

Schiller Institute Weekly Dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Orbán Tries Diplomacy While NATO Plans More War

The following is an edited transcript of the July 10, 2024, weekly Schiller Institute dialogue with Schiller Institute founder and leader Helga Zepp-LaRouche. Embedded links and subheads have been added. The video is available [here](#).

Harley Schlanger: Hello and welcome to our weekly dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche. She is the founder and leader of the Schiller Institute. Today is Wednesday, July 10, 2024. I'm Harley Schlanger and I'll be your host. You can send your questions and comments by email to questions@schillerinstitute.org or post them to the YouTube chat page.

Well, Helga, there's so much going on, I'm not quite sure where to start. Let's begin with a question from a contact in London, who writes: "I don't know if Biden suffers from dementia, but it's obvious from the NATO summit going on, that most of the leaders of NATO are dangerously delusional. Do you think that Putin's patience will last, if NATO provides more long-range missiles, F-16s, and approves of Ukrainian strikes inside Russia? I fear we are really looking at a nuclear World War III."

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Well, I would be happier if I could dismiss your concern, because I do share it. I think that the situation is incredibly dangerous, and if you analyze the different positions, you come to the conclusion, if you look at it from the side of NATO, that there is no option of a diplomatic solution, of going back to any kind of negotiations; there is only the policy of defeating Russia. I think that's completely impossible, because you cannot defeat the strongest nuclear power on Earth, especially when they have a nuclear doctrine which says that if their existence as a state is threatened, they will use nuclear weapons. That means

World War III, and indeed we are very close to that. And it's very clear, red lines have been crossed, and the Russians have also said that if the F-16s are delivered into Ukraine, there will have to be some counter-reaction, some symmetric, or asymmetric response—maybe taking out the F-16s directly, maybe some other way, but given the fact that they are dual-use fighter planes [i.e., capable of carrying conventional or nuclear missiles—ed.], they cannot remain, from the standpoint of Russia, inside Ukraine. Also, this idea, that, what is now being pushed practically by all of NATO, that all



Official White House photo by Adam Schultz

War-promoter President Joe Biden continues pushing the line that Vladimir Putin is trying to reinstate the Soviet Union.

weapons systems can be used deep into the territory of Russia, is a prescription that sooner or later, we will reach a point of no return.

And obviously, if you look at it from the Russian side—and you're not allowed any more to do that—but if you are a scientist, a historian, an analyst, you have to look at all sides and come to a conclusion where we actually are. And the accusation of NATO, that of basically everybody—[NATO Secretary General] Stoltenberg, U.S. President Biden—Biden said it just recently, again, and also many others, like the British are saying it continuously, that the aim of Russian President Putin



kremlin.ru

Russian President Vladimir Putin. After nine NATO advances eastward and NATO's Nazi networks' takeover of Ukraine's government, he launched the 2022 special military operation.

would be to reinstate the Soviet Union, and that therefore, you cannot have a negotiated settlement, because Putin will not stop; he will go on to the Baltic states, to Poland, and even into Western Europe at some point: That is an assumption, that is a statement, that is not proved by any facts! I have not seen any fact, any proof that that accusation is truthful, but the entire NATO behavior rests on that characterization of supposedly what Putin's intentions are.

Now, that is a critical question, and I would ask all of you, our viewers, to insist that this be clarified, because all I have been able to find, where tons of statements by Putin and some others—but Putin is what counts—that Putin has no intention to reconstitute the Soviet Union; he has no intention to even take over the entirety of Ukraine, but only those parts which, according to recent developments caused by the Mайдан coup, now are regarded as part of the Russian Federation, because of the votes of the populations who are living there. So that is the big gap, and I think we have to absolutely make sure that that question is either proven—which I think is not provable, because I have not been able to find any such proof—or it should get out of the equation.

