

Schiller Conference Keynote

A Polycentric, Harmonious, Multi-nodal System Emerges

The following is an edited transcript of the keynote speech given by Schiller Institute founder and chairwoman Helga Zepp-LaRouche to Panel 1, “Europe After the European Elections,” of the June 15-16 international Schiller Institute conference, “The World on the Brink: For a New Peace of Westphalia.” Subheads and embedded links have been added. The video may be viewed [here](#).

Let me start with a perspective which is very well known among the countries of the Global South, which actually have become the Global Majority in the recent years. But this perspective is almost unknown in Europe and in the United States. I’m talking about the fact that a new world system is in process of being built, a polycentric, harmonious world, a “multi-nodal” world. A world which is becoming more just, where every country has the right to develop, can choose their own path of development, according to their own culture, their own tradition, their philosophy. This is already happening. It is very much advanced in different forms. For example, it is growing in the form of the BRICS countries, which already since the summit in Johannesburg last year have grown in number from 5 to 9. Now there are 59 more countries which have issued applications to join, so that makes all together already almost 70 countries. And naturally, among them are China and India, which together account for almost 3 billion people right there.

The End of Colonialism

So, what we are experiencing—and I think nobody in the West has an appropriate appreciation, or very few people have an appropriate appreciation of that—is that we are experiencing the end of an epoch. What I mean by that, is the 600 years, which started around 1500, of colonialism and subsequent neocolonialism, which persisted even after many countries of the so-called developing sector acquired independence. As

Indian Prime Minister Nehru and Indonesian President Sukarno already at the [1955] Bandung Conference had warned, the neocolonialism persisted in the form of denial of access to credit for development, terms of trade, and generally unjust conditions. But in the last 10-12 years, the prominence of the BRICS started to rise, from 2014, with the famous summit in Brazil. They have undergone tremendous development; the Belt and Road Initiative by Xi Jinping, the massive industrial growth of many emerging countries like Brazil, Indonesia, Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, and others—all of this naturally in part the result of the rise of China. Without the civilizational contribution of China, which is unique and without precedent, because it lifted not only 850 million of its own people out of poverty, but it also then stretched out its hands and provided, through corridors, through development projects, through industrial parks, a hand to the other developing countries to start this growth process on their own.

In part it was the rise of China, but in part it was also the blowback of the attempt after the collapse of the Soviet Union, to establish a unipolar world, by the neo-cons in the United States and their co-thinkers in Great Britain. And Francis Fukuyama’s famous “end of history” meant actually that there was a hubris in which they pursued the idea that the whole world, every single country on the planet, would adopt the Western neo-liberal model of democracy.

The means by which this was supposed to be accomplished were not so nice. It included “regime-change” against countries that would not go along with this; “color revolutions” by using civil organizations and NGOs to destabilize existing elected governments. It was based on interventionist wars—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and others. It was based on a brutal regime of unilateral sanctions—not backed by the UN Security Council—which always would not aim at the regimes, but actually

punish the populations in order to get them to rise up against their governments. It included weaponization of the dollar and the euro.

All of these factors created a factor in which there was the emergence of a powerful movement against neocolonialism, of countries which are demanding the right to their own development. They do not any longer want to be just raw materials exporters, where the profit of their raw materials goes to multinationals, cartels, and the banks. But, increasingly, really inspired by the example of China, countries wanted to have the creation of the value chain in their own countries, to develop their own industrial production, to become middle-level-income countries in the near future.

If we were thinking straight, we in Europe and the United States should be happy about this. This would mean the end to the migration crisis, which is bothering a lot of people in Europe and the United States, and which in large part contributed to the recent election result in the European Parliament elections. Shouldn't we be happy that young people from Africa, Asia, Latin America, would want to stay home and help to build their own country, instead of dying of thirst and hunger in the Sahara, or drowning in the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe, or being shot at, at the Mexican-American border? Countries like Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, the United States, and Japan are all export-oriented countries. We should support the countries in the developing, growing markets so that they become well-to-do and wealthy and that we have growing markets. It's an absolute win-win situation.

