

Schiller Institute Weekly Dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche

U.S. Directed Attack on Crimea: One Step Closer to War Between NATO and Russia

The following is an edited transcript of the June 26, 2024, weekly Schiller Institute dialogue with Schiller Institute founder and chairwoman Helga Zepp-LaRouche. Embedded links have been added. The video is available [here](#).

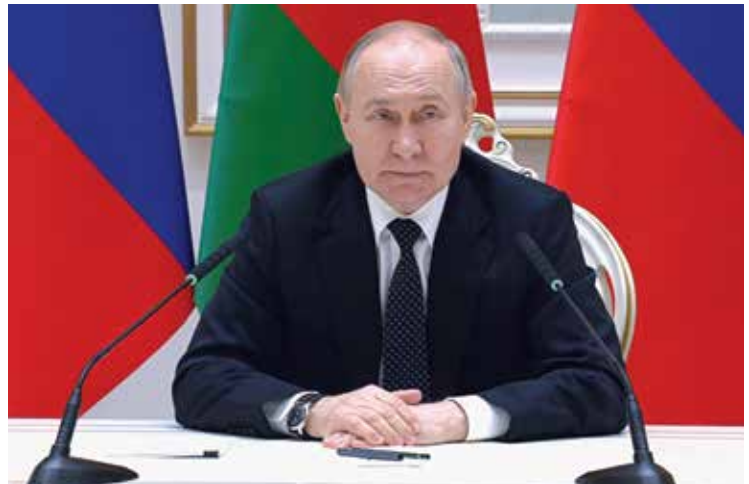
Harley Schlanger: Hello and welcome to the international dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder of the Schiller Institute. Today is Wednesday, June 26, 2024, and I'm your host Harley Schlanger. You can send your questions and comments via email to questions@schillerinstitute.org or post them on the YouTube chat page.

Helga, last Friday's International Peace Coalition meeting adopted a resolution which could not have been more timely, given the attacks on Crimea on June 23rd. There had been a discussion of the June 14 peace proposal by President Putin, which was dismissed, rejected, or ignored by most Western leaders, and a proposal was made to support Putin's peace initiative, drafted by the East German Board of Trustees of Associations (OKV), and it was adopted by the International Peace Coalition members. What's the content of the resolution, and how can this be used to intervene in the present crisis?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: It is an effort to get back to a dialogue in the international arena, because we are—and that is what concerns many people in the West—we are right now in an extremely dangerous spiral of escalation, whereby, no matter what happens, the NATO countries are for the most part dead-set on escalating. And I think the recent example of that, was the attack in Sevastopol on June 23, on the beach, by five U.S. ATACMS missiles, armed with cluster bombs: They struck a beach in Crimea on Trinity Sunday, which is a major religious holiday in the Russian Orthodox Church. There were many families on the beach: more than 150 people were injured; 4 were killed. Many are still in serious medical condition. And this was solely a

civilian target!

In the meantime, it is very clear that this could not have happened, without the U.S. fully guiding [the missiles] to the targets, the whole technical supervision of these ATACMS are not Ukrainian, they're entirely American. Naturally, the response from Russia was extremely sharp, because also on the same day, another terrorist attack occurred, in Dagestan, hitting a church and a synagogue, and that was also a terrorist attack, very clearly.



Russian President Vladimir Putin's peace plan has been ignored by most western leaders.

There is very clearly an attempt to escalate the confrontation, and one cannot help but think of the plan which was proposed by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in Great Britain, two years ago, where they said, we have to “boil the Russian frog” by increasing the temperature on and on, and eventually leading to a “Cuban Missile Crisis on steroids,” where you have a nuclear confrontation and then, maybe at the height of such a “Cuban missile crisis on steroids,” maybe then the leaders are more willing to negotiate.

This is pure insanity! And it increases the potential of a catastrophe, where something unexpected can happen, especially in light of a complete breakdown of all

disarmament agreements and arms control agreements, which makes the situation so much worse than during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

So, in this environment—naturally also before, but in this environment, Putin had issued this proposal, which the Western media reduced to just a proposal on Ukraine, but that was only the end of a one-hour speech he gave before the Foreign Ministry leadership on June 14, where he proposed a comprehensive, new Eurasian security architecture, open for NATO countries, and saying, maybe this is the last moment before a catastrophe can annihilate the entire human civilization. And it was an urgent call to sit down at the negotiation table.

