

Schiller Institute Weekly Dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Tectonic Shifts Open the Way for the LaRouche Program

The following is an edited transcript of the March 5, 2025, 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: Welcome to our weekly dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and leader of the Schiller Institute. This is Wednesday, March 5, 2025. I'm Harley Schlanger and I will be your host. You can send questions and comments to Helga via email to questions@schillerinstitute.org or you can post them to the chat page.

Now, Helga, last night during his address to a joint session of Congress, U.S. President Donald Trump read a letter from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, in which he wrote, "No one wants an endless war. Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer." And then he said, "I stand ready to work under President Trump's strong leadership." Which is quite an about-face, and obviously in response to the scolding he got from Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance last Friday, being kicked out of the White House, the failure of the summit with European leaders in London, Trump's pause of weapons and financial aid to Ukraine, and other developments. So, let's begin with your assessment of these events. Do these events bring us closer to a sustainable peace in Ukraine?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: I say so, because, I don't know if you mentioned the fact that the U.S. has cut off information sharing and military supplies, and that leaves Ukraine with a very short period of time where they could, in any case, maintain military activities. So, this is a really, incredibly important moment. And if

you then compare the hysterical behavior of some people in Europe, it's now becoming very clear who is interested in keeping this war going, and who wants peace. This is a very hopeful sign, and it's not yet the full settlement of the problem, but it shows that there is a willingness, at least from the side of the United States and Russia, and that Trump is also determined to put deeds behind his words. And that is a principle which, if applied for a good purpose, is really bringing the



White House/Daniel Torok

President Donald Trump addresses a joint session of Congress.

world away from the edge of World War III. Anybody who is reasonable should be happy about that!

Whither U.S., NATO, Europe?

Schlanger: Several people wrote to us, asking about rumors that Trump might announce that the U.S. is leaving NATO, in response to the meeting of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron; that he had a decidedly negative reaction to the Europeans, because they came out and said they don't want peace! They're committed to war. So, we have two questions on this: "What would you



NATO

NATO exercise Nordic Response 24.

think about the U.S. leaving NATO?” and “Can NATO survive without the United States?”

Zepp-LaRouche: It has been my view for a very long time that NATO should have dissolved at the same time when the Warsaw Pact dissolved in 1991; that also the character of NATO, in the meantime, has changed, increasingly, step by step, from a defensive North Atlantic alliance, into an offensive alliance with global aspirations in the Indo-Pacific, and clearly changing its character from being a defensive instrument, defending the interests of America and the Europeans, in order to contain Russia, China, and now, potentially, the whole BRICS development.

So, I think NATO should dissolve; it’s an obsolete concept. It would be good if the United States would make that decision as well, and I don’t think that Europe alone could maintain something like NATO. It may be able to develop a European security system, even though I personally think that would be a completely missed opportunity, because we are at the point where we have to go into a new paradigm of international relations, whereby geopolitics is being replaced by a cooperative approach. And given the fact that there are now two major leaders, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, talking about a global security system— Xi Jinping has said that for quite some time, with his three initiatives, the Global Development, Global Security, and Global Civilizational initiatives; and Putin, in a meeting last Saturday with the [Russian Federal Security Service](#), basically said that he sees now the possibility to establish a European security

system, and even a global security system.

So, anybody in the West who wants to have a different outlook should immediately pick up on that and start serious negotiations along these lines, because the very idea that you always need an enemy is just— It’s one of these *Ewiggestrige* ideas: This means in German, those backward ideas of the past which should be rooted out. And humanity should make a new leap into an era of cooperation, and anybody of goodwill should help and work in this direction.

Schlanger: We just got a question that asks: “Is Zelensky’s letter just a feint, while Ukraine circles back to its original, unacceptable demands?”

Zepp-LaRouche: I don’t think so. I think that the realities of the war, which are horrible—and look, we now have to get to peace; that’s the first and most important step. But eventually, one has to look back at who prevented peace in March 2022? I mean, there’s



kremlin.ru

Russian President Vladimir Putin

obviously the whole question of how did it come to the war in the first place? And there are many important Americans, in particular, who have pointed to the whole development of NATO expansion, the broken promises—Jack Matlock, Jeffrey Sachs, John Mearsheimer, all kinds of people of relevance have pointed to this. And if everything is under control,

which it hopefully will be soon, one has to look back and say, who was responsible that the agreement which was reached in Türkiye, in Istanbul in March 2022, where there was an agreement between Putin and Zelensky—who sabotaged it? And now, there are more and more people coming forward, saying it was then U.S. President Joe Biden, and it was emphatically then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, flying into Kiev and telling Zelensky to keep fighting, “We’re backing you all the way.”