The Precipice of Nuclear War

Why are we, then, on the verge of World War III? The NATO narrative of an unprovoked Russian war of aggression assumes that the entire world population has historic amnesia. That we don't remember the time of the German unification, where we, from the Schiller Institute, were an absolute force in the middle of it. We are part of this, so we don't read books about it; this was our history. We remember the promises to Gorbachev that NATO would not move one inch to the East. We remember the hopeful discussions about a common European house; a common economic space from Vladivostok to Lisbon. Then, five expansions of NATO eastward did occur. The Orange Revolution in Ukraine; the Rose Revolution in Georgia; the Maidan

[in Ukraine], which was a U.S.- and Western-backed coup against a democratically elected government. We still remember Victoria Nuland's famous utterings—which I don't want to repeat here, because it's not lady-like. We remember Merkel and Hollande admitting that their participation in Minsk II [negotiations for a peace settlement between Ukraine and Russia] was only a trick to give the Ukrainians more time to be trained to a NATO standard. I can only sketch these developments here, but that's enough to paint the panorama of things happening now.

Now, the situation on the battlefield in Ukraine is near a stalemate. The Ukrainian counteroffensive from the Summer of 2023 clearly failed. There is a clear Russian advantage, but due to the massive supply of weapons from the West, Russia is not able to just run over the remaining depleted Ukrainian forces. New weapons are being sent; more powerful weapons. We are in a spiral of escalation. French President Macron infamously was demanding to send ground troops; many of those are already there in the form of advisors. Foreign Minister David Cameron of Great Britain allowed the use of Western weapons systems, cruise missiles; then increasingly the idea of long-range missiles to be used deep into the territory of Russia. And Putin, explicitly in response to these Western provocations, for the first time publicly announced military exercises with tactical nuclear weapons.

The West ignored this. Blinken afterwards doubled down and said, "Yes, you can use the weapons systems for attacks into Russian territory." So, this caused Putin to make a second maneuver in Russia, plus in Belarus. Then came the attack on the Russian early-warning radar system in Armavir, and an attempt in Orsk. These attacks had nothing to do with the Ukrainian war, but the only way Russia could read this, was that this was an attempt to knock out its second-strike capability; meaning a nuclear strike against Russia was being prepared. Clearly, this would not have been possible without NATO assistance, without U.S. tactical assistance. Therefore, the perception in Russia has been steadily rising that NATO is *de facto* already at war with Russia.

In the West, the narrative also is increasingly spreading that war is inevitable. German Defense Minister Pistorius went into this incredible campaign that Germany must become "war ready" again. After

our history, we should go on that path again? Is this man of a clear mind? And are the German people, who are just swallowing this as if nothing would have happened, are they of a clear mind?

The war with Russia, according to Pistorius, will take place in 2029. Russia must lose, says German Foreign Minister Baerbock and other such incredibly wise people. Ukraine must win. Now, that creates a dilemma, because the Russian defeat is excluded; forget about it. Russia is the strongest nuclear power on the planet, and it will never capitulate; that is completely out of the equation. In Russia, it is understood that at the level of the people who really run the show—not at the level of Biden, Blinken, but by the real powers that be—the decision has already been made; the order already has been given to go to war with Russia. That is, according to all witnesses, the consensus in Russia right now. In response to the Russian attacks in Kharkiv, the attacks on civilian targets in Belgorod escalated, and they are regarded in Russia as terrorist attacks, because they mainly hit children, civilians, and so forth. In Russia, the consensus in discussion—and one could hear that on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum—the consensus is that this has all gone too far already, and therefore a discussion has erupted about a decapitating strike.

At the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Russian President Putin had a discussion with Sergey Karaganov, who had been chosen, clearly deliberately, to be the moderator. Karaganov is known to be the number-one first-strike guy in Russia, the decapitation-strike man. Contrary to Karaganov, we are quite happy that Putin is very patient. He made again and again very clear that the Russian strategic doctrine is that Russia will use nuclear weapons only if the territorial integrity of Russia is threatened, but that Russia has symmetric and asymmetric responses to Western-backed Ukrainian attacks.

The biggest danger is if the West starts to believe in their own narrative, that Putin is only bluffing. I don't think Putin is bluffing, and that myth has to be eradicated, because that is one of the many ingredients which can lead to a catastrophe. Russia has also said that if there are NATO ground troops in Ukraine, or the stationing of F-16s, which are dual-use capable, then not only those troops and military items on the ground

will be hit, but also the decision-making centers where the order was given to deploy them.

