

Live Dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche

The LaRouche Solution to the War Danger in Southwest Asia

Subheads and embedded links have been added. The video of this dialogue is available [here](#).

Harley Schlanger: Hello and welcome to our weekly dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder and chairwoman of the Schiller Institute. It's Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2023. I'm Harley Schlanger and I'll be your host today. Send us your questions or comments to questions@schillerinstitute.org.

Helga, your warning last week, of the danger that the crisis in Southwest Asia could explode into a rapidly expanding danger of world war, seems unfortunately to be coming true. The rocket attack on the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital in Gaza yesterday, which has killed hundreds of people, has been fueling demonstrations in all the states neighboring Israel. There have been comments from many Arab governments, and from other governments from around the world, the African Union and so on.

And yet, the big question remains: Will Israel go



President Joe Biden flew to Tel Aviv Oct. 18, 2023 to personally pledge unconditional U.S. support for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's war of vengeance on the Palestinians in Gaza.

ahead with a ground invasion? Yesterday, Germany's Chancellor Scholz became the first head of government to visit Israel and give his blessing to [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu's "war of vengeance," as Netanyahu himself is calling it. President Joe Biden is there today, pledging unconditional support. Also yesterday, an effort by Russia to get a resolution through the United Nations Security Council, calling for a ceasefire, was shot down by the United States, just as the U.S.

has been shooting down proposals for a diplomatic resolution in Ukraine.

Helga, you have a lot of experience in this region, having worked very closely with your husband Lyndon LaRouche, who himself was quite influential with his writings and presentations on a solution to this crisis. What's your present assessment, and what's required to stop the escalation from going to a full-scale war?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: The



Aftermath of the huge blast that killed hundreds and wounded hundreds more at the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, Oct. 16, 2023.

simultaneous worsening of the Ukraine crisis and the crisis in the Middle East, or Southwest Asia, should really be the alarm for everybody, that if we don't move to change the dynamic, this may quickly get out of control and end up in a world war. That is why, before I go into any assessments, I want to say that anybody who wants to have peace and prevent the escalation of this crisis, should really join hands with us to put on the table our three proposals:

Ceasefire and a Peace Conference

One, that all movements, all people, all individuals around the world, should support the initiative which came originally from China, then was backed by President Lula of Brazil, and is now pretty much on the agenda, that is, to immediately convene a peace conference for Southwest Asia, to stop the crisis through negotiations.

Two: Economic substance must be put into such a conference, which is what my late husband, Lyndon LaRouche, already wrote about in 1975, when he called for a so-called "Oasis Plan," for the Middle East: Meaning that you have to create lots of new water, new freshwater, make the desert bloom to create the kind of economic development for all the countries and all the peoples of the region, as the absolute necessary precondition for a peace in Southwest Asia.

Three: Resolution 242, which was adopted, actually several times by the United Nations Security Council, must be implemented. And a two-state solution—Palestine must become an independent state as part of this process.

There is a solution. It should also be obvious, that Southwest Asia is only part of the world crisis. It's not just the dynamics in the region which works, but it is the larger context of the geopolitical confrontation of the so-called West, the neoliberal financial system, especially under the leadership of the United States, which wants to keep a dominant position in the world, and has basically reduced Europe into a colony (it's a tragedy, but that's what it is), against the emerging new world economic order around the BRICS, the BRICS-Plus, the Global South, the Global Majority, where it

would be so easy to solve it, but they decided to keep the confrontation.

That dynamic is the underlying dynamic, even in Southwest Asia, and in Ukraine: And that is why a peace conference for the Southwest Asia can only be the first stepping stone for a new security and development architecture for the whole world, which must take into account the security interests of everybody, every nation on the planet.

That is something I would really like to start the discussion, or the thinking process with, because there are those who demand that everyone now has to completely, totally—in Germany, for example—take the side of Israel; that the defense of Israel is the state *raison d'être* for Germany.