Now, as you say, the Western leaders categorically rejected that, without even bothering to read the whole thing, just referring to the last part, the proposal for settling the Ukraine crisis. So, the umbrella organization of East German associations (OKV) of various kinds, they issued an appeal to support this proposal, and we invited a spokesman from the OKV to present this proposal, and it was discussed at length by all the participants of the International Peace Coalition, and we decided *ad hoc* in a resolution that we would try to get support for this, because we need to go to the negotiating table. I think this is extremely important, and I would urge all of you, our viewers, to check the resolution, to read the Putin speech, and also to check the [Ten Principles](#) I had proposed already in November 2022, for what such a security and development architecture should look like, and you will find there is an amazing affinity between Putin's proposal of June 14 and what I proposed in November 2022. And that is why I have a very easy time to agree and say, we should put this on the table and go back to diplomacy; and stop this absolutely immoral, extremely dangerous escalation, which can only lead to a world war which nobody would survive.

So please study these proposals, and help us to get as many signatures of individuals, institutions, organizations, because I think we need to really change the agenda.

Now, there are some signs that the danger of the situation is getting to some politicians. For example, while [German] Chancellor Scholz, in his government declaration today, again, for the second time, flatly rejected this proposal by Putin, by saying, “Aw, this can only be believed by people who are listening too much to RT Germany,” referring to the Russian news agency. It's just a silly response. But fortunately, Friedrich Merz, who is the opposition [Christian Democratic Union] leader and likely opposition chancellor candidate— Given the fact that the [incumbent] coalition has maybe 25% or less of the vote, but they're dwindling and crashing in the polls, it makes the statement

by Merz somewhat important. He said, already two days ago, that there may have to be a rethinking on the Ukraine situation, because it may be time to think about how to end the war, with a ceasefire or some peace negotiations.

This is very interesting. What the media are saying about that, is that this has something to do with the upcoming elections in three of the Eastern German states—in Saxony, in Brandenburg, and in Thuringia—where the mood of the population is overwhelmingly to stop this crisis, and they don't believe the narrative about what NATO is trying to tell them.

So, that may be a factor, but even more important is the fact that the German economy is just collapsing, falling like a stone, and there is massive pressure by industry to stop this insane confrontation course, which will ruin Germany economically. So, they're leaning heavily on Merz, and that is a big factor as well.

And also [French President] Macron, who recently was a key warmonger in demanding for French and other NATO troops to be sent to Ukraine, now he's all of a sudden—he's also under the impact of a tumultuous domestic situation—he is calling for going back to discussions with Putin, and then he says he believes in the power of dialogue, and he wants to be in the dialogue with Putin.

As you can see, there is flux, and that has to do with the fact that people vacillate between obedience to the NATO narrative and a perceived, fundamentally differ-



CC/European People's Party

Friedrich Merz, the Christian Democratic Union leader in Germany: It may be time to rethink the war in Ukraine.

ent self-interest. And that is why I think such an intervention, to actually gather support for such a dialogue based on Putin's proposal, is extremely important.

Schlanger: Madeleine assured me before we came on that the proposal is now posted on the [Schiller Institute website](#), and I notice it's also posted on the [BüSo website](#) in German. So, people can download it, read it and circulate it.

Now, I have a question from a medical professional from North Carolina, who writes: "I don't think most Americans realize that one or two more attacks like the one that hit the beach in Crimea, will put enormous pressure on Putin to escalate. I heard Scott Ritter and others warn about the danger of nuclear war, but the main media won't cover it. Does Biden think that Putin won't respond? Why do they keep pushing this way?"

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, it's very hard to figure out what Biden is thinking, because he seems to be vacillating a lot, and one doesn't get a clear idea. But I think the powers that be, that is, the military-industrial complex—or as Ray McGovern calls it, the MICIMATT, referring to the military-industrial-congressional-intelligence-media-academia-think tank complex—I think they are completely freaked out about the fact that the Western model is not functioning. The financial system is in shambles, it's over-indebted and there's no easy way in sight how that can be remedied. And they're seeing that there is this other world system emerging with the BRICS, the BRICS-Plus. But as Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov pointed out, it's not just the BRICS. It's the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), ASEAN, several other such organizations, which are forming a different economic system, which is based on sovereignty, on non-interference, on allowing for the different social system of the other country. They're basically focussing on investment into the real economy, while the West is entirely focussing on making the military strong, but neglecting the civilian economy. And that naturally goes along with brutal austerity against all kinds of things for the population.