We now read in the newspapers the decision that the command for the Ukraine war was transferred from [the U.S./NATO base in] Ramstein in Germany to a NATO command in Wiesbaden. For those people who know what that means for us, it's a very uncomfortable place to be in the future. If one considers how the United States is treating the interests of the allies, as we for sure will hear from Rainer Rupp later in this panel, and which is also very graphically described by Klaus von Dohnanyi, the former Lord Mayor of Hamburg, in a book in which he describes how in NATO maneuvers there had been no concern by the Americans if some nuclear bombs would be dropped on Germany; that was just a casualty of war to be taken into account. That is obviously a very frightening perspective.

Today also starts the Swiss conference in Bürgenstock, based on the Zelensky formula to have a so-called Ukraine peace conference, which before it even starts is doomed to fail, because Russia is not invited. Also today, Putin made a new peace proposal for Ukraine, where he proposed that in the territory where the population voted to be part of Russia, all Ukrainian troops should be withdrawn. And that there should be an absolute final agreement that Ukraine never will become part of NATO. So, what do the mainstream media do? They say that Putin is fabricating again, what is he talking about? Well, this is still on the path of confrontation and the road to continue the escalation until it is too late.

A New Paradigm for Humanity

What we need is a new global security and development conference which takes into account the interests of every single country on the planet. The obvious model has to be the Peace of Westphalia, which, in 1648, ended 150 years of religious war, of which the 30 Years War was only the last phase. The reason why people came to their senses, is because one-third of everything was destroyed already; one-third of the people, the cattle, the villages. They realized that if the war would go on, there would be nobody alive to enjoy the victory. Is that not the case all the more in the time of thermonuclear weapons? We will all be dead if it ever comes to a global nuclear war. And we are on the verge of it, on the edge of it. Such a global

war, according to the best scientists, will be followed by probably 10 years of a nuclear winter, in which all life on the planet will disappear.

Yesterday, President Putin proposed a new security system, apart from the proposal for Ukraine. A new system of indivisible security in Europe, based on the greater Eurasian partnership. Putin said, "Who wants to deny that geography cannot be changed? We have to live together somehow." This security system is open to European and NATO countries, he said. Going back to the beginning of my remarks, this new world system is emerging; this polycentric, harmonious, multi-nodal system. Xi Jinping has often called in the last years for a shared community of the one future of humanity.

This is a beautiful idea which has been around for many centuries; it's not new. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz in the 17th Century famously said that the two most advanced civilizations on the two poles of the Eurasian continent should stretch out their hands and work together to develop all the countries in between. Develop the South together. Friedrich List,

the most famous German economist, when he was discussing the continuous building of infrastructure around the globe until it finally would connect the entire globe through such trains and other systems—an early vision of our World Land-Bridge proposal—actually created the notion of a space-time economy. He had the idea that an increasing interconnectivity of global infrastructure will create the conditions to exchange creative ideas in science and art, and it will become the economy of mankind, where eventually all nations would unite in what he called a "republic of the planet." Cai Yuanpei, who was the first education minister of the Sun Yat-sen government and later president of the University of Beijing and the man who brought the concept of the aesthetic education of Schiller into China, had a beautiful vision of a great community of the entire world—in Chinese, the "datong shijie."

This is no longer a vision for the future; it is here. And rather than stumble into the last world war, after which there will be nothing, let us join the Global Majority. Thank you.

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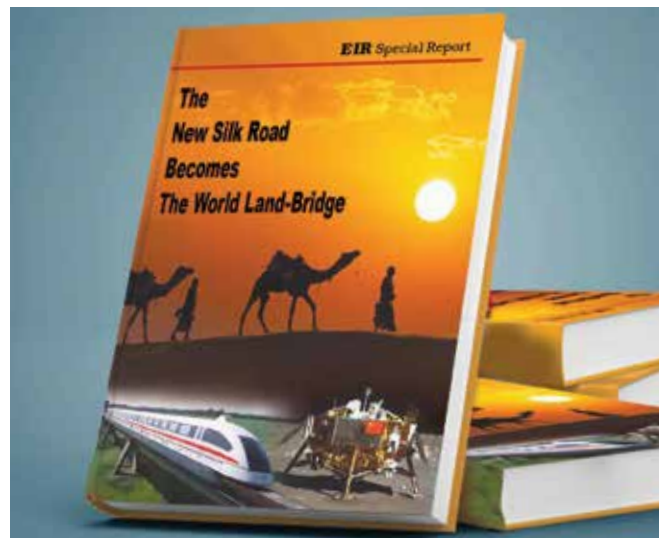
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