CGTN



Agência Brasil/José Cruz

Helga Zepp-LaRouche has called on all nations and individuals to support China's initiative, backed by Brazil's President Lula da Silva (at right), to immediately convene a conference for Southwest Asia to end the crisis through negotiations. At left: Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, March 21, 2023.

I would like to remind people that one big lesson of the Peace of Westphalia, after 150 years of religious war and after 4 years of tedious negotiations, before coming to a solution, was the recognition that a peace solution *always* requires that one takes into account the interest of the other. When you somehow try to create a situation, where you say, "No, one side is absolutely right," then you preclude a peace!

The difference between the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and the Versailles Treaty (1919), was that the Peace of Westphalia created the basis for the emergence of international law, of international law of the people. While the Versailles Treaty, because it did not take into account the interest of the other, did not take into account the historic truth or the interest of Germany or China, therefore had the seed of what would

soon after become World War II. If you want to end this, then you have to apply the principle of the interest of the other.

We are sitting on a complete powder keg. I can only say that the situation is super dangerous, because the fact that the United States has now sent the long-range ATACMS missiles, which was immediately characterized by Russian side as a very dangerous escalation of the crisis, and leading to a direct confrontation between NATO and Russia.

In Southwest Asia, you were mentioning the possibility of a ground offensive by the Israelis. That is still a very dangerous possibility, because if that would happen, it would just increase the absolutely unbelievable situation in Gaza, to a point of explosion—I'm sure of that. Not in Gaza, because the people have very little means, but it would be a very nasty and long-dragged out confrontation, because Hamas has created tunnels and bunkers. I don't even want to imagine what would happen if that would take place. It would be a nightmare.

I have read certain experts, however, who are rather hesitant about that option, because it does require an intensive battle, and it is not so clear that the Israeli armed forces really are prepared at this point to undertake that, because Hamas obviously was able for a very long time, to prepare for something like that; they do have a lot of tunnels and very elaborated defense systems.

That would then leave a flank open with Lebanon. I'm not saying it will not happen; I'm just saying that there are experts who are considering that Israel may not want to do that, because the backlash would be tremendous.

On the other side, the option that it may happen is absolutely still there, because that has been in the plans of some people for a long time, as well.

We are sitting on an extremely dangerous situation. I don't even want to think about what is happening to the people who are locked in the Gaza Strip right now. There are reports that 600,000 people fled from the north, but there is no facility, there is no food, no fuel, no water, no medicine; the hospitals are emptied, or in this case, now, one being bombed, with 600+ people



The difference between the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and the Versailles Treaty (1919): The former created the basis for the emergence of international law; the latter carried the seed of what became two world wars. Shown: Ratification of the Peace of Westphalia (Münster), by Gerard ter Borch.

dead. Many roads, you can no longer drive on, because they are full of rubble from the bombings. The situation at the only place where people before could leave, at the Rafah border crossing with Egypt is closed. Egypt has apparently made a decision that they do not accept the Palestinian refugees to come to Egypt: I don't even want to imagine what people are going through in this kind of situation!

Anybody who is reasonable must really mobilize everything we can, to say that a diplomatic solution, a ceasefire, negotiations, is the only way out of this situation, and must really mobilize for that. Anything else, anything which encourages either the one side or the other to keep up the fight, threatens that this thing goes completely out of control, leading to a world war: And that would be the end of everything.

Questions from the Audience

Schlanger: Helga, as you mention, part of the mobilization is the new leaflet that the Schiller Institute has put out, which is an emergency call under the headline, "Westphalia, Not Versailles: The World Needs an 'Oasis Plan' in the Middle East!" That's available on the Schiller Institute website, and I urge people to read it and circulate it, because it gets right to the heart of what you were just discussing.

A number of questions have come in about that situation in Southwest Asia, but I want to hopefully have some time to broaden it to other areas. Let me

start with comments from two people who are longtime collaborators of ours. One is a very good supporter, but quite demoralized, who asks: “Isn’t it too late to insist on a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine, right now?” The second, a more hopeful supporter asks “Haven’t we learned, yet, that a violent response just begets more violence?”