So, all the people who have died since— This is hundreds of thousands of people; nobody knows exactly how many, but probably more than half a million for sure, and the whole country is destroyed, the infrastructure is destroyed. Many people have left Ukraine. The country is only a shadow of what it was before—and for what? For what? I think one really has to come to their senses, and basically say that in modern times, war is not a way to settle conflict.

So, this is now a moment where the most important thing is to get to peace, and then later, historians, and maybe journalists and others—there are still some journalists around, not many, it seems these days—have to really answer that question. But most important right now is to end the war.

LaRouche’s SDI vs. a ‘Golden Dome’

Schlanger: We have one more question on Trump’s address. Someone wrote in and said: “President Trump spoke of a missile defense system, calling it a ‘Golden Dome’ to protect the United States and referring to Reagan’s call for the missile defense system as the model.” And this person asks: “Your husband, Lyndon LaRouche, worked with President Ronald Reagan’s administration on the idea of missile defense in the early 1980s, and campaigned for it worldwide. Is what Trump proposed last night modeled on Lyndon’s idea, or is it different?”

Zepp-LaRouche: I don’t think one can adduce from what Trump said in this speech what exactly he



Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

President Ronald Reagan delivers his “SDI speech,” March 23, 1983.

means, because it was not very clear. He referred on the one side to Reagan’s policies of the 1980s, and that, indeed, would indicate something like the SDI. I mean, about the SDI, there is so much misunderstanding of what Lyndon LaRouche meant—which was a very far-reaching vision of how to dissolve the blocs, how to dissolve the Warsaw Pact and NATO, and how to move from Mutually Assured Destruction to Mutually Assured Survival. It was the joint cooperation between Russia and NATO, or, the United States in particular, to develop the technologies which would make nuclear weapons obsolete—and then use the application of these new physical principles in the civilian sector. Then use the incredible boost in productivity to make a technology transfer to the developing countries, to overcome their underdevelopment for good, to stop using these countries in proxy wars, and give them the chance to fully develop their potential. So, this was a grand design; this was not just an “Iron Dome” or “Golden Dome” like something modeled on the Israeli model.

So, it’s too early to comment on that, because the remarks of Trump were too scarce to know whether he meant the SDI as it was picked up by President Reagan from my late husband, or did he mean “Golden Dome,” referring to the Israeli “Iron Dome”? But that is definitely a very interesting question, which must be sorted out. And one would hope that it would be the Reagan version, but we’ll have to see.

Schlanger: Now, we have a questioner who asks: “Can the BRICS, the United States, and others create a global New Deal?” And he says, “This might be more realistic than the UN Sustainable Development Goals. What do you think?”

Zepp-LaRouche: It all depends. Right now I think it’s promising that Trump has repeatedly said that Russia is not an enemy. That is very important, because if you talk to some of the Europeans right now, they are so absolutely—they have foam in front of the mouth when you mention the word “Russia,” and it is unbelievable how this Russophobia has taken over.

Now, if Trump, on the other side, goes in the direction of making lasting and far-reaching agreements with Russia, then there is obviously an implication that Russia and China have a strategic partnership, which I don’t think anybody can ever split again. I mean, there were Steven Bannon and Mike Pompeo running around in Europe, at the time of the Biden administration, and telling leading Europeans, “We will split Russia from China. That is how we will defeat this whole thing.” I don’t think it will happen, because the governments of Russia and China, they know perfectly well, if they’re divided they’re vulnerable to attack. So, I think it’s almost 100% certain that any attempt to separate them will not succeed. Furthermore, you have the BRICS as a new dynamic, the Global Majority, which is the countries of Asia, Africa, of Latin America, that all want development. And they will not be lured into the camp of the so-called “democracies,” as Biden had tried repeatedly, completely in vain, because these countries have their own experience; they have experienced colonialism. Vietnam has experienced a war, and Agent Orange. Other countries, in Africa, have experienced coups, the murders of their leaders. I mean, this is all very present in their memory, and I don’t think they will be convinced to ally with any scheme that would go against either Russia or China, because these countries have helped them.

So therefore, if Trump wants to deal with all of that in a positive way, he has to take China into the package, because China has provided many of these countries in the Global South with real development, and they have become friends. Therefore, the best thing which could happen, which I have been saying now for a very long time, is if the European countries and the United States would give up their geopolitical fantasies, and basically say, “We move from confrontation to cooperation.” And then, indeed, a New Deal would be

easy; it would be a piece of cake! That’s why I wrote these [Ten Principles](#), which would be the starting point for a new security and development architecture.

So, if you call that a New Deal, or a New Paradigm, it doesn’t matter so much; but the idea would be to absolutely stop geopolitical thinking, which is a mental disease, and should be eradicated forever for the future.