And I think the reason why these people, who have set up all their hopes on the continuation of the war, are so desperate— Because if you look at this NATO summit, which was supposed to be the glorious celebration of the

75th anniversary of NATO, you look at the people who are gathering there, it is a not-so-illustrious combination: Biden—I don't know what his mental condition is, or not; he's weak in any case. Even the Democratic Party has many people who want to have his resignation. The *New York Times* editorial board is demanding his resignation, and they don't really have a credible replacement, which is why I think it's taking so long to come to any decision there. But then, [French President] Macron: Macron is completely discredited in France, weak. [German Chancellor] Scholz is in a terrible position. So, I think NATO is not in a strong position at all, and I think if there would be any reason among these people, they would pick up on the initiative of Prime Minister Orbán from Hungary, who has shown the way how it is possible to negotiate. And I think just the physical presence of Orbán at this [July 9-11 NATO] meeting must be really a painful experience for these people.

Global NATO or Peaceful Cooperation?

Schlanger: Well, here's a question, which is sort of a follow-up on that one about the NATO summit. The person writes: "The war-hawk CEO of the Atlantic Council, [Frederick Kempe](#), demonstrated the panic of the NATO delegates in his column yesterday. He writes



NATO Photo

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg led the Washington, D.C. NATO conference to bolster the enemy image of Russia and China in the U.S.

of the Orbán meetings with Zelensky, Putin, and Xi, and Indian Prime Minister Modi’s meetings with Putin, as though they are deliberate provocations timed to coincide with the NATO summit. He concludes his article by saying: ‘NATO began its mission 75 years ago amid an inflection-point in history, a story former U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson chronicled in his memoir, *Present at the Creation*. Putin and Xi would very much like to be present at the conclusion of NATO and the U.S.-led international order. But they will only be successful if allies don’t respond and if partners go out of their way to back these revisionist autocrats.’”

“Do you have any response to the hysteria exhibited by Kempe?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, you can only characterize what is going on in such a way if you are sitting on a very, very high horse! And you are looking down at the whole rest of the world as being just some dwarves who don’t count. But that arrogance of the so-called collective West, that is the problem, because it is that arrogance which prevents these people from seeing the world as it is. They only think in terms of how they can maintain the status of running the world as a unipolar system, by treating all of these other countries and peoples as inferior. And that’s what comes out of his statement.

The reality is that the timing of the visits of [Chinese President] Xi Jinping, of Putin and Modi, in Moscow, have their own logic. I mean, the BRICS are building their own system. They just had the [Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting](#) in Astana: They emphasized that it is not just the BRICS-Plus, but it is all of these organizations—the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, ASEAN, some other organizations—which are



MSC/Kuhlmann

Atlantic Council CEO Frederick Kempe called Hungarian President Viktor Orbán’s meetings with Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping a provocation.

parts of the emergence of a new economic system based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence—that is, sovereignty, non-interference, respect for the different social system of the other country—and these countries are determined to build such a system. And if it timely coincides with NATO, so be it. But these people do not think that NATO is the navel of the world, and they’re doing their own thing!

I think the freakout about Modi going to Moscow, meeting with Putin, is incredible, because India was supposed to be that big, so-called “largest democracy,” where all efforts were made to

pull it into the camp of the Western models. But I think they completely underestimated the desire of Modi to have an independent India.

What you will see coming out of the NATO summit—all the signs are speaking in this direction—is an effort to make NATO a global system. NATO is the North Atlantic defense system, supposedly, but they’re deciding now—they decided it since the Madrid summit last year—that NATO should become global. They will make enormous efforts to enlarge the AUKUS, that is, the defense alliance between the United States, Great Britain and Australia, and add Japan and South



NATO Photo

NATO heads-of-state meeting: The “North Atlantic” goes on the brutal offense globally for “our values.”



PIB of India

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's expanded cooperation with Russian President Vladimir Putin for advanced development troubles the West's elites.

