III. Strategic

EIR *Emergency Roundtable*

Senior Experts Confer on Plan of Action 'To Bring the World Back from the Brink'

by Michael O. Billington

Jan. 12—*EIR* sponsored an Emergency Roundtable Jan. 12, featuring leading political figures from around the world, which convened online under the theme, "It's Worse Than You Think: The Strategic Implications of the Attack on Venezuela and How To Bring the World Back from the Brink." Ten experts, from the Americas, Eurasia and Africa, representing long experience and tested judgment in international affairs, met for nearly three hours, with a live-stream audience averaging 1200 participants, with translation, in English, French, German and Spanish.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Editor-in-Chief of *EIR*, and founder and leader of the Schiller institute, welcomed her 10 fellow panelists, saying, "We have assembled here today not to lament the unprecedented situation which can only be described as a threat to the existence of the entire human civilization, but to discuss, analyze, and catapult an international response to restore international law."

The stern reports and evaluations that then followed provided a powerful expression of the shock and disgust around the world at the violent actions of these

Left: Dennis Speed, moderator. Left to right, top row: Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Hon. Naledi Pandor, Dennis Small, Ambassador Chas Freeman. Second row: Namit Verma, H.E. Donald Ramotar, Hans-Christof Graf von Sponeck, María de los Ángeles Huerta. Bottom: Lt. Col. Ralph Bosshard, Prof. Zhang Weiwei.

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past weeks, and the role of the United States government in acting with abandon to discard international law.

However, as one speaker said, "we are not here to become more knowledgeable" about the crises, but to confer on galvanizing the action to change this situation. Proposals ranged from a "Declaration" to be issued, to consensus that the priority is to mobilize the forces of the Global Majority, to discussion of new "configurations" to be supported to act to restore international law and morality. Many confirmed that the UN General Assembly is still a formation of potential positive international impact.The idea was posed of a "structured international civil organization."

Several speakers made the point that the cultural and political situation inside the United States is a priority to transform and upgrade. There is a correspondence between the violence underway inside the United States, and the international lawlessness from Washington. As one senior U.S. diplomat stated, now is the time that "America must introspect."

Zepp-LaRouche summed up, at the conclusion of the discussion, that an organizing group will be formed to formulate priorities and move on follow-up action.

The discussion period included several exchanges on how to make this Roundtable of leading figures the basis for a global movement. The proposals discussed were for a UN General Assembly action to stop the U.S. policy; creating a movement of civil society organizations to intervene globally; activate mass movements on the model of Gandhi and Mandela and Martin Luther King; start a movement for the forgiveness of the unpayable debt; to remind Trump that he campaigned against the "Deep State," but now appears to be run by that same Deep State.

Terming the event, "extremely productive," Zepp-LaRouche called for everyone to reach out to good institutions and individuals. She noted—not in a religious, but in a humanitarian way—that Pope Leo XIV, on the occasion of the Jubilee Year, has backed debt relief, and called for the "coincidence of opposites" way of thinking of Nicholas of Cusa (15th Century), which provides one path for organizing. The necessary elimination of the debt bubble must be controlled—an uncontrolled collapse could cause chaos. We should get this discussion to world leaders and institutions.

Extraordinary Panel

The discussants were truly an extraordinary gathering of expertise and morality, amounting to a Council of Elders. The moderator was Dennis Speed of the Schiller Institute. Presentations were made by the following speakers, in the order given, proceeding after the opening by Zepp-LaRouche: **(1) Hon. Naledi Pandor**, former South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation; **(2) Zhang Weiwei**, Professor of International Relations at Fudan University in Shanghai; **(3) Chas Freeman**, former U.S. Ambassador; **(4) Dmitri Trenin**, Director and Academic Supervisor of the Institute of World Military Economy and Strategy at the HSE University in Moscow; **(5) H.E. Donald Ramotar**, former President of Guyana; **(6) Hans-Christof Graf von Sponeck**, former UN Assistant Secretary General; **(7) María de los Ángeles Huerta**, former Mexican Congresswoman; **(6) Namit Verma**, Indian author and security analyst; **(9) Dennis Small**, *EIR* Ibero-America Editor; and **(10) Lt. Col. Ralph Bosshard** (ret., Swiss Army), former military adviser to the OSCE secretary general.