Zepp-LaRouche: On the second question, the answer is “Yes, as long as you keep answering with revenge, even if it may be understandable and people have all the reasons to say that the suffering [in this case] became too much. Any continuation of policies which are based on revenge and hatred, will breed more of that! And the only way how you can break out of it, is to drastically apply the principle of the Peace of Westphalia: They came to the conclusion, after 150 years of religious war, that if they continued there would be nobody alive to enjoy the victory, and they came to the conclusion that, as a principle of foreign policy, hatred had to be replaced by love.

Now, applied to the situation in Southwest Asia, that sounds obviously, very far off—but, it’s nevertheless true! Love doesn’t have to be some strange Romantic idea. Love in this case, means creating the economic conditions for the other side to have a decent, fulfilled life. The poverty in the region is absolutely incredible.

The Oasis Plan, proposed by Lyndon LaRouche in 1975, is still an extremely viable conception. It basically says that you have to create the infrastructure, to have agriculture; you have to green the deserts. In order to green the deserts, you have to produce a lot more fresh-water; and how do you do that? You do it by peaceful nuclear energy, being the energy source for the desalination of huge amounts of ocean water, and by canals for irrigation of agriculture, and so forth. You have aquifers, which are, for the short term, accessible. They’re already used in Israel and other countries in the region; ionization of the atmosphere to cause rainfall patterns. All of these things could be applied to completely change the situation, and indeed, have agricultural development, industrial development, basic infrastructure.



Schiller Institute

LaRouche’s Oasis Plan, proposed in 1975, is still a fully viable concept: Green the deserts and support agriculture with massive seawater desalination using nuclear energy; distribute the water with new irrigation canals.

Now, with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) being potentially extended into the entire Southwest Asia—this was the plan after the rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia—that can still be put back on the table. Even the IMEC (the India-Middle East Economic Corridor), which was announced recently, which had a little geopolitical connotation of being against the BRI. It doesn’t have to be against the BRI! These infrastructure projects tend to grow into each other, once you develop them, and they can be the basis for peace for everybody.

You have to stop the hatred, and replace it with love, and love being to do the good for the other. It’s the only option! Wise people on all sides are being called upon to act on that basis.

Now, a two-state solution: I know it’s very difficult now. All these settlements have been built in an attempt to ruin this option, which obviously is a huge problem. But, with an overall approach, the Middle East can become just the first step toward a new global security and development architecture: I mean, if the United States, and Russia, and China, to start with, would get an agreement, *all* problems could be solved! The only reason these regional problems cannot be solved, is because they are proxies for the larger context of the strategic showdown between the U.S./NATO, Russia, and China.

But there is right now a whole other world emerging, with the BRICS, with the ten-year anniversary of

the BRI, which is being celebrated right now in Beijing—that’s an incredible success story, despite the meek efforts by the Western media to say “oh, it’s such a failure.” The ten-year-old BRI has transformed many countries of the world: The Belt and Road projects have completely changed the dynamic, whereby the Global South countries, for the first time, see the opportunity to overcome underdevelopment. That spirit can be brought even into Southwest Asia!

It’s not that everybody in Israel wants to continue on this path of confrontation. Around the world, many Jewish organizations are demonstrating, in Washington, and elsewhere. So it’s not an issue between religions, it’s an issue between those people who want war and those who agree that we must absolutely end the war and overcome geopolitics by a peaceful solution which allows the survival and well-being of everybody.

Schlanger: Helga, I think you convinced one of our questioners, who asks, “How do we prevent falling into emotional counter-reflex and maintain unity and prevent communities from falling against other?” And then he answers his own question: “The Oasis Plan seems like one example.”

Here are two questions that are basically the same. From Facebook, someone asks, “Will the Israelis rise up and defeat Netanyahu, so he’s replaced by someone willing to seek peace with the Palestinians?” Someone else wrote: “Six weeks ago, there were hundreds of thousands of Israelis in the street, protesting Netanyahu’s so-called ‘judicial reforms.’ Is this crisis deflecting all opposition to him?”