So, I think it's one of the most remarkable phenomena of this present crisis, that while it is clear to

the whole world, to the Global Majority, and to many people in the West as well, that what the Chinese and their friends and colleagues in other states are doing, is in the interest of the people, because it pertains to the living standards, to increasing the living conditions for the people, while, what the West is trying to do, is they're trying to assert hegemony by cutting the living standard, by going into brutal austerity, cutting hospitals, cutting schools, cutting all the things that make life worth living—and, rather than thinking and reflecting that maybe it would be wise for the Western countries



Official White House Photo/Oliver Contreras

Is President Joe Biden trying to score election points by releasing Julian Assange?

to go back to a different policy tradition, like the U.S. Founding Fathers, like Alexander Hamilton, like Lincoln, like Franklin D. Roosevelt, like [John F.] Kennedy—no! They're incapable, or seemingly incapable, of correcting their mistakes, and they're trying to double down by escalating the confrontations with Russia, and with China looming not far in the background.

So, I think this is something which needs a massive intervention by the population, by thinking people! by people who are professors, academics, retired military, all kinds of people who have an opinion on that: They should speak out while we still can do that. Because, I think, only if we move to a situation where the collective West stops the geopolitical confrontation, and says, "OK, the world is shifting. There are more power centers emerging, but if we cooperate, that way we can resolve all problems easily through dialogue." And I

know it would be easy if Biden would reach out and call Xi Jinping, call Putin, and say, “Look, let’s have a summit, let’s discuss how we get a better policy,” I’m 100% sure it would be responded to positively.

Now, Putin’s proposal *is* such a stretching out, and that’s why we need to build as much support for it as possible.

Schlanger: We’re getting some questions coming in, and this one is from Connie, and it refers to the release of Julian Assange, which I’m sure you have some thoughts about that. But Connie asks: “Is Biden trying to score points for his re-election, especially among students? Or is there more to the release of Assange than we’re hearing?”

Zepp-LaRouche: The best I know is that that is a very likely hypothesis, that Biden would not want to have this terrible situation hanging around his shoulders, while going into the hot phase of the election campaign. There’s a lot of debate about it, where some people are expressing happiness that he’s finally in freedom, others criticize that he made a deal whereby he admitted some guilt concerning the espionage accusation. My view on this matter is that it’s very, very good that he is now free because if he would have stayed in prison much longer, there was a serious threat to his life. He has two children, and a wife, and he now can hopefully go back to some form of normality, and I fully endorse this decision.

Now, the not so nice part about it is that it came at the price of admitting a guilt which he does not have! Because even the German TV, which is among the most controlled media on the planet, in their normal coverage, they had some commentaries which were very important that they got out. Namely, they said that what Assange was accused of, was that he published some videos many years ago which showed war crimes by American and British soldiers in Afghanistan, in Iraq, which were quite horrible. Where soldiers were shooting civilians on the ground as if it was a video game, and egging each other on, saying, “Oh, here’s another one! We have to get this one, shoot that one down.” This is so absolutely incredible, terrible, and if you have a journalist who says, this has to become known, that’s what should be supported. Because if a government or an army is involved in such activity, it should not go unpunished. But obviously, the message which is supposed to be gotten out to the world is that if you



WikiLeaks/Twitter

Julian Assange, finally out of prison, but only by “admitting guilt he does not have.”

do this, if you are an investigative journalist, look at what happened to Assange: He had to be in exile in the Ecuador embassy for seven years, and then in HM Prison Belmarsh for five years, so, this is what happens to you if you dare to do this.

Now, hopefully this will lead to a reflection, with people saying: Are we a democracy, are we supposed to be the countries of the “rules-based order,” of freedom of speech, freedom of thought, human rights? Well, I think we are really in danger of losing these things, if we don’t correct this very urgently.

I think this will have an aftermath, because hopefully there will be a reflection of this, and hopefully the freedom of the press will not die with this case, which is obviously what the intention was.

Schlanger: I have a question—actually two people from Serbia sent in responses to your quoting [Serbian] President [Aleksandar] Vučić last week, where he warned that we may be headed toward World War III within three to six months. Neither of these people say they like Vučić, whom they’re accusing of making deals with European Union companies to sell off Serbia’s lithium deposits. But one of them says she believes there is a way out of this. She said that she believes that Putin’s response to the most recent attack should be to expand the BRICS alliance. And she asks what you think about that?