Archived video of the roundtable is available, and upcoming issues of the weekly *EIR* will publish selections from the transcript. The following are selected highlights.

Zepp-LaRouche pointed to President Donald Trump's recent declaration that he is not bound by international law, but only by his own mind, allowing the "might makes right" actions he is following. Trump's call for increasing the U.S. defense budget from $1 trillion to $1.5 trillion, together with the military buildup across Europe, demonstrates that we are on a path to global nuclear war. She insisted that we are the only species capable of reason, and thus we can and must act to change this disastrous course. She reviewed her own proposal of "Ten Principles of a New International Security and Development Architecture" and noted that these ideas were contained also in the four global Initiatives of Chinese President Xi Jinping.

She called for a return to the principles of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, placing the concept of "the one humanity" above all, as also in the concept of the "coincidence of opposites" presented by Nicholas of Cusa in the 15th Century as a means of resolving differences by reaching a higher, unitary vision. We must reach back to all the great thinkers of our different cultures,

such as Confucius, Plato and Leibniz, to restore a true love for humanity through agape.

Hon. Naledi Pandor addressed the horror felt around the world at the illegal acts against Venezuela, and warned that an attack on Cuba would be "a catastrophe." She is the former South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, and now Chairman of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, who spearheaded the application to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to investigate Israel's genocide in Gaza. Pandor pointed out that most of the Western nations believe that the West has the power to disregard international law in dealing with Russia and all non-European nations. Developing countries have suffered under colonial rule, which the UN Charter was intended to eliminate to ensure the protection of the vulnerable from the strong. Yet what is occurring now is the "most dangerous abuse of international law since 1948," she said, "and thus we face the increasing likelihood of a third world war." The BRICS, the Hague Group (formed by nations of the Global South in January 2025 to defend the ICJ's investigation of genocide in Palestine), the African Union, and other international organizations "must do more to restore international law," while civil society organizations must also speak out. And individuals, too, must cause "good trouble." The UN must be reformed so that those who break the rules of the Charter face enforcement before a court of law.

Prof. Zhang Weiwei expressed his outrage at Trump's actions in Venezuela, as a "dangerous precedent" for the future. He noted that the U.S. had a "long history of reckless invasions" adding that the new U.S. National Security Strategy granting power to the U.S. over all of the Western Hemisphere is "shortsighted and self-defeating," which is destroying the country's "soft power" by carrying out regime change operations militarily while using a "value-based humanitarian fig leaf." The U.S. action is destroying the UN Charter, which was "forged by two world wars." He called for all nations to "unite to save the UN Charter." He condemned the recent moves in Japan to restore the militaristic policies which had caused such destruction in World War II, insisting that China "will not accept the return of Japanese militarism," and warned the U.S. and others that the world will not accept the end of the UN Charter.

Chas Freeman, former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, expressed support for German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier's recent denunciation of the U.S. for being responsible for a "breakdown of values" and allowing the world to become a "den of thieves." "My country," he said, "has followed Israel into the law of the jungle," acting like a mafia in protection rackets. "We are heading into a New Dark Age," he warned. The genocide in Gaza, he said, demonstrates that "words won't fix it" when there are such blatant crimes against humanity. The banning of free speech is a "disastrous mis-judgment," while the media refuse to even report that Russia had reasons for the invasion of Ukraine, or the blatant act of piracy of a Russian ship, or that the U.S. has turned Venezuela into a colony. Now the U.S. is even threatening its allies, pointing to Greenland. On Trump's "brutal reassertion of the Monroe Doctrine," he warns that "Venezuela is just an opening move." In the face of such an "abyss of tyranny," he said, "rhetoric is not enough. If we can't convince our governments to respect the Peace of Westphalia, we will perish." Our rules have failed, and if the UN cannot enforce the peace, we must "find a workaround," to either "repair or replace it." Surely, he concluded, "we can stop this run to nuclear war" that could end the human race.

