watching to sign the petition and also to circulate it. And you can read that online. And again, we urge you to [join](#) the Schiller Institute, and join this battle for humanity and reason.

So, on behalf of the Schiller Institute, and I think I can say on behalf of Helga, as well, we want to thank everybody for joining us, and that will bring our forum and online conference for today to a close.

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