What can you say about what’s happening in Israel?

Zepp-LaRouche: The conflict which was the subject for a long time, and where people were demonstrating against the judicial reform, is not gone. It has been papered over, because of the present crisis, and, in my view, the short-term so-called “national unity government,” which includes Benny Gantz, it includes some

others; but it does not include the major opposition party, for once, Yesh Atid. I think this will not hold very long. Israelis, and Jewish people all over the world, are right now in an absolute nightmare situation, but I think once reflection sets in, the idea that we absolutely must find a higher level of reason will set in; and in that case, I think also Netanyahu’s political future may not be one to look forward to, because he has some very personal reasons why he’s doing what he’s doing. I think the Israelis will find a way of dealing with that, once we have this overall framework to settle the crisis.

Ukraine

Schlanger: Helga, you mentioned the Ukraine situation, and we do have a question from someone who asks about the fact that it was reported now by Zelensky that U.S. ATACMS missiles have been delivered to Ukraine, and that [Ukrainian President Volodymyr] Zelensky has said this could be a game-changer. Biden had previously said he wasn’t going to send them, and then he seems to have done it through a back door, very quietly. It does seem to signal an intent that the U.S. is not giving up, or NATO either, on using the proxy war to severely damage Russia. What would you say to that?



U.S. Army

The Biden administration has begun shipping the long-range Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) to Ukraine. One variant has a range of up to 305 kilometers (190 miles).

Zepp-LaRouche: Biden made this unbelievable remark on CBS’ “60 Minutes” program Oct. 15, where he [said](#) “Imagine what happens if we, in fact, unite all of

Europe and Putin is finally put down where he cannot cause the kind of trouble he has been causing.” For a President of a country to say that about the strongest nuclear power in the world—I mean, I don’t want to comment on Biden; people have said already a lot about it. But to say such a thing! It is so beyond the beyond, beyond! Putin answered to that, and he was relatively nonchalant and generous about it, given the enormity of the statement.

Unfortunately, behind all of that is—I really hate to say this—but I think behind all of that is the clear intention to escalate the situation—escalate the situa-

tion means they don't accept—first of all, the Western elites don't even reflect for one single minute that the entire crisis is a reflection of their own policies, and there's zero intention to reflect that maybe they have made a mistake; maybe it was their idea of causing world dominance, a unipolar world, expansion of NATO, encirclement of China, building 800 military bases around the world, and on and on, that that would all cause a blowback. And that blowback is right now, not to be stopped!

The idea to put the genie back in the bottle and go back to a unipolar world, is out of the question. The idea of winning that confrontation with Russia and China is also out of the question. At a banquet on the evening before the Belt and Road Forum—I watched this on Chinese TV. A big door was opened and out came Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin—a clear demonstration that the relationship between the two countries is one of a very profound, deep strategic alliance, and that between the two men a political friendship has grown and developed over many years.

So whoever is taking on one, namely Putin in this case, or Russia, has to calculate that it's not just Russia, it's also the whole new arrangement of countries which have now become the BRICS-Plus—the original BRICS countries, plus the six that will formalize their membership Jan. 1, and 40 more countries that want to be part of the BRICS as well.

This *is* the majority of the world's population. And even if it doesn't sound likely, I keep saying, the only way how we can come out of this crisis, is when we get forces in Europe and in the United States to say, "let's change course": The BRI has been an option open to all from the beginning; there's still the chance, if the United States and European nations would say they want to cooperate with the BRI to develop Latin America, Asia, and Africa, the door would be open—I'm 100% certain of that.

What's so problematic about that? The narrative about the "good guys," the democracies, against the



White House

President Joe Biden holds a news conference after meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet in Tel Aviv, Oct. 18, 2023.