Dmitri Trenin, Russian military and economic strategist, gave a "bleaker view of the path ahead," warning about the use of force. In particular, he said that Trump "won't stop until someone strikes back." He said that this forum was provoked by the Venezuela attack, but he asked himself, is this the cause? Rather, he said, look at Iran, at the Israeli and U.S. war on Iran which shows the worst that this can become. The advent of Trump, he said, changed the priorities of the U.S., but they are still the same policies of the U.S. since World War II. But the "globalist collective West" is no more, now it is Trump's personal force, while the hegemony of the U.S. is still in force. On Venezuela, he believes it was an "inside job," as was also true in the Iraq war. What can be done? He proposed that China and Russia must cooperate more, and that Iran must do more to defend itself. He is concerned that the only protection of states over the past decades has been the possession of nuclear weapons.

Donald Ramotar, the former President of Guyana,

a neighbor of Venezuela, which has been threatened by Venezuela over contested territory, nonetheless asserted that the kidnapping of President Maduro was a "giant step backwards for humanity." The U.S. is asserting itself as a "super-colonial power, even against its allies in Europe." He calls this MAGA, mafia style. There is no regard for sovereignty or international law—already seen in Gaza. The immediate target is China and the BRICS, to "push China out of South America and the Caribbean." The targeting of the BRICS is because the sanctions failed to destroy Russia as intended, and the U.S. fears losing its position as the unipolar power. Those supporting democracy in the U.S. are powerless, and now chaos is breaking out in major U.S. cities. The military industrial complex warned about by President Eisenhower has taken over foreign policy, and now is moving on domestic policy. The policy will spark a new global battle for liberation, or nuclear war. The U.S. must mobilize against this madness. He praised Diane Sare for announcing her campaign for U.S. President.

Hans-Christof Graf von Sponeck from Germany, the former UN Assistant Secretary General, said he had studied and worked in the United States, but that what he sees now is not the "good" U.S. that he had appreciated. He proposes that the UN should activate Article 6 of the UN Charter, which allows for the expulsion of a country which consistently breaches the UN Charter, but added that perhaps the U.S. should have its membership "frozen" first. He also called for an integrated social forum internationally, a civil society institution to act on global policy.

Maria de los Angeles Huerta, a former member of the Mexican Congress warned of a "brutality unmatched threatening 2026," with Mexico definitely threatened. She described this as the "death rattle of the bankrupt financial system." In keeping with Helga's Ten Principles, she proposed: development of the transoceanic rail connection between the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean and an energy and monetary fund to protect all the countries of Latin America, as well as a security pact as a deterrent to "the new fascist policy of Donald Trump." She called for support of an "Action Group" designed to find new pathways. She recommended joining in international actions on January 17, when the World Without War organization will be demonstrating.

Namit Verma, a security expert from New Delhi, India, said that Trump's actions are "so wild that it shocked the world into seeing the state we are in." The world is itself responsible, since after World War II there was an agreement to tie the dollar to gold, keeping exchange rates stable, but on August 15, 1971, Nixon made a "unilateral declaration ending this policy, and we accepted it." He said there have been many more betrayals. Now, America is bankrupt. "Do we need to save a bankrupt Empire?" He said, "pragmatism has become opportunism." It is time to call the bluff of the United States and of Trump.

Dennis Small presented the dimensions of the Western system debt and financial aggregates bubble that stands at $2.4 quadrillion. The system is bankrupt, and is even worsening through the crypto bubble and bailouts. This is "Schachtian economics" as Hitler's central banker Hjalmar Schacht devised it—printing money for mass military build-up to save the bubble and the Empire. One third of the U.S. budget will be going to Wall Street, through military spending and debt service. Thus the world economy is governed by the military ambitions of the Western leaders preparing for a war with Russia. Small referenced LaRouche's "Four Laws" as the crucial alternative including a global Glass-Steagall to isolate financial speculation, new national banks to provide credit, and currency controls for all nations, to allow an economic development drive with vastly increased employment in productive jobs. Think of a Global Land-Bridge, spanning the world.

Lt. Col. Ralph Bossard, who served as the military advisor to the OSCE secretary general, said the unilateral attack on Venezuela sent a message to the world that universal law is finished. This is not new, he said, since the bombing of Yugoslavia without UN approval was already bypassing international law. Now we have nations building military coalitions among the 150 countries which are not already part of military alliances. The talk of a new Monroe Doctrine is absurd, since the original Doctrine was to stop the Spanish and Portuguese colonial powers from any operations in South America, not to make the United States into a colonial power as is now taking place.