Korea, and basically have this policy of NATO expanding to the East; to encircle Russia more and more, and to encircle China as well. And I think this is very, very dangerous: Because why would NATO—Why are they not staying at home? What business do they have to try to expand to a global system, all over the world, trying to contain Russia and China? And I think the fact that these countries of the Global South do not agree with that, and insist on building their own system, it's very rational, it's very understandable, it's legitimate. Nobody has the right to impose their will on the majority of the world population, which is what these countries are, which together represent 85% of the human population!

So, I think this has to be resolved. And the best way to resolve it, is to go in the direction of sovereignty: The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence are a model out of which all of international law came; the UN Charter is in cohesion with that. And I think the idea to have supranational constructs like NATO, or the EU, for that matter— And they have married a lot since [European Commission President Ursula] von der Leyen decided to make the difference between NATO and the EU nonexistent. So I think it's not a provocation: It's arrogance to characterize it as a provocation, and the fact that they are not holding the ship together is seen by the fact that, not only did Modi go to Moscow, but Modi accepted to go immediately after the meeting with Putin, to Vienna; to Austria! This

naturally means that Chancellor Nehammer is not able to participate in the NATO summit, because he has to receive Modi in Austria.

You have Orbán from Hungary, [Prime Minister] Fico from Slovakia, also the President of Bulgaria, Radev, have all voiced clear opposition to the NATO policy; we have Prime Minister Kobakhidze from Georgia, [President] Vučić from Serbia (who's naturally not in the EU, but part of the European dynamic), and obviously, Austria insisting on its neutral status. All this speaks to the fact that there are many forces in Europe also who do not agree to this policy of globalization; militarization of NATO.

So, I think Mr. Kempe has the wrong view. I think he has to adjust it.

Schlanger: We did get something on the chat line, here, referring to the charge that the Russians deliberately blew up a children's hospital in Kyiv. The person writes: "Numerous photos and videos from Kyiv irrefutably confirm destruction by a Ukrainian anti-aircraft missile, fired by a launcher positioned inside the city." It seems as though they've used these kinds of false flags before at moments like this, including the Bucha case. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, again, this would require an independent, international investigation, which naturally will not happen under the present circumstances. But I think one should also note [some Russian spokesmen](#)—it may even have been Ambassador Antonov, but I'm not entirely sure—said, if a Russian missile would



CC/Oksana Ivanets, Oleksandr Shulman

Kyiv's Okhmatyd Hospital, most likely hit by intended Ukrainian anti-missile defense.



Viktor Orbán Facebook page

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's presence at the NATO summit, fresh from peace-making diplomacy, caused consternation among the war party.

have hit this children's hospital, it would have completely destroyed the building, and just by the nature of the damage, it is very clear that the likelihood is it was rather from some debris falling down from such an anti-aircraft missile attack.

So, I think it's typical: Like "Bucha 2.0," it's supposed to ruin—Like [Bucha](#) was coming onto the scene especially when the chance for a diplomatic solution around Istanbul was on the table. Now, it's a NATO summit, which naturally is designed to fuel the outrage. But I think, for most thinking people, it's very apparent.

Will Europe and the U.S. Return to Sovereignty?

Schlanger: Now, there's the second round of the election in France, that produced what some people are calling a "surprising" result. I have an email here, from someone who signed their email "Angry and disappointed." And they ask: "What happened to [Marine] Le Pen's party in the French election? I don't know anyone in France who likes Macron. What happened?"



Marine le Pen Facebook page

Prominent French leader Marine le Pen, whose Rassemblement National remains France's strongest party amidst turmoil.

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, if you look at the election result, the Le Pen party, the Rassemblement National, is still the strongest party, so Marine Le Pen actually said that it increased from whatever seats they had to 120, which is a gain of several dozen. In any case, they are the strongest individual party. However, because of the deal between the Macronists and the United Left—the Popular Front—they could prevent the Le Pen party from getting an absolute majority. But given the fact that the EU already has indicated that they will force France to adjust their budget because of the deficit they have, according to EU rules, they will come down—no matter who the new government is—they will come down with a brutal austerity program, and that means that there is no way how the Left components of such a new government—provided that that's what it's going to be—will accept that. So, disunity is preprogrammed, and I think France is, from everything I can see,

looking at a period of real instability; Macron, according to all reports we are getting from our colleagues in France, is completely finished.

So, I think we are in for a turbulent time, because such dramatic changes are taking place in almost every country in Europe, and I think it's lucky that there is

an alternative: With the Global Majority organizing themselves into a new economic system, it would be very easy for European nations to reach out to the BRICS, to the SCO, to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and similar organizations, and just say, "We want to cooperate on equal terms. We do not insist on decoupling, on derisking, but we will have trade negotiations and relations with each other to the benefit of each."

Look at Germany: The newest figures on the German economy for May are devastating! Overall exports collapsed by

3.6%, imports by 6.6%, but exports to China decreased by 10.2%. Now, that is a serious blow, and the German economy is in a free fall. And if they continue to be just the vassals of the Anglo-American effort to decouple

from China, Germany, and with that all of Europe, will go into a free fall even more than now. And that will have incredible social consequences.

I think the good thing is that there is this emerging new system, and the European countries would be well advised to show the way, you know, like Orbán took the initiative and showed that there is another way. And frankly, if Europe would take such a position towards the Global South, that would be the biggest friendship service they could do for the United States, and help them to do likewise.

Schlanger: Now we have lots of questions that have come in on what you might call the “mess around Biden” in the United States, the question of whether he should step down, whether he should run for re-election, and so on. Here are just a couple questions, to give you an example: One asks, “Do you think he should resign?” Someone else says, “There’s obviously been a cover-up by his staffers and by the media. Shouldn’t there be some accountability for that?” And then someone writes, “How can we believe anything? How do we know who’s actually running the country?” So, why don’t you take those three questions.

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, I think the last question points to the crux of the matter. Because questions about Biden’s fitness were asked five years ago, by the Democrats already then! There have been all these videos on the Internet for the last several years; one never would know: Are they real, are they fake? Are they AI-doctored? These days one never knows. But it is very clear that the feebleness of Biden does pose the absolute, crucial question: Who actually is running the United States? Because if it’s not the President, and it always was said that the President of the United States is the most challenging job in the world—and indeed, it is a huge job—if it’s not run by Biden, who is running it?

I think this idea that there is not an elected President, but a permanent bureaucracy—and some names have popped up, like this [Tom Donilon](#), and similar people—but one could probably—and we are actually looking into this—make a very good list of who’s who in this permanent bureaucracy: in Wall Street, the military-industrial complex, Silicon Valley, the academia, the university control—which is amazingly, if you start looking at the boards of these universities, the overlap with the military-industrial complex, with the banking sector, is just mind-boggling. So, one can actually

come up with this permanent bureaucracy of people who have not been elected, who are not accountable, but who are running the show; who are running the fate of the world. And that should really worry anybody, because on the one side, under the name of “democracy,” human rights, and rules-based order, and all of these nice words, where is the democracy in the United States?

So, I think it does require that real patriots of the United States should really take on this question and take responsibility for it. At this point, I cannot see who in the Democratic Party would make a difference. Obviously, with [former U.S. President] Trump, there is some question mark: Is there a connection between Trump and Prime Minister Orbán? It seems that there is some coordination on this initiative by Orbán to go to Moscow, to go to Beijing, and now participate in the NATO summit, and that that may all be a prelude to what Trump has promised, that he could end the Ukraine war in 24 hours. So that is a likely hypothesis. Will the policy toward China be changed, if Trump becomes President? That’s a big question mark.

But I think it poses a much more fundamental question that, obviously, these institutions of Wall Street, of the military, Silicon Valley, they have taken on a life of their own, and what that does to the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution, well, that is the big question which can only be resolved by the American people, themselves. And fortunately, we do have two absolutely important flagship campaigns, that of [Diane Sare](#) for U.S. Senate in New York, and of [Jose Vega for Congress](#) in the Bronx (CD-15), and I can only tell people to orient towards these campaigns, because they address the issues every American should be concerned with.

Continued Discredit or a New Credit System?

Schlanger: Helga, I have a whole series of questions, so let’s see if we can answer them in a fairly concise way. First, there’s from Tora: “It is leaked that in the [final declaration from the NATO summit](#) that the path for Ukraine into NATO is irreversible. Can you comment on this?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, there will be at the NATO summit a big effort to have as strong as possible wording, guaranteeing some kind of NATO status for Ukraine. But as recent reports indicate, there are also some countries, some members of NATO that oppose

that, and there are actually several people who know that to have made the promise to Ukraine, and to Georgia, for that matter, at the [Bucharest NATO summit in 2008](#) was really the most stupid and dangerous decision one could possibly make. And if now, NATO would basically give Ukraine some status, whereby, if you call it “bridge to NATO” or whatever name you give it, where *de facto*, more and more, NATO is in Ukraine, this is just one inch, one step, one centimeter closer to World War III. Because it’s just, from the Russian standpoint, not acceptable, from their very basic security standpoint to have offensive weapons systems at their border in Ukraine! That’s the whole issue: The NATO expansion—people, say, “Oh, NATO expansion, NATO is such a good-natured creature, and nobody should ever expect anything bad from NATO.” That’s baloney! Because if you are the military in Russia, you’re not listening to words and propaganda, you’re looking in hard-nosed fashion at what weapons systems have been moved to within five minutes’ striking distance from Moscow. And that is what they’re reacting to! And anybody who is not dishonest, will recognize that it is a legitimate security interest of Russia to make that point.

What happened in the Cuban Missile Crisis? President Kennedy, when he saw that there were Soviet missiles in Cuba, correctly made the point that this is too close to the United States border. What would be the U.S. reaction, if all of a sudden, China and Russia would move their offensive systems to the Mexican-American border, or to the Canadian-American border? You would have a dance on all media. People would go haywire.

So be realistic. And [Zbigniew] Brzezinski said it many decades ago; he said, without Ukraine, Russia is not defensible, and it’s not even a superpower anymore. Now, people also oppose the fact that with Putin, Russia has started to resume its role as a world player, and they say, “Under no circumstances Russia should be allowed to do that.” Why not? Russia is the largest country in the world, it has 11 time zones, it’s an enormous land mass in Eurasia. It has all the raw materials in the Mendeleev [Periodic] Table. Why should Russia not say they’re a major power in the world? If you accept that, and say, let’s go back to all disarmament agreements, let’s go to having some peaceful order, it would not be a problem. Now, unfortunately, I don’t think that old regime can be re-established, which is why I think the only way how we will get out of this present, dangerous situation is by completely changing

the parameters, by going back to the principles of the Peace of Westphalia, to say that a continuation of the war will not do any good to anybody, because there will be no victorious power; we will all be dead! That was the case in 1644-1648, when the negotiations took place, because people realized that a continuation of the fighting would lead to the deaths of everybody. And in a time when we have more than 10 times the number of thermonuclear weapons needed to eliminate the last bit of life on Earth, to not come to the conclusion that we have to stop is just delusional, to state it mildly.

We have to have the idea to go to [a new security and development architecture](#), and fortunately in the recent period, there have been tremendous steps in this direction. The [initiative by Putin on June 14](#), where he offered an all-Eurasian security architecture; the same thing was offered by [Xi Jinping at the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence conference](#); and now at the [Shanghai Cooperation Organization conference](#), and I think that is what should be discussed. I think that is the only way we will get out of this crisis.

Schlanger: Now, the other place where there was an election that took place was in the United Kingdom, and D. points out that Labour Party leader Keir Starmer was quick to condemn Russia, but has not yet condemned genocide by Israel. He goes on to ask, “How will the political dynamics change between the UK and the U.S. if Trump wins the U.S. election?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, I think this new British government is not any different than the previous one. I mean, maybe in color, maybe Labour instead of the Tories, but in terms of foreign policy, there is no change. I think if Trump would come in, that could then lead to a situation where, obviously, that would also encourage many more patriotic thinking people in Europe, so I think it would hopefully isolate the British, and reduce them to what they actually are: a small island.

Schlanger: [laughs] And here’s the final question for today, Helga, from a German economist, who says: “I took your advice and read Lyndon LaRouche’s fascinating essay on a [‘Basket of Hard Commodities: Trade without Currency.’](#) While I understand his argument about the disaster of the post-1971 floating-exchange system, I wonder why he did not make it simple and just go back to the Bretton Woods gold-reserve system?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, I think there’s too much

emphasis on the aspect of the gold reserve, and less emphasis on the difference between the fixed and floating exchange rates. Because that shift to floating exchange rates is what opened the gates to the whole deregulation of the markets, which was increased, step by step by step, until the present, almost complete deregulation of everything. But I think the key reason why that paper is relevant, is because the Bretton Woods system was giving stability to the Northern countries, to the Western world; it did allow reconstruction after the Second World War, in Germany and elsewhere, but it did absolutely *not* fulfill the promise of [U.S. President Franklin] Roosevelt, which he had given in 1933, that he wanted to create a system which would allow cheap, long-term credit for the increase of the wealth of the developing countries.

Now, because Roosevelt died at an unfortunate moment, and when Truman became President of the United States, the characterization and the actual building of the Bretton Woods system took care of the Northern countries, but it did not take care of the Global South, so they remained in a condition of, practically, colonialism, and in poverty and underdevelopment.

And I think the key thing about this paper by Lyndon LaRouche, is that it absolutely puts the emphasis

on long-term credit for development. And I think that is what has to be understood: Because we're not talking about the replacement of one monetary system with another one, but we're talking about the replacement of a monetary system with a credit system. And I think there is good hope that what is being negotiated presently among countries such as Russia, China, and other BRICS countries, is very much inspired by the ideas of my late husband. In other words, it's not monetarist value, but the measurement will not even be raw materials and hard commodities, but it will be the increase of the productivity in the production process of the labor power and the industrial capacity, which will be the reference point for the measurement of the currencies. So, this is a completely different approach: It's oriented towards the ongoing, continuous improvement of the living conditions of the people, and not the profit of a few. That's an important difference.

Schlanger: Well, Helga, thanks for joining us again today. It's always a pleasure to hear your thoughts on these things. Thanks for joining us. I urge everyone to look for the International Peace Coalition meetings on Fridays. You can sign up for those meetings on the [Schiller Institute website](https://www.schillerinstitute.com/).

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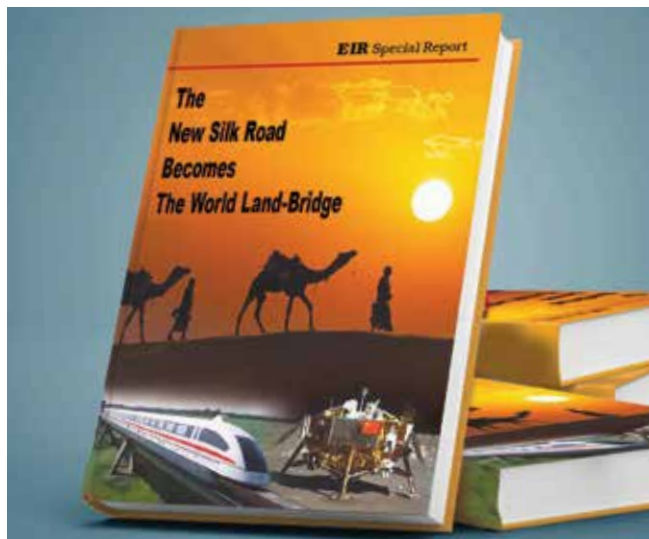
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