

I. National

Emergency Event at National Press Club: The Drive to Nuclear War Is Real, and Must Be Stopped

by Daniel Platt

June 12—On Wednesday, June 12, the Schiller Institute hosted an emergency press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., to bring the imminent danger of nuclear war to an American audience. The event featured four distinguished speakers: Scott Ritter, former UN weapons inspector and U.S. Marine intelligence officer; Col. (ret.) Richard H. Black, former head of the U.S. Army's Criminal Law Division at the Pentagon and a former Virginia State Senator; Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute; and Col. (ret.) Lawrence Wilkerson, former chief of staff to

United States Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The in-person gathering at the National Press Club was joined by dozens of journalists participating by Zoom from around the world, with simultaneous interpretation provided in Spanish, German, and French. In addition, close to 2,000 people participated on a live Schiller Institute feed, with others joining via other electronic venues. Within 24 hours, more than 30,000 had viewed the event.

The press conference was exceptionally timely, as tensions between the United States and Russia have



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

The Schiller Institute's emergency press conference at the National Press Club. From left: moderator Dennis Speed introduced Scott Ritter, Col. (ret.) Richard Black and, online, Col. (ret.) Lawrence Wilkerson (not shown). At right, Anastasia Battle.

skyrocketed over the recent weeks, prompting some in Russia to discuss the potential of changing their nuclear doctrine, which currently rules out a first strike, and referring to this as a reverse Cuban Missile Crisis. Worse, there is no semblance of maturity or comprehension of this danger within American or NATO officialdom, nor in the general public, only a seemingly mindless ladder of escalation of further involvement in Ukraine.

The panelists were excellently suited to discuss this topic, as, among others, Scott Ritter and Helga Zepp-LaRouche have been listed as targets by Ukraine’s U.S.-funded Center for Countering Disinformation (CCD) for their role in speaking out publicly against NATO’s pro-war policies. Additionally, Ritter was recently prevented from boarding a plane to attend the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in Russia, based on orders from the State Department, and even had his passport seized. Ritter had planned a 40-



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The conference announcement was sent out widely to media, diplomatic offices, and social networks internationally.

Ambassador Anatoly Antonov, a leading specialist in arms control, is sitting in the Russian embassy on Wisconsin Avenue in Washington, D.C., “and his phone is not ringing.” After the end of the Soviet Union, America decided to maintain a strategic advantage, and began to withdraw from arms control treaties. Gradually, deterrence gave way to a nuclear war-fighting doctrine. “The greatest threat to us,” Ritter insisted, “is American nuclear weapons policy,” and only through the patience of the Russian leadership have we avoided nuclear war.



Stuart Lewis

Former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter: “The greatest threat to us is American nuclear weapons policy” which, unlike Russia’s, includes “pre-emptive” first strike. Not a single Western leader, he said, understands what nuclear war is.

day peace mission throughout Russia to bring a message of friendship from America.

Ritter opened the event, stating that the lead story of every U.S. newscast should be the acute danger of nuclear war. People say wrongly that the Cuban Missile Crisis was the closest we ever came to nuclear war, he noted; at that time, diplomacy was taking place. Today,

Col. Richard Black continued the theme: “Our nuclear doctrine grants the President of the United States plenary authority—unfettered authority”—to launch a nuclear war for any reason. This is different from Russian or Chinese doctrine; Russian doctrine is defensive, and nuclear weapons will be used only if the country is under nuclear attack or if the sovereign existence of the nation is otherwise threatened. “Ukraine was never a vital United States interest,” said Black, adding that the war began over whether Ukraine would be integrated into NATO and nuclear weapons could be stationed there, close enough that Russia would have no time to respond to a first strike. After Russia entered Ukraine in February 2022, peace negotiations began within four days. After two months,



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Helga Zepp-LaRouche



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Col. (ret.) Richard H. Black



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Col. (ret.) Lawrence Wilkerson

they were virtually at an agreement. Then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was sent to Kyiv to tell the Ukrainians, “Knock off these peace talks, get back to the important work of fighting.”