Zepp-LaRouche: I think the BRICS is not a counter to NATO. While NATO is extremely centralized,

with a tight bureaucracy of control on top of it, the BRICS is a rather loose association of partners, and they are based on completely different principles of economic cooperation, on the basis of a win-win cooperation. And I think that the more countries that would join that, the better. Many years ago, in 2014, I remember that we, from the Schiller Institute, campaigned for even the United States to join the BRICS. I don't know if that is feasible right now; I think it would not be in contradiction, at all, to the cohesion of the West. This idea that the Russians and the Chinese are the enemy and they have to be defeated—that is the narrative which will lead to World War III. I think the BRICS is an option; it's sort of like the lifeboat for the sinking *Titanic*; and if countries would decide to join the BRICS, they could also become the bridge to countries in the West to try to go back to dialogue and cooperation.

So, since there are already, as far as I know, 59 countries that have applied to become BRICS members, it could very well be, it could become like an umbrella organization uniting all countries on the planet.

Schlanger: We have a question from someone who often sends in questions. He said that he heard today that [Lloyd Austin](#) called his Russian counterpart, [Andrey Belousov], and that this is the first communication between the U.S. Defense Secretary and his Russian counterpart in some time. But, he said, did this actually happen, and if so, what does it indicate?

Zepp-LaRouche: I think [it did happen](#), because the news reported it on both sides, so I think that confirms it, and I think it's very good. Because for more than a year, there was no communication between the two defense ministers, and that is always extremely danger-



U.S. National Guard/Staff Sgt. Jordan Sivayavrojna
Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin—with U.S. troops who will train Ukrainian troops—had his first conversation with his Russian counterpart, Andrey Belousov.

ous, because if people don't talk to each other anymore, the opportunity to remove misunderstandings is zero. So, while we do not know yet what the content was—the readout was very slim, it just said “Ukraine and

other issues.” One can imagine that the attack on Sevastopol was a topic, and the implication of, hopefully, how to contain further escalations—I mean, the Russian response to the Sevastopol attack had been extremely harsh, because I think Russian Ambassador Antonov in Washington has blasted the U.S. and said that there is 100% certainty that this was done by the United States. And Russia's UN Ambassador, [Vasily] [Nebenzia](#), said that the U.S. has become a war-participating party.

Now, what could be more dangerous than to have the two most powerful nuclear forces being at war with each other, or *de*

facto, almost being at fully declared war? So, I think this came, really, at the absolute urgent moment, and one can only hope that the kind of civilized dialogue among the nuclear superpowers would become the normal standard again.



UN Photo/Manuel Elias
Vasily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative to the UN of the Russian Federation, on military activity in Crimea: The U.S. has become a participating party in the war.

Schlanger: Maybe Lloyd Austin was paying attention to the resolution that came through the International Peace Coalition meeting, which called for that! Let me take this opportunity to tell people that there will be another call this Friday, the 56th straight week, for discussion, and people can join that. So, sign up with the Schiller Institute to get the link for the [International Peace Coalition](#) meeting on Friday, June 28, and become active with us.

Now, Helga, I have a couple more questions that are interesting. A woman from Arizona writes: “I live near the border with Mexico, and we have a big immigration problem. I used to think Trump’s idea of a wall was bad, but I’m not sure any more. I hear there are immigration problems in Europe, as well, and people are demanding action there, also. What are the countries in Europe doing about immigration. Does the European Union have a plan?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, yes, but that plan is very terrible, because that plan is basically the idea that you work with countries around the Mediterranean and make deals with them whereby they keep the potential refugees from crossing the Mediterranean, or using some other route, like the Balkans, or from Africa to the Canary Islands, all of which have extremely high mortality rates. People are drowning, and the Mediterranean has become a mass grave already. Now, this is pushed through with military means. The border organization Frontex has been accused of terrible acts many times by now. So, that is not a solution!

And the Global South looks at the EU and says, how can they claim to be for “human rights” if they treat human beings like this? So, I can only strongly warn against the model of the European Union, which is disgusting, to say the least.

Right now, the only way how we can solve the migrant problem is by developing the Global South! Right now, you have a whole upheaval from countries of the Global Majority, that is, 85% of the human species, Latin America, Asia, Africa: These countries want to end colonialism. And they see China and the Belt and Road Initiative, and they see the kinds of infrastructure projects they can have, and that has led to a new optimism, whereby these countries basically say they want to stop colonialism, they want to stop being export countries for raw materials, and they want to keep the production and processing of these raw ma-

terials into semi-finished products, into industry, into infrastructure, and build up their own economies, and overcome poverty, overcome underdevelopment, and that way create the conditions where the young people in particular, but all people, want to stay in their home country and help to build it up! This is what the President of Ghana has already said some years ago. He said, do you really think our young people want to flee through the Sahara, through the Sahel, the Mediterranean, and die on the way? Rather than having investments where we create millions of new productive jobs for all of these people, who can stay home and help to construct their home country.