Development for Southwest Asia

Schlanger: Now, we have something from a journalist in Lebanon, who is writing about the meeting that took place in Egypt yesterday, on reconstruction of Gaza. And she says, “I looked and didn’t see anything on the Oasis Plan. Was that something I overlooked, or is that not part of what the Egyptian plan includes?”

Zepp-LaRouche: I don’t think it’s in there, yet. I think the Egyptian plan is a very good counterproposal to what President Trump has proposed with his “Riviera Gaza” idea, which is pretty outrageous, especially if you think about the AI-generated video which is circulating, which he put on his own channel—which is disgusting. So, the Egyptian plan is definitely a step in the right direction. It has a two-state solution; it says the Palestinians should remain there for the time of the reconstruction, which the plan says will take about five years; it has a detailed approach of separating Gaza into different zones for different centers.

So, it all looks very good, and very realizable. But it’s a far cry from the [Oasis Plan](#), because the Oasis Plan basically has this idea of water, of generating large, large amounts of fresh water from ocean water by desalination, and the canals from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, and the Red Sea, these are just the beginning. If you think about the Oasis Plan in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, for all of Southwest Asia, one has to think about the entire region, from India to the Mediterranean, from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf. This is mainly desert, almost entirely desert—complete lack of water. And the Oasis Plan is basically a concept for how to turn this desert into land for agriculture, forestry, infrastructure, city-building. It’s a much larger conception.

But I think the Oasis Plan will eventually enter the debate, because we are organizing for it from the Schiller Institute extremely actively: We are talking to embassies, we’re talking to diplomats, we’re talking to all kinds of individuals on all sides, and we find increasing interest, because once people get the idea—You know, normally, it takes a while before people



Kerel Vereycken (May 2024)

LaRouche's Oasis Plan for Southwest Asian development.

really grasp what we are proposing there. But once they get it, they see that this is a way to overcome the cycle of violence for good. And while justice is an important element, if you only look at the issue of justice to see who did what to whom— That was the whole thing about the Peace of Westphalia: people realized that if they stuck with that approach, you could count forever what one side did to one, and the other to the other—even though in this case, it's not so evenly distributed. Nevertheless, you have to take a step beyond that, and come to a joint vision for the future; that there should still be jurisprudence, like at the International Court

of Justice. And that's definitely the case, and they're working on it. So, that has to be respected as well.

But the idea of the Oasis Plan is very alive, and I can only ask you to help us; do whatever you can. Contact us, and we can make more proposals together.

Schlanger: We have a question that came in from the United Kingdom, from someone who says that British Prime Minister Keir Starmer looks more and more like an imbecile. It's now clear to most people in the United Kingdom that he has no standing.

But he's worried about what he's reading in *The Economist*, the *Financial Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, that have been writing that Trump seems to be riding high now, but there are, as *The Economist* put it, "warning signs of economic weakness on the horizon." And he writes: "It seems to me this is the weak flank of Trump. Is there any indication that he has a different plan than the Europeans of just defense spending and budget cutting?"

Fragile Financial Bubbles vs. Global Progress

Zepp-LaRouche: I, unfortunately, tend to agree that that is the Achilles Heel of Trump, because, first of all, this whole talk that he has all the time that he loves tariffs. I

mean, that's just not a good idea. The idea of tariffs is a meaningful thing when you have a nascent economy, when you have a developing country, or in the pre-industrial age, when countries started to industrialize. At that time it was very useful to have protective tariffs to give them a fair chance against other countries that were more developed and could basically wipe out their nascent industries. But if you have extremely developed countries, it is completely counterproductive. And there is now a war-and-a-half between Canada and the United States, between China and the United States, and countries are responding with similar tariffs on

other products, which in the final instance will hurt the production chain, the industrial chain, stability; it will hurt availability of goods; it will basically mean that consumers will have to pay a higher price, and that is generally called inflation—so that’s no good.

And then, naturally, this whole idea about creating another bubble with the cryptocurrencies, that is just a totally monetarist idea, and I don’t understand why President Trump isn’t looking at Argentina, and what just happened to President Javier Milei, who is involved in a huge scandal, because he tried a similar hoax—and it did not work.

So, that is, indeed, a very important point, and I can only say, we have to somehow make sure to hopefully find some people in the Trump team who have an understanding of physical economy, and what it actually requires to “Make American Great Again,” in terms of economic policies, which is very clearly a total renewal of infrastructure inside the United States: building new cities, new science cities in the less populated areas, naturally space, fusion power—all of these things are extremely important. But the bankruptcy of the trans-Atlantic financial system—if you try to solve that by creating new bubbles, such as a military New Deal in Europe, or a cryptocurrency deal in the United States—is, indeed, a weakness of enormous proportions.