In summary, Black said, “All of this vast sea of bloodshed which followed has been largely unnecessary.” He described American and NATO-launched provocations such as the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipeline, which threw the German economy into recession; French President Macron’s proposal to send troops as “trainers,” as in Vietnam, which will inevitably lead to combat; and the attempts to blind Russian early-warning radars, and attacks on the Russian Engels-2 airbase, where its nuclear bombers are stationed.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche described how Russia is responding to these escalating provocations from NATO. In addition to conducting maneuvers for the tactical use of nuclear weapons, a Russian flotilla had arrived in Cuba on the very day of the press conference. Turning to discuss solutions, she proposed that “the most obvious reference point is the Peace of Westphalia,” which ended the Thirty Years’ War, because continuation of that war would have killed everyone in Europe. We now have a global version of that situation. She asked the participants to study her [Ten Principles of a New International Security and Development Architecture](#), and praised the proposals of [Chinese President Xi Jinping](#) and the [Brazilian/Chinese initiative to end the Ukraine war](#).

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson began by quoting a “great man, a patriot and a hero of this country,” Daniel Ellsberg, who said that we are closer to nuclear war than we have ever been. Wilkerson added,

“It is all our fault. It is the empire’s fault.... We have abrogated every protective treaty environment that we painstakingly crafted.” Prior to the U.S. proxy confrontation with Russia in Ukraine, it was an established principle of diplomacy that two nuclear weapons-owning states should never go to war. “The American people have forgotten what it was to build a bomb shelter in your backyard,” he said. “We don’t have any idea in this nation anymore of what nuclear weapons can do.”

Questions from Viewers and the Press

The first questioner asked if our leaders knew they would die, whether that would deter them from launching a nuclear attack. Colonel Black responded that U.S. leaders would probably survive an initial strike, but the problem is, we don’t have central intellectual leadership that takes responsibility for policy.

“The West has essentially banked its entire existence on Putin’s rationality.” Ritter added: “I would say that in the West, there is not a single leader who understands today what nuclear war is.... We have to find a way to make the American people afraid again.” Wilkerson recounted how, at the end of the Cold War, the United States and Russia had 30,000 nuclear weapons each, and began reducing their stockpiles. A U.S. Air Force study said we could go down to 600 each. “Those were good days,” exclaimed Wilkerson. But now, America is discussing ways to modify our nuclear policy to make it more aggressive.

Independent U.S. Senate candidate Diane Sare asked Zepp-LaRouche about the relationship between the looming blowout of the trans-Atlantic financial system and the war danger. In reply, Mrs. Zepp-La-

Rouche acknowledged that “the system could blow out at any moment, as we are sitting here,” and that the threatened loss of power is driving American recklessness. Zepp-LaRouche described the end of the Cold War as a “*Sternstunde der Menschheit*,” a golden opportunity for humanity. Unfortunately, the neocons rejected this opportunity, and instead went for their dream of a “unipolar world” and Francis Fukuyama’s “End of History” theory. Decades of NATO expansion ensued, with color revolutions and military interventions. “Almost everything that is happening in the world is the result of these wrong policies by the West from that moment on,” she added. Contrary to delusions of the neocons, who consider the BRICS “a big threat to the hegemon,” none of these countries are our enemies.

Prof. Steven Starr, who teaches a class on nuclear weapons at the University of Missouri, asked the purpose of the attacks on Russian radars, and whether the United States provided intelligence for targeting them. Wilkerson addressed the latter question, saying, “This is informed speculation, but yes.” As to why the U.S. did this, he said, “We’re insane,” and added that we did it for the same reason we blew up the Nord Stream pipeline. Ritter added that the drones could not have penetrated Russia without American real-time intelligence.

Black added, “If you’re bluffing, there’s always the chance that the other person calls your bluff.... You’re actually putting all of humanity on the table ... and we’re the chips.”

A questioner in Mexico asked about the lack of preparedness for war in the West, and whether that could help deter a decision to launch one. Ritter responded that neither the United States nor NATO is in position to engage in a full confrontation with Russia. “That’s the good news ... the bad news is that we are pursuing an aggressive policy, and the default is nuclear weapons.”

A reporter from TASS asked about the possibility that America or allies will provide Ukraine with nuclear weapons. Ritter and Black responded that they thought this outside of the realm of possibility, with Ritter asking rhetorically, “Why would we turn over the most dangerous weapons in the world to the most irresponsible nation in the world?”