And I think that, given the fact that most countries in Latin America would like exactly that, there are key projects, such as in Peru, this new port which is being built, which is a game-changer; there are plans for a bi-oceanic railway connecting the Pacific and the Atlantic, across Latin America. All of these projects would be an attraction for people not to flee and come to the United States, where they have a miserable flight, crossing Central America, being hounded by all kinds of military, police, and then coming to a border where the chance that they may not make it alive is very high—that is not the way to solve this problem.

The United States should join hands with China and agree on certain development projects in Latin America, in [Mexico, and Central America](#), between [Venezuela and Guyana](#), [Brazil and Peru](#), many projects, and that way, you would create an incentive and an atmosphere of hope, where all the prospective migrants would rather stay in their home country and build it. And I think that is what we have to fight for: Everything else is disgusting and should really not happen.

Schlanger: I have one more question for you, Helga. I think you’ll like this one. An old friend of mine wrote in and said: “Lyn used to use the Yiddish word *mishigas*, when talking about the foolishness of governments, especially Israeli governments. There seems to be a lot of *mishigas* in Israel right now! The government seems to be infighting in the midst of a genocide against the Palestinians. What’s going to happen there? It looks like Netanyahu has lost his mandate, and the real crazies are moving to take over. We need a new Sholem Aleichem to get people to reflect on this craziness. What do you think?”



UNWRA Facebook page

Children in the Gaza Strip wait for scant food aid. An estimated 15,000 or more children have died from Israel's "war on Hamas terrorists."

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, the situation is horrible! Because just now, various international aid organizations published new reports that the hunger, famine crisis in Gaza is getting worse by the day! Also UNRWA, the major Palestinian aid organization, they're running out of funds. They cannot do what is their life task to do! So the catastrophe is absolutely continuing. Netanyahu's support is dwindling. I think that last Saturday, there was the largest protest demonstration since Oct. 7, with 150,000 people in Tel Aviv alone. And I think it's very difficult to see how the Israel situation can be resolved.

What we have proposed as the [Oasis Plan](#) is, in my view, still the only option. You have to have a peace conference, a ceasefire, and then you have to put the two-state solution on the table, and you have to have an agreement to develop the entire region, with the Oasis Plan to create plenty of new water, with the peaceful use of nuclear energy. And I would still hope that the neighboring countries are agreeing to that. And I think, realistically, given the fact that the interwoven nature of the Israel situation and the election campaign in the United States, which is a real complicating factor, does require that you take a totally different approach—which is actually Putin's proposal

for a completely new Eurasian security architecture. Because it involves all of Eurasia, which would include Southwest Asia, which is part of Eurasia, obviously. And in that context, one could have, in the tradition of the Peace of Westphalia, a peace negotiation, whereby, first, one agrees on principle, and that is, the name for peace is development, for this region more than anything else; and that then you go and discuss out the differences, the details, land ownership. But if you start to develop the region, if you make the deserts green, you master the deserts, you turn desert land into forestry, into farmland, then all of these questions of who owns what piece of territory are completely different: Because you're increasing the cake rather than fighting over a shrinking number of pieces of cake. And I think that approach is urgently required.

So, please support our Oasis Plan as part of this new security architecture. I think that is the only realistic perspective I can talk about.

Schlanger: When you started talking, I just got a message saying, "Speaking of craziness, what about the U.S. Congress inviting Netanyahu to address them?"

Helga, we've run out of time, but I do think it's extremely important that people take what you said about this International Peace Coalition resolution and go out with it. So, if you want to conclude with a comment on that, I think it would be highly appropriate, given the danger we've seen in the last days, with the use of the ATACMS by Ukrainians with the full support of the United States.

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes, I do actually ask all of you to [help to get this resolution](#) around. Get many organizations and individuals to sign it. Hopefully we can do this all over the world, and if we have enough together, we can think of trying to buy advertisements or get people to give interviews about it—just make the awareness that that is a route out of the present danger. So please take this resolution and spread it, ask people to sign it, and join us on Friday for the IPC meeting.

Schlanger: Helga, thank you very much, and we'll see you next week.

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes, or also on Friday.