"bad guys," the autocracies—it's just a myth! It's a narrative—a narrative is a fairy tale. It's not the truth! Now, it's becoming almost risky to say what I'm saying here, but this insanity must stop, and we must find an order of all nations, where we can live together peacefully. Geopolitics is a mental disease which we must get rid of.

Belt and Road Forum in Beijing

Schlanger: We have a couple of questions on the Belt and Road Forum conference in Beijing. One is more of a comment from someone from Singapore, who says: "The Chinese government seems to be following the ideas of the late legend Lyndon LaRouche, on economic development and infrastructure, with the Belt and Road Initiative." He wants your comment on that.

The other question is from someone who obviously is trying to find out about it, and is frustrated: "How can you have Putin, Xi, and 140 governments participating and we can't find it in the Western press? Where can we find information about what's going on in Beijing, with this conference?"

Zepp-LaRouche: Yeah, that is really amazing. I was also listening to the media here in Germany, and there is one report after the other that the Belt and Road Initiative is a complete failure, it just causes a debt trap for the participating countries, and on and on. Nothing is more a lie than that, because the Belt and Road Initiative, which is now ten years old, is, indeed, the greatest infrastructure project in history. It has completely changed the dynamic! If you're blind to that, you're just not willing to face the facts.

The developing countries, in the form of the Non-Aligned Movement, have tried to get justice to overcome colonialism for half a century or more. In the beginning, starting maybe with the Bandung Conference in 1955, which was between Asia and Africa, there was the hope that this could be realized very quickly. But then, it turned out that the independence fights, where many countries did win independence, did not get them

real independence, because of the conditionalities policy of the IMF—for example, the lack of access to credit for development, the imposition of conditionalities which forced those countries to not invest in healthcare infrastructure, in order to pay the debt. The debt trap existed long before China even played a significant role, but [the debt was] to the IMF, to the World Bank. Many of these countries became entangled in a completely impossible situation.

Many of their leaders were assassinated! If a leader of a developing country started to seriously fight for his or her nation, many people were eliminated! There is a long history of that.

What my late husband, Lyndon LaRouche, and the people associated with him for half a century were fighting for, it's now happening. We have been putting out economic development programs for a very long time. You can read them all: Go to our archives and you can read up on the history of that.

The reason why these countries of the Global South now feel empowered to actually accomplish what we proposed is because of China! Because you have, now, the second largest economy, which very well may be already the largest one, in terms of buying power, in terms of physical economy, in terms of machine tools. In terms of physical economy, China is probably the largest economy already. They have transformed themselves from a very poor country, in the time of the Cultural Revolution, when its economic level was no better than that of some Sahel zone African nations, very, very poor.

But then, especially because of Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening-up policy (this is a long story), but in the 40 years since, they have made the biggest economic miracle, ever in the history of mankind. They lifted 850 million of their own people out of poverty, and eradicated extreme poverty by the end of I believe it was 2020, or maybe 2021. But it's been eliminated by an enormous effort to reach out to even the most remote, rural areas, and think about ways how every single family could be participating in these programs, e-commerce for farmers, manufacturing, education, all kinds of ways. That example has incredibly encouraged the countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia, to also overcome their own poverty. That is something you cannot reverse.

Rather than being completely hysterical about it, and trying to suppress it, the countries of the West should reflect on why they didn't develop Africa, Latin

America, and Asia with the same kinds of infrastructure projects: building railways, ports, airports, waterways. They could have done that for the entire period after the Second World War—but they didn't.

China is now popular among these countries because China has something to offer. If you have the choice between either economic development, and developing your own resources, where you can actually become a middle-income level country in the short to medium term, or, just being an attachment to an aircraft carrier for some regional wars and security building—it's clear why these countries of the Global South prefer to work with Russia and China. And Russia, as well, because Russia is offering them a lot, for example, in the development of nuclear energy. So it is very clear why the countries of the Global South refuse to be drawn into this conflict, and why they refuse to condemn Russia, because they know this narrative is not true, and it doesn't correspond to their own experience.

It remains the situation, that we have to convince the United States and the European countries to stop their opposition, and to cooperate, and then we can find a solution.