A questioner from Patriot Action PAC asked whether nuclear conflict might be used as an election tactic by this administration. Black said that this is the

“wag the dog” scenario, adding that Bill Clinton had used war against Serbia for political recovery from impeachment. But it has to be something unexpected, Black qualified. People now are tired of war; they have made this clear in European elections on June 9. Wilkerson added that President Biden is like Lyndon Johnson in 1965: He escalated an unwinnable war, because cutting and running would hurt his re-election prospects.

Zepp-LaRouche was asked to comment on the June 9 European elections. She replied that it is good that there are now two German parties in Parliament that oppose the war, but that Germany has become the “laughingstock of the world, ... the total colonial slave of the Anglosphere.” Ritter added that Americans don’t believe their vote counts anymore, and they don’t like any of the candidates. But, he said, “ask Emmanuel Macron—your vote matters.”

A question came from the Pressenza International Press Agency, about how people around the world might contribute to peace in Ukraine, as they did to end apartheid in South Africa. Zepp-LaRouche responded: “It is emphatically the right of voices and countries in the Global South” to intervene, because the danger of nuclear war affects everyone. NATO is focused on controlling the narrative, and has created a whole apparatus to demonize Russia and China, so the Global South is not heard in the West. A more assertive role for the South is the most important thing which could happen to shift things.

A former ambassador from Greece observed that there is no civil defense in America or Europe for the case of a nuclear attack. Black proposed that notices be posted in New York subways, telling people to get potassium iodide tablets to protect themselves from radiation: “It might make people think twice.” Ritter said that the government’s call for a more aggressive nuclear scenario implies that someone is actually doing some planning. But this planning does not include measures such as stockpiles of water, food, fallout shelters, etc. to protect the American people. People should be asking: Are you abandoning us?

Ritter was asked what he had planned to say in St. Petersburg, had he not been prevented from going. He reported that he had planned a 40-day journey throughout Russia as an ambassador for peace, live-streaming the trip. This “scared them to death,” so they pulled his passport.

Carl Osgood of *EIR* reminded Wilkerson that Daniel Ellsberg had written that the United States had always used nuclear weapons as a criminal uses a gun, to get what he wants without pulling the trigger. Wilkerson joked about Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), who represents his home state, saying, “Lindsey has reached new crescendos of insanity.” He added that the United States has 30-35 countries under draconian sanctions with no real reason. We are detested all over the world, we are incapable of mobilizing for war, so the only option is the threat of nuclear war.

A question came from The Grayzone site: What are the implications of Biden’s proposed deal with the Saudis to help with uranium enrichment, in order to get normalization with Israel? Wilkerson replied that America is desperate to resolve the situation in Gaza, and the Saudis want to be able to make a nuclear weapon. China and Russia will not give them that capability, but we will!

A reporter from Radio Mindanao in the Philippines asked whether the Filipino military is being cultivated as a proxy for a war against China. Ritter replied that the United States is incapable of fighting a peer-level force, and so is using the Philippines instead, just as it is using Ukraine. Black said, “It’s very important for the Philippines to be clear-eyed in what’s going on.”

Summary Remarks

Wilkerson: The nuclear weapons state today that is most likely to use those weapons is the United States. A prudent state never has more enemies at a given time than it can handle, but we have made enemies of most of the world. He proposed that we learn to use that “deft instrument of national power called diplomacy.”

Black: It was a great victory of mankind that the Cold War ended bloodlessly. We failed to take advantage of it, and we moved the border eastward. When the Warsaw Pact disappeared, NATO didn’t. It was a terrible loss for humanity that we passed up the opportunity for peace.

Ritter: “I was advised, ‘do not try to scare people,’” but he is disregarding that advice. Every American needs to wake up in the morning with that fear of dying from nuclear war, because then people will take action. For your vote to count, the candidates need to know what your vote stands for: “If you don’t

oppose nuclear war, you will never get our vote.”

Zepp-LaRouche: “We are going into the most important and dangerous period probably in all of history.” NATO is facing a huge loss of face, and the way they abandoned their proxies in Afghanistan should be a lesson for the Filipinos and Ukrainians. She denounced the idiotic policy of confiscating Russian assets—even the IMF has warned of this collapsing the financial system when Russia retaliates. The World War II generation knew what war was, but the new generation is shallow-minded, and doesn’t know history. How could the great German civilization sink to the level of Nazism?

There must be a sense of higher lawfulness, natural law, Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche concluded, but it was abandoned by the victorious powers. This is necessary to the debate. “We have to lift humanity to a higher level of morality if we want to survive this great danger.”



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