Schlanger: Now here’s a question from someone who writes: “With all that’s going on regarding Ukraine and Gaza, I haven’t heard much coming from China, as to the peace initiative. I did watch [your interview](#) with the Chinese television network on your website, and was very impressed. But what role is China playing at this point to promote peace?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Oh! They’re doing an enormous amount of things! They have right now the so-called “Two Sessions.” That’s the two governing boards, and they have an annual meeting, which is called the “Two Sessions”—this is several thousand delegates—and they’re debating right now what should be the next Five Year Plan, and it is very clear that China is really moving at an unbelievable speed. They have a growth perspective of 5% annually for the next Five Year Plan, in the next year in particular. But the changes going on right now— They want to build up the domestic market. China has a domestic market of 1.4 billion people. And if you increase the living standard of that large a group of people, by raising the wages, by making an industrial

revolution, by applying artificial intelligence, digitalization, quantum computers, you modernize the existing economy on the domestic market as well, and increase the productivity, so people become more wealthy. And that engine is the power for China to play a leading role in any peace effort in the world, because China, having such an engine of economic power, could be a factor in the reconstruction of Ukraine. If you go back to pre-2014 Maidan coup, there was the potential that Ukraine would be the bridge between Europe and Asia, by being an absolute bridge between Europe, the western parts of Ukraine, and the eastern parts of Ukraine, leaning more toward Russia, but nevertheless being one country. And if you build the Belt and Road Initiative, basically from Asia all the way into Europe, Ukraine would be in a unique position, and that would be the best future for Ukraine, if you go back to such an approach.

Likewise, for the Middle East, China has made peace proposals there as well. They have said openly in our conferences that China could implement the Oasis Plan, because they have experience in reversing desertification, in turning deserts into agriculture and forestry. And the power of the economic capacity of China would be most welcome. And you need big players to do all of this.

So, the Chinese contribution to peace is especially the idea of peace through development.

Schlanger: Well, I would heartily recommend that all of our viewers look at the [interview of Helga](#) on Chinese TV that is posted now on the Schiller Institute site, because it’s very interesting to have an insight. This is from November! But you can see how far ahead you were back then, and the dialogue is quite interesting.

Now, here’s another question for you Helga, from a Jewish activist who has lived in Israel, and she says, she’s been very depressed by watching what Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has done and his ethnic cleansing policy. But more depressing than that is watching the Israeli population accept it. But she says, “Now, I’m beginning to see some changes in the population in Israel,” and she refers to this Shin Bet report that came out today, that identified an intelligence and security failure that allowed October 7, 2023 to happen; the fact that it’s now in the press that Netanyahu funneled money to Hamas through Qatar. And now, the hostage family members are highly critical of Netanyahu for not taking seriously a campaign to free the hostages.

So, she says, “While most still support the idea of



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China builds a “green wall” to stop the spread of the desert.

wiping out Hamas, there seems to be a change coming. Given your optimism, which I admire greatly about human nature, can you suggest what might change the culture in Israel?” There’s a big question for you, Helga.

Zepp-LaRouche: Israel is facing a big decision: If they keep doing what has been happening in the last—actually 76 years, but emphatically more the last year plus a few months—you will continue the cycle of Hell, where one massacre replaces the next one, and we have one war after another. And it will be a nightmare! There is no security. That’s not only the problem for Israel; that’s also the problem for the Arab neighbors. They also have to think about stability, because this was— What was going on in Gaza was not hidden. It was in Al Jazeera. Every day, one could see the detailed pictures on your home TV. And that has had a lasting impact on the population, and it has led to a more politicized approach. So, countries have to think about their stability, because if they condone too much, they may not last forever. I mean, that’s a very serious consideration.

On the other side, if you

is a highly developed country, from the standpoint of infrastructure.

And just think, that density could exist in the entire Middle East, or Southwest Asia, and you could eventually have a brimming economic development—new cities, new science development—and that is not at all unrealistic. Because remember, 2,000 years ago, the ancient Silk Road went through most of these places: You had Samarkand, you had Baghdad, you had Damascus. Many of these cities were pearls of culture, of science, of trade, and that region was the hub between Asia and Africa and Europe! And that could become the future for Southwest Asia again.

You just have to have an imagination for how the transformation of the desert would look, and you can make an animation—maybe we should actually do that, it would probably greatly help. We did a little video, but we could really develop this idea much more, so that people can actually start to really get an idea that this is within reach. And that would then change the culture within Israel, because Israel is not in a vacuum, it’s not an island, it’s a part of that region. So, the best way to change Israel is to change every country around it.



Prime Minister of Israel X page

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu