

Ray McGovern and Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Between Peace and World War Three

The following is an edited transcript of the June 4, 2025 Schiller Institute dialogue between Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute, and Ray McGovern. Mr. McGovern, an expert in Russian language, literature and history, served from 1963 to 1990 as a CIA analyst. In 2003, he co-founded the Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPs), a group dedicated to exposing corruption within the intelligence agencies and advocating for rational military and intelligence policies. Subheads have been added. The video is available [here](#).



The Schiller Institute

Ray McGovern, 27-year CIA analyst and cofounder of the Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPs).

nian military attacked five military bases inside Russia, some of them deep into the territory of Russia, as far as 4,000 km, and they hit, according to varying reports, anywhere between 7 and 41 strategic, nuclear-capable bombers of the Russians, which are part of their strategic nuclear triad.

Now, this came as a complete surprise, and obviously was meant—that's what we want to discuss—what was the aim of that? And subsequently, the Ukrainians also attacked three times—I think it was on June

3—the pillars of the Kerch Bridge. Not much damage was done there, but that is a very strategic target in the minds of the Russians as well.

This whole situation was one day before the Istan-

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Hello, good day. I'm very happy to welcome today a very special guest, Ray McGovern, who is very well known throughout the world, in Europe, as well as in the United States. And for those of you who may not know him, he was a former high-ranking CIA analyst, and briefer of three American Presidents. Now, obviously these days, we are acutely aware of how important a position that is, to brief the President on a daily basis, because if the President is not briefed—or is wrongly briefed—this can have devastating strategic consequences.

So, welcome to you, Ray, and I'm very happy to be with you here.

Ray McGovern: Thank you for having me on.

Zepp-LaRouche: There are extremely dramatic developments. A few days ago, on June 1, the Ukrai-



cc/Alex Beltyukov - RuSpotters Team

Kubinka, a Russian military air base located in the Moscow Oblast.

bul discussions, and it could have been aimed to sabotage these discussions, by hoping to provoke a Russian over-reaction, putting into jeopardy the entire negotiation process. It could have also had some other strategic objectives, like ruining the relationship between [United States President Donald] Trump and [Russian President Vladimir] Putin—and there were several Western specialists who even made the point that this could not have been done without coordination and military help from either the CIA or MI6. So, given the fact that you are one of the world-renowned experts in this field, I want to ask you for your assessment about these developments.

McGovern: With respect to the timing, Helga, I share your view: It was clearly timed the day before the renewal of these negotiations in Istanbul. The Ukrainians want no negotiations. They were dragged there by a combination of Mr. Putin and Mr. Trump, who combined to embarrass them into a situation where the Russians were showing up in Istanbul—this was weeks ago—and the Ukrainians had a choice whether they would not show, or whether they would go.

So, they feared these negotiations. And, of course, if Putin reacted in a way many naïve Western officials would have thought, in other words, like the way *they* would have reacted, and said, “I’m not going to any talks now, man! I’m going to throw some Oreshniks [missiles] in there, into Ukraine, and maybe Germany, and—” Well, he disappointed them on that.

I think the other main objective here, with respect to timing at least, had to do with trying to provoke Putin into reacting in such a way, that it would be too embarrassing for the U.S. to step aside, to get out of this, to just wash its hands of the Ukrainian experience. In other words, there is such a thing as over-cowardice. I think that the European leaders, particularly, would have thought, “Well, if we can provoke Putin into throwing a few Oreshniks into Ukraine, my God, that’s an escalation,” and the U.S. could not possibly walk



CC/Rosavtodor

The Kerch Strait Bridge, which connects the Taman Peninsula of Russia's Krasnodar Krai to the Kerch Peninsula of Crimea.

away—“walk away” is the term used these days—without suffering not only humiliation, but extreme charges of cowardice. Now, that didn’t work either, so far.

I should emphasize that I’m sort of an outlier on these things. Some of my best friends, so to speak, some of the best analysts—like Pepe Escobar, for example, who was in Moscow at the time—are telling me and telling others that the sentiment there is one of revenge. “Now’s the time, we’ve got to do something, Vladimir Vladimirovich. C’mon! Let’s go! Don’t be too cowardly to react in an appropriate way!” Well, I’m sure there are people there in Russia, and some in high places, that are reacting in precisely that way. But I will say, you know, “*Gott sei Dank*” [thank God], Putin is a cool, calm, collected sort of person. He’s also very smart. He sees that there are ways he can attenuate this thing, without rising to the bait that the Western powers, and [acting Ukrainian President Volodymyr] Zelensky, have set up for him.

What do I mean? Well, he ordered the negotiations to proceed, and Trump welcomed that as well, so the Ukrainians showed up. And what happened on the 2nd of June? Well, people say, “nothing happened, just an hour—” No, no! Number one, they exchanged their terms for a settlement; that’s big. Number two, the Ukrainians went home and said, “Okay, we’ll study this. We’ll be back in 10 days or so, or two weeks or something like that.” That’s also big. And then, on a humanitarian level, one may think these are small

steps in the strategic picture, but, my God, what was it, 6,000 frozen corpses from Ukraine that the Russians froze and now are giving back for, as they say, “proper burial.” That’s big in my view! And they’re freeing the young kids that were dragged off from the nightclubs and the streets in Kiev. These things may not seem like much, but they are a start, okay? The first round had an exchange of 1,000 prisoners on each side!

So, what I’m saying here is that, it is true that the positions of both sides seem to be irreconcilable, but the negotiations are going on. Winston Churchill, whom I’m not fond of, but [he] did say something sensible; he said, “it’s better to jaw, jaw, than to war, war.”

The End Is Nigh for Ukraine

That having been said, the war continues. And what’s the war doing? The war is, eventually, resulting in complete defeat of the Ukrainian army, one of the twin aims of Putin when he announced the special military operation: destroying the Ukrainian army. Not about territory; it’s about destroying their army. And you know, even Budanov, who is the military intelligence czar in Kiev, he predicted over a year ago that, come next June, we’ll probably run out of soldiers and probably suffer defeat. Well, it’s June! [laughs]

It’s far from clear how many more weeks, or even months, the Ukrainians can persist, but there will come a time when somebody sensible in Kiev will say, “Well, we haven’t shown much concern for these troops that we put into the meat grinder, but there are none left. And the Europeans are making big noises and beating their breasts—but c’mon! If the U.S. isn’t in this mix, it’s not going to work. And the U.S. isn’t in this mix, so, what do we do?” At that point, I think there will be successful negotiations. And people say, “Well, will Putin have enough flexibility so that it’s not an abject defeat and retreat on the part of the West?” I think so!

Again, he wants to defeat the Ukrainian army; he wants to prevent the Nazis, who now are very influential in Kiev, from holding sway. That’s going to be a monumental task, but the way things are going, he’s going to be able to achieve those things. The question is, at what point will the Ukrainians say, “Okay, okay, enough. Now we think it’s a sensible thing to stop.” *And*, whether Putin is sensible enough—and I believe

he is—that we talk about “putting lipstick on a pig.” The metaphor is pretty clear, right?

Will Putin put enough lipstick, will he give enough lipstick to Trump to make this “pig” of defeat for the U.S., for the West, and for Ukraine; make that pig look prettier? Make it appear that it wasn’t an abject defeat, that it was something else: It was a negotiated settlement. If Putin wanted to take over all of Ukraine or, God forbid, Poland, or even the Baltic States, that would be a different story. But he doesn’t. When will Putin stop? You think it’ll stop with Ukraine? Well, he already stopped with Ukraine; he stopped six weeks into the war, when he scared the hell out of Zelensky, who appointed his best friend to do a negotiation, and which was conceived and concluded in Istanbul in early April of 2022. So, he already stopped. He stopped before taking over Ukraine. How many troops did they put into that fray, to scare Zelensky? Most people think about 100,000; is that enough to take over Ukraine? Of course not! How about Poland? No!

Just to finish up here: It is possible that Mr. Trump could, at the end of the day, get up and say, “Look, the previous administration warned that Putin wouldn’t stop with Ukraine. He’d go into Poland and the Baltic States. Well, I have this written agreement with Mr. Putin, my friend, who says he has no intention of doing that! And we can monitor whether he’s going to do that, or not. Okay? And so, I’ve done something that Biden couldn’t do. Biden was afraid of this. I have precluded it, and we have these other terms that were worked out with the Russians and the Ukrainians.”

So, I see a glass more than half-full, whereas, I should warn you, most of my colleagues, fellow analysts, see a glass more than half-empty. And I dare say, neither of us pretend to be— Well, as Colin Powell bragged at the UN back on Feb. 5, 2003, neither of us pretend to have evidence that is incontrovertible, that is “indisputable,” the word he used. Who knows? It may be that the next days lead to some regular escalation; I just don’t think so, reading the signs that I’ve read so far. Again, I’ve been wrong before; everyone’s been wrong before.

Was Trump Briefed?

Zepp-LaRouche: I hope you’re right, but there are a couple of points to consider. One is the very ominous mood changes, or fluctuations in what President

Trump is saying. Because just a couple of days earlier, he, according to himself in an interview he gave to a reporter at an airport, did not know two or three days after there was a drone attack on the helicopter of President Putin, that this incident had happened. Now, there was also very clearly no statement coming from Trump during the time of the Ukrainian drone attack on these military bases in Russia, so that puts up the question: Was Trump briefed about all of that? Was he not? Is there a breakdown of the briefing process? And, since you have been a briefer of presidents, you probably can shed some light on how these things function. Or, was he just being quiet because he was annoyed, as he seems to have been?

In any case, that is a worrisome point, because there seems to be still a very heavy factional situation in the Cabinet of President Trump, and one can only hope that he is asserting himself. But a big question mark remains. So, what is your take on that?

McGovern: Well Helga, you're quite right in suggesting that there's a great division within Trump's own Administration. That's clear. Will Trump and the allies closest to him—like [Special Envoy Steve] Witkoff and, I guess, [Vice President] J.D. Vance, and now [Secretary of State Marco] Rubio, if he's joined Team A—will that prevail? That's not at all clear, despite their best efforts. We've seen such reaching out to Russia not prevail in the past. Matter of fact, the man who got me down to Washington from New York, to work in government, [President] John F. Kennedy, was killed when he reached out to the Russians and tried to create a decent relationship with them himself. There's lots of history here.

I saw the interview at that airport, where Trump was asked about the assassination attempt [on Putin], and said, "No, I don't know anything about that." Well, I don't take that at face value. I think probably he was briefed; he just didn't want to talk about it just then. And the silence now—and I think it's right up to right now—is because they're wondering how to react to the drone strikes, deep, deep inside Russia at those major airfields; they're trying to figure out, how did this happen? Did John Ratcliffe, the head of the CIA, know about it? If he did, why didn't he tell the President? Or at least J.D. Vance? And if he didn't, he ought to be fired! This is a big deal! Did the previous administration not leave any papers on this? Did [National

Security Advisor] Jake Sullivan, the godfather of the destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines, did he not brief Trump's people with respect to what was going on here?

Now, I think—and this is just circumstantial evidence—it's my theory, the British are great at blowing up things. They love to blow up things—they're really good at it, actually! Actually, they prefer bridges to blow up. But they're artful and they can do all kinds of blowing up. We've seen that all over the world; in the Middle East. Anyhow, it's my view that the British conceived this plan. I think that Bill Burns, the head of the CIA under [President Joe] Biden, and a couple of their people were fully aboard and briefed on this, and probably helped with some of the intelligence necessary; but I think it was mostly a British operation. And with some of the people now arrested by Russian authorities, I think it may become clear that that's the case.

Now, what does that do? [British Prime Minister Keir] Starmer is so Russophobic that it would be no surprise if he knew about it, and let it happen. But it sort of gives Putin, when he's talking to his advisors, "Look, you want me to throw Oreshnik missiles into Ukraine, or do even worse? But I have this relationship going with Mr. Trump. I'm going to talk to him about that. I'm going to see how much he knew about it. I suspect that he wasn't fully briefed. I know from what Sergey Lavrov, our Foreign Minister, said, that it looked like Rubio was completely in the dark, when, to his credit, Lavrov called Rubio just an hour or two after the strikes occurred."

Lavrov Gives Rubio the Third Degree

Now, that's good, and this is an important point: In the old days, I don't think Lavrov had [Secretary of State Antony] Blinken's telephone number! I think Blinken gave him the wrong number, or at least put it on pause, or whatever. This time, Lavrov calls Rubio, gets through immediately, and what does he do? Well, he talks about what's going on. And now, the American readout is very sparse; it's bare bones. But the Russian readout says that Rubio expressed condolences for the sabotage of those two railroad bridges that he knew about, and that had severe civilian casualties. Whoa!

So, here they're talking not only after—that same day—those bridges were blown, but after those far-

reaching attacks on Russian strategic air bases; and we know from the Russian readout, and the Russian readout's going to be dependent on—I mean, if I've seen one, I've seen about a thousand of 'em. So, what happened was, Rubio knew about the bridges and apologized, or kind of expressed condolence about it, and you can be really sure that Lavrov said: "Look, Marco—Marco, did you know about this other stuff? Did you know about those long-range attacks on our air bases?" And this is just hours after it happened, so Rubio may have said, "Well, what're you talking about?" Or, he would have said, "Oh, that." And then he would have said, "My God, no! I didn't know a thing about that!"

"Well, how about your President? Did he know?"

"Uh, he would have told me, for sure!"

So, what I'm saying here is that, whether or not Trump knew—and I think it's probable that he did not; that he was not briefed in detail on this—then Putin can avoid being provoked from reacting against Trump, with whom he has cultivated a decent relationship. That's the backdrop of all this.

And just to finish with this word: Both the Russians and the American side have given priority to creating the kind of decent relationship between Russia and America that Trump was unable to do during the first four years, his first tenure. Now, one can come up with theories about why each side wants to do that, and why each side gives absolute priority to that, but it's a fact, okay! And I believe it to be true, and I think that's what's at work behind all this stuff. Given



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov discussing the second round of the resumed direct Russian-Ukrainian talks, Moscow, May 28, 2025.

the equities, as the Russians see the equities, with a President that, however erratic, however— Well, the [Russian] President's spokesman, [Dmitry] Peskov, when Trump said some of these most outlandish things, like, "I'm very angry. I'm not happy, I'm not happy," Peskov says, "Well, you know, there's an emotional overcharge. These things are very complicated, and so, we don't place a lot— There's an emotional factor here."

So, what I'm saying here, is that against this backdrop, if I'm correct,

that priority is being given to cultivating this relationship, in the face of Europeans who want nothing, nothing to do with this; who want America in this war in Ukraine. I think that explains a lot about how cool, calm and collected Putin has been thus far.

One caveat here: I'm reliably informed that Russian ambassadors have been called back to Moscow to be briefed. Now, this happens about this time every year, but this bears the earmarks of something special. And what could that be? It could be a briefing on the next steps with respect to Ukraine, or simply a status report of where we are and where our priorities lie. But this is big. This is decision-time, and that the Russian ambassadors are being called back to get this kind of briefing means that this is all being taken very seriously by Putin.



Russian President Vladimir Putin

And lastly, Putin does face internal urging, or opposition, or people say, "Why are you so timid?" Well, he even alluded to this in a major speech about six weeks ago. He said: "You know, a lot of people here want to go much faster—much faster—but we're going at our

own pace, which is giving success, and that happens to be the case on the field in Ukraine,” and that’s another major backdrop to this whole calculus.

Many Morons in Europe

Zepp-LaRouche: I think it’s extremely important to hear that from you, because if there is a priority from the side of Putin and Trump “to normalize” the relationship between the two largest nuclear-weapons powers in the world, everybody who is not a moron should be extremely happy about it. But there seem to be a lot of morons, at least on the European side, because President Lula from Brazil just expressed that he was absolutely horrified when he heard the previous U.S. President Biden declaring his intent to destroy Russia. Now, that has been the line by several people in Europe as well. One of them is now, from September onward, the acting President of the UN General Assembly, which is a rather disturbing idea.

McGovern: [laughs] [former German Foreign Minister Annalena] Baerbock!

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, that’s a totally different topic. But even [German] Defense Minister Pistorius just came out, I think yesterday or today, and he said, “Ukraine is not losing the war,” which is really amazing, because you have, as you mentioned, the military commander in Ukraine telling Zelensky that the war cannot go on beyond the Summer, simply from attrition of the army, of the military supplies and especially soldiers. And then you have the entire European war machine, or I should say the “Coalition of the Willing”—that’s the British, the French, the Germans, the Poles, the Baltic nations and some of the Scandinavian countries; not, emphatically, obviously, Hungary, Slovakia. Italy is also not exactly on the same line; Spain not.

So, it’s the Coalition of the Willing, not even the entirety of NATO, and not the entirety of the EU. But they are dead-set to go for the biggest militarization, military buildup of Europe since the Second World War. They have earmarked €1 trillion for investment in infrastructure. The British and the Germans just agreed to build long-range missiles, and the British and Ukrainians have all kinds of— So, there is clearly the intent to keep this war going, *and* the main problem is obviously the line that, when the Ukraine war will come to

an end, then Russia will just use that pause to build up its army again, and then a Russian attack on Poland or some other NATO country is inevitable—the latest by 2029, but probably before. Some people are even talking about this year.

They’re hyping themselves into a frenzy that the war with Russia is inevitable; it will happen. There is an unbelievable preparation of the German public on all levels, something called “Operation Plan Germany,” which explicitly is supposed to teach all levels of society—civil society, trade unions, schools, teachers, just everybody—what has to be done in the coming war with Russia. Soldiers go into schools, trying to recruit pupils.

And so, that is the danger I see, that this could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. This could take longer, but it could also be short-term, given the fact that the new Chancellor of Germany, [Friedrich] Merz, in the election campaign, said in that 24-hour ultimatum to Ukraine, that he would also send the Taurus missiles. In the meantime, he pulled back a little bit, while his coalition partner repeatedly lied that the Taurus would not be sent. But, he also said that he will, in the future, not reveal any decision. And there are some bloggers suggesting that the Taurus may have been delivered already; that training of Ukrainian soldiers is already taking place.

So, all of that is, naturally, a factor. You can say, like your friend Pepe Escobar, that the Europeans are just Chihuahuas [not the attack dogs they claim to be—ed.] and that it doesn’t really matter. There are some important Russian analysts who also say Europe is totally sidelining itself by its stupidity. But, given the fact that the British role in all of this has been to instigate—again and again—I think we are not out of the danger zone, and you can see how quickly, overnight, new facts can arrive, and we are in the same crisis, again.

So, what would you tell these Europeans?

Be Sensible

McGovern: I would say: *Sei doch vernünftig*. [Be sensible.] [laughs] You know, Europeans used to be able to reason from facts, right? They learned a lot in the Renaissance, and in other thinking since then. And what I go back to, is what happened to *Ostpolitik*? The hallmark of that was Willy Brandt, Egon Bahr, *und vernünftig*. And they said to their popula-

tion, “*Sei doch vernünftig*”: “We can deal with the East. It will be a very prosperous thing to do. Not only would it tamp down tensions, but there are immense possibilities for trade. By the way, the Russians have a lot of cheap gas they could sell us.” And so, the Social Democratic Party [SPD] used to be kind of enlightened.

Now, I have to say that—let me put it this way: Back during the 1930s, there was a German lawyer in Berlin; he was studying to be a judge. His name was Raimund Pretzel, pen name Sebastian Haffner; and the book is, *Geschichte eines Deutschen* [History of a German], a diary he kept in 1933, discovered in his attic by his daughter, and published—and a big seller in Germany, I’m told. Anyhow, what he said was, right after the Reichstag burned, the Germans exhibited what he called “*Schafmässige Ergebenheit*”—“sheepish submissiveness.” They accepted all kinds of infringements on their personal freedoms, just because the Communists burned down the Reichstag. So, is that a characteristic of the way Germans react to this cataclysmic stuff, with propaganda in their ears? Well, Willy Brandt said, “No, that’s passé. We can deal with Russia.” And he did! And that engendered a whole series of East-West engagements.

Let’s fast-forward now: The Germans decided that the evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction was not good. The French felt the same way. And so they refused to join the Coalition of the Willing. There was great anger in Washington: “French fries” were renamed “Freedom fries” in the Senate and House cafeterias! Talk about puerile, or at best, adolescent reactions! Well, that was the “Coalition of the Unwilling.” We know this is a game; that it’s not just a fight. You are prostituting the intelligence analysis process, which I must confess, my former colleagues were persuaded to do. And so, they [the Germans and French] didn’t join the Coalition of the Willing.

Now, that was before. That was then. Now we have, in my view, the coalition of the brain-dead. [laughs] These political functionaries have bubbled to the top, in systems that reward people who are not so smart, but politically astute. Now, what are they doing? They’re trying to do something impossible: They are trying to persuade everyone that the Soviet Union never fell apart, and that the Russians are intent on moving to-

ward Poland, after Ukraine, and the Baltics, and God knows, he’ll be on the English Channel before you know it! I mean, it’s bollocks! It’s crazy!

But the press, the media—you know, I understand a lot about the media in our country, but also in Germany, since I served there for five years. And I think the German media, the mainstream media, despite all the revelations of Udo Ulfkotte and others, they still are the worst media in the world! So, unless you are plugged into places like *NachDenkSeiten*, you don’t have a clue what’s going on.



CC/Karl-Heinz Münker-Appel

The Social Democrats used to be the kind of party that Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr led and were proud of. What happened? Here, Brandt in 1987.

Operation Anaconda

So, what I’m saying here is that the Social Democrats used to be the kind of party that Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr not only led, but were proud of. What happened to it? I don’t know! But I do know this: About ten years ago, when Operation Anaconda, a NATO operation—actually, the Coalition of the Willing operation—right up on Russia’s border, the biggest mass of Western troops against the Russian border since World War II, it started the day that I was lucky enough to be briefing, or to have a conversation with the head of the Bundestag’s Armed Services Committee; he was from the SPD. They had the coalition going.

So, I said to him, “What do you think of this Operation Anaconda? The name itself—what do you think is going on there?” And he was very defensive. He said, “Well, that’s something else. We’re not participating in



U.S. Embassy Kiev, Ukraine

Former U.S. Under Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland, at a June 2014 press conference in Kiev's Ukrainian Crisis Media Center.

that.” But I said, “Herr Hellmich, you are participating in that. You have troops participating—” “Well, that’s—no, no.”

Now, why do I mention that? My God, this is the chair of the Armed Services Committee, and he’s embarrassed by it; he thinks it’s a lousy idea—but he goes along. He’s not like Willy Brandt or Egon Bahr, or the others. So, the SPD is sort of like the party that folded in 1933 when the Hitler people did not have the majority; that party folded, the Social Democrats, and so, of course, did the Zentrum, the Catholic party. So, even though Hitler did not have a majority, because these people had *Schafmässige Ergebenheit* [sheepish submissiveness], they folded.

So, my question is, when are the Germans going to say, number one, that the Soviet Union really and truly fell apart; that there is absolutely zero evidence that Russia has its designs on any other part of Europe? There is zero evidence that Russia had any intention of seizing Crimea, for example, before the coup in Kiev. The Western secret services coup in Kiev, that was appropriately described as the “most blatant coup in the history of mankind.” And indeed, was advertised, two- and-a-half weeks before, on YouTube, with U.S. Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland talking to the U.S. Ambassador [to Ukraine] Geoffrey Pyatt in Kiev,

and naming the coup leaders, naming who they were going to put in place. And Pyatt says at one point, “You know, with all due respect, the Europeans aren’t going to like this,” and she says, “F—the Europeans.” (You know what the F-word is.)

Why do I mention that? Well, because it’s right there in her voice, but also, it’s two-and-a-half weeks before the coup; but also, because she’s a diplomat, right? Two days later, she apologizes to the Europeans, “Oh, I didn’t mean ‘F—the Europeans’. I’m sorry.” So, you have her confirmation that that conversation was not artificial; it was real—two-and-a-half weeks before the coup.

An Accident of History

Now, what I’m trying to get at here is, where was Putin during the coup? He was in Sochi, for the last winding up of the Winter Olympics. What happened when he got back? Well, he convened his military advisors. “My God! NATO has its eye not only on Ukraine, but on our only ice-free, all-year-round naval port in Sevastopol, and the whole part of Crimea where we have airfields and everything else. The first thing we have to do is to get Crimea out of harm’s way, and how do we do that?” And his advisors said, “Well, you remember, Mr. President Putin, that it was Khrushchev, it was an accident of history that gave Crimea to Ukraine. It was always a Russian part of this world. That was in 1954, because Khrushchev needed more support from Ukraine. It didn’t matter then, Mr. Putin, because Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union. So now it matters.”

And Putin said: “Well, how did Khrushchev do that?” And the answer was “*ukase* [edict]. That’s how we’d do things in the old days. You have a piece of paper here; you’re the General Secretary, you do an *ukase*, saying, from now on Crimea is part of Ukraine. That’s how it’s done.” And Putin says—Putin’s a lawyer—he said: “I don’t want to do that. How do the people in Crimea feel about this coup?” Well, the answer was simple—they were up in arms against the coup, as were the people in Donbas. And so, it was very easy to have plebiscites, and the votes were over 90% in favor of rejoining Russia, and a month later

that happened. So, to suggest that Putin wanted to “annex” Crimea well before the coup in Kiev, there’s no evidence of that at all! As a matter of fact, there’s zero evidence.

So, to the degree that Europeans, particularly the Germans, who used to be pretty solid thinkers—syllogisms, and pretty good philosophers, as well as writers and so forth—to that degree Germans have to “Wake up! Wake up! Look at what’s being done to you by these militarists!”

I use, as you know, Helga, a different phrase from “military-industrial complex,” which is what President Eisenhower warned against in his Farewell Address. Eisenhower said look, after World War II, the military-industrial complex we built up during the war has grown like topsy, it’s grown out of proportion, and the only way to stem that growth and control it is a well-informed populace. Now, whoa, do we have that? No! Does Germany have that? Extra no! So, I use, instead of the MIC, for military-industrial complex, I use a different acronym. Actually, Pepe Escobar was one of the people who advertised this in his book recently: It’s the MICIMATT. It sort of rhymes with “Mickey Mouse,” but this is what it stands for: the military-industrial-congressional-intelligence-media-academia-think tank complex. Why do I say “media”? Because it’s the fulcrum; it’s the principal thing, the basis for making the whole thing work. And who controls the media? The rest of the MICIMATT, the military-industrial-congressional-intelligence-media-academia-think tank complex.

So, we are in quite a pickle. That’s why I’m delighted to appear on your show here, Helga, to try to spread my truth around. Do I pretend that it’s always the perfect truth? I do the best I can. But, I was warned as a young boy, if you tell the truth, it’s a real, real joy, because then you don’t have to remember what you said before! [laughs] I’ve been saying this kind of stuff for about 60 years now, and I just say it the way I see it; and I hope nobody takes offense, but rather reflects on whether what I might be saying might possibly, conceivably, be true.

Germany’s Memory Loss

Zepp-LaRouche: I hope that especially many members of the Social Democracy are listening to what you have to say, because there is an amazing transformation going on, or has been going on for some time,

and the present head of it, the [German] Finance Minister Lars Klingbeil, basically says—he even attributes the policy of Brandt and Bahr and so forth, as having been the reason why eventually Russia invaded Ukraine. It’s a very convoluted story.

But the Russians are much sharper; they say that a lot of what is coming from Germany is reminiscent of the same kind of policies which came from Germany 80-plus years ago, which has really not sunk in, in the German debate. But, given the fact that you mentioned the MICIMATT, it is becoming increasingly difficult in Germany to do what you are rightfully advertising, namely to go by facts, to go by the truth. And it is amazing how much the media are now counting on the memory loss of people. Like, for example, the Maidan coup? No! There was no coup; what coup are you talking about? There was a democratic transformation in Ukraine leading to the present democratic government! And so forth and so on. [laughs]

So, maybe I can ask you to say a word about our publication, the *EIR Daily News*, because we are trying to analyze events on a strategic basis. Could you say what you think about our efforts to do that?

McGovern: I will, but first, a word about Steinmeier. You know who [Frank-Walter] Steinmeier is, your Foreign Minister back in the day. And a good friend of his, and a friend of mine, who got me an interview (almost) with him, but in the end it was with his principal associate for Russia and so forth. So, I was very cordial; I went in, I had my tie on; I was well behaved. And I started to talk about the coup in Kiev, and he looks at me and he says, “What coup in Kiev?” And I said, “Well, uhm, my gosh, have you not heard the intercepted conversation between Victoria Nuland and Geoffrey Pyatt?” “Ah—that’s all you got?”

I said, “I guess we’re proceeding from a different factual basis here.” I tried to speak with him, but it was a lost cause, so I left. The next thing, he became the German ambassador to Türkiye. You could track him down. He was a very erudite guy, but why would he say, “What coup?” And Steinmeier was there, for God’s sake! Steinmeier was there, and he was one of the people that persuaded [Ukrainian President Viktor] Yanukovich to get out of town, and let the secret services of the West raid the government buildings and get rid of the government. That’s called a coup d’état.

All right—I feel strongly about that, because I know that Steinmeier, even in my opinion, used to have, *ein guten Ruf—nicht mehr* [a good reputation—not any more].

Now, let me talk about *Executive Intelligence Review*, *EIR*. Man! I used to work in current intelligence at the CIA; that meant glorified journalist. You had to publish every day on main things that were going on, and you had to be right up to the morning, before you gave that to the President. Now, you know the only outfit that I know is doing that now? It's the *EIR*. And just this morning, the first thing I did was get to my computer—

I subscribe, I can afford whatever it was—and I get, who was it today? Well, it's really the best thing available, to get people up to date, and very often more up to date than anything except for breaking news from *The New York Times*, which often is just about sports or something like that. I'm not getting paid for advertising it or anything, but my God! I was really surprised at the breadth and the depth of the people—I don't know where they all come from! I don't know much about the Schiller Institute, but they are doing one hell of a job. And if I can persuade people that want to keep up on things, if they want to be informed, like President Eisenhower warned that you have to be, if you're going to face down the military-industrial complex, well, the *EIR* is a good thing to look at in the morning. Actually, I look at it in the morning. I forget, you look at it probably in the afternoon, I suppose.

A Dialogue of Cultures Destroys Hate

Zepp-LaRouche: Let me ask you a last question, because unfortunately, we are coming already on time. But, given the fact that there is this incredible demonization of Russia, and you are an expert; you fluently speak Russian, you have many times recited Russian poetry. Just this morning, Kiesewetter [Roderich Kiesewetter, CDU member of the German parliament—ed.], who is one of the unbelievable—I don't know what fuels this guy. He is spitting out



Official Photo by Simon Liu / Office of the President (of Taiwan)
Member of the Bundestag, and rabid
Russophobe, Roderich Kiesewetter.

hatred against Russia every day. This morning, he came down: We have to break all cultural ties, we have to kick out the diplomats. I mean, how do you characterize that? Or maybe you can say something to our listeners. Because the Schiller Institute was founded 41 years ago, with the explicit idea that you have to have a dialogue of cultures, where each nation and civilization presents the best of their cultural artwork, music, poetry, and learns about the others' best [contributions]. And that way you can learn about each other. You start to understand each other, you develop sympathy, and sometimes even

love. Without that, I cannot see how we will ever remedy the present cultural collapse we have in the West. So, I think this Russophobia is almost a mental disease that has taken over the brains of so many people. What would you say about that?

McGovern: Well, unfortunately I think that you're right. When I was in Russia, in early May, with Oliver Stone, we had dinner given to us by a very, very high official, very close to the President. And he looked at me and he said, "Mr. McGovern, you're a Russian expert, right?" and I said, "I try to be." "And you studied Russian area studies, so why don't you hate Russia?" [laughs] And I said, in a short form, "Because I studied area studies. I know about Russian history, Russian literature, Russian music, Russian liturgy; when you know about that, it's impossible to hate Russia!" Now, you understand Russia: "*Putinversther*" [Putin understander]; that's okay.

Let me just finish with this quotation. The Germans are smart people, for God's sake! And a lot of them are courageous people, and they have people like Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr. Here's what Sevim Dağdelen did, who is in the Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht party. Here's what she said, and I recommend it to all Germans: "*Es ist unsere erste Pflicht, sich von diesem Königreich der Lügen nicht dumm machen zu lassen.*" Let us not let ourselves be made *dumm* by this king-



Official White House Photo by Daniel Torok

U.S. President Donald Trump

dom of lies. C'mon folks, we're big, we understand this time. We're not going to be deceived; we're going to get to know the enemy, and maybe understand, the Russians are just as human as us.

One last thing I'll add: I was at the parade there [in Moscow] on the 9th of May, and I watched Putin give his address. After several weeks of people like our President Trump saying, "We won the Second World War," we had the strongest army, and the Russians may have helped, but we—" I mean, after that kind of frivolity, I expected Putin to have some snide remark to reply to that. None of that! What he said was: We welcomed the Second Front that was opened up in the West. That was a very big deal, and a very big help to us. Now, we had some very decisive battles before that, pointing toward victory, but we want to make sure that we give credit to our Allied friends.

Well, my God! If Western diplomats or statesmen, so-called, want to learn something about being gracious under fire—and what more insult could there be than to deny that the Russians, not the U.S., beat the Germans—so, in other words, we have a perspicacious, principled, but peaceful and gradual President in Russia. We have a person in the White House who is willing to deal with and get beyond this Russophobia. He faces great obstacles. Let's not make it any worse for him. Let's study Russian history; let's find out, for God's sake, who lost 27 million citizens during World War II.

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, thank you so much. I think it is extremely important for Germans, for sure, to hear an American who is *so vernünftig* [reasonable], that this is a pleasure! I think if President Trump were really smart, he would make you ambassador to at least one country, and maybe more.

I want to thank you so much, and this whole history, about the 27 million and what that should do for the way Germans should behave today. Maybe we can have another discussion sometime in the future. For today, I want to thank you, very, very much. And I think it's very important, what you have to say. Thank you!

McGovern: You're most welcome, Helga.



Executive Intelligence Review now offers automatic monthly billing for its intelligence package. Receive *EIR's* weekly magazine and its *Daily Alert* in your inbox for \$50/month, billed monthly. Cancel anytime. Subscribe today!



Details at:
[store.larouchepub.com/
EIR-Daily-Alert-p/eirpk-
0000-000-00-001-std.htm](http://store.larouchepub.com/EIR-Daily-Alert-p/eirpk-0000-000-00-001-std.htm)