Taking Up Profound Ideas

Schlanger: I was speaking at an event the other day and someone came up to me and he said: "I'm so happy to meet someone who knows Lyndon LaRouche. I heard him speak a number of years ago, and I thought, 'This man's brilliant, but he's too philosophical to understand.'" And he said to me, "I'm now happily involved in trying to think that way myself. How can I inspire other people to take up such profound ideas?"

Zepp-LaRouche: I think the questioner already has the right approach—by being a philosophical mind yourself. We are living in such a dull environment. Compare our present political class with even the people in the postwar period—Nehru, Sukarno, de Gaulle, Adenauer, Indira Gandhi, and many others. Or, even in Germany—Franz Josef Strauss, Herbert Wehner, Helmut Schmidt—these were people. You may not have liked all of them, and not agreed with all of them, but they were powerful minds! They would really demand respect, because even if they had different views, they were thinkers, they were intellectuals, they were giants compared to the present crop of politicians! Because of *Gleichschaltung* [synchronization],



DaD/Bundesbildstelle

Compared to today's political class, the post-World War II figures were thinkers, intellectuals, giants: Here, Sukarno (Indonesia), de Gaulle (France), Adenauer (Germany), and Indira Gandhi (India).



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

where all the newspapers only publish the official narrative, if you say something which is not exactly the prescribed data line, you get ostracized.

At the Frankfurt Book Fair right now, this week, they had selected a Palestinian writer, a woman, because she had written a book which was discussing some destiny of a Palestinian who was kidnapped and eventually murdered, early in the 1950s, or so. She was supposed to get a prize, but they kicked her out. She doesn't get the prize, she doesn't even get a room to discuss her book—all because it supposedly doesn't fit the present situation. Another person, a prize recipient, dared to say that the attack by Hamas is disgusting and horrible, but one also has to understand the side of the Palestinians. He was completely attacked!

In this climate, which reminds so much of what happened in the 1930s, where eventually Goebbels triumphed, and in the postwar period, British intelligence said that they had to learn how to “out-Goebbels Goebbels.” I think that is exactly what is happening today. In an environment like that, what is needed is civil cour-

age. If you are a philosophical mind, you can inspire the people around, because you are not adjusting to this *horrible* mediocrity! I mean, you can attack certain politicians because they are evil, but what's even more stifling is the fact that they're so absolutely, horrifyingly mediocre!

In that environment, *be* a philosophical mind! Have the courage to discuss great ideas. Discuss the ideas of my late husband, because he was a visionary. He predicted the present collapse of the financial system. He had the vision for how to create a better world, and it is happening right now!

Many times, I'm thinking, if Lyndon were alive, he would be happy to see what is happening, because it would be the fulfillment of what his whole life was all about. That he did not live to see it, fills me with a certain sadness. But maybe he's somewhere, still capable of seeing what is happening—I don't want to make any speculations about that.

Be courageous! Read the *Aesthetical Letters* of Friedrich Schiller, where he discusses that question: What do you do when the governments are corrupt, and the masses are apathetic? Where should the solution come from? And I think in the eighth or the ninth letter, Schiller says, that Athena, when she came down to Earth, she was fully armed, she was dressed up in armor, and her first sentence was, “Be courageous to be wise.” That's very good advice. People who have right ideas and are aware of how dangerous the situation right now is, they should have the civil courage to speak out. Because too many people say, “Oh yeah, I agree with you, in private, but don't expect me to speak out, because I would be immediately ostracized by all my friends, who all have adjusted to the public narrative.” So, be wise.

Schlanger: [laughs] And a good place to start that would be to take the Schiller Institute [leaflet](#), “Westphalia, Not Versailles: The World Needs an ‘Oasis Plan’ in the Middle East!” Do some research on the Westphalian principle, where it came from, what happened to it, and the difference between that and the Treaty of Versailles. That's a good starting point. We're headed toward a horrible crisis that has no way out, internally. You have to get outside of it.