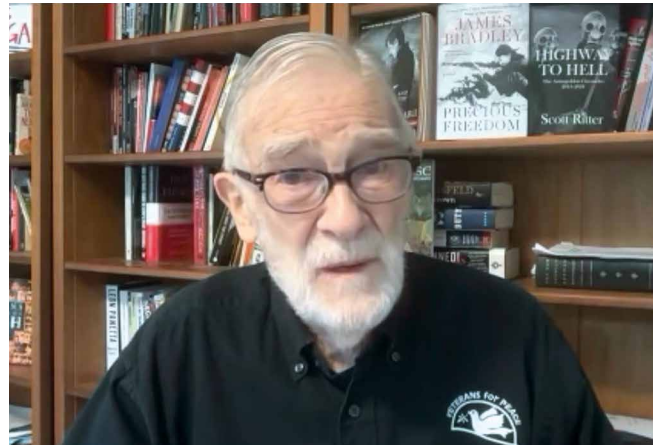


INTERVIEW: *Ray McGovern*

The Epstein Scandal: The Last Chapter of Oligarchism

The following is an edited transcript of the Feb. 11, 2026, EIR interview with Ray McGovern. Mr. McGovern is a former CIA analyst, active member of Veterans for Peace, and co-founder of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS). He was interviewed by EIR Editor-in-Chief Helga Zepp-LaRouche. Subheads have been added. The video is available [here](#).

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Hello, Ray, it's a pleasure to have you as a discussion partner today, because you are one of the rare species, a true intellectual who is also knowledgeable of many cultures. So, it's a big pleasure to talk to you. Also because naturally your special insights are very welcome. Most ordinary citizens are rubbing their eyes and saying, what is going on in this world? Everything seems to be falling apart. You have a President of the United States [Donald Trump] who declared in early January that international law is not necessary. You have an American Secretary of the Treasury [Scott Bessent] who admitted to [running a] color revolution and economic warfare in the case of Iran.



EIRNS

Ray McGovern

Now we have the collapse of the last arms-control treaty [on Feb. 5] with the New START not being replaced.

But, I think, overshadowing everything—and we should touch upon all of these topics—is the Epstein scandal, which now turns out to be a vast network of people involved not only in child molestation, in corruption, in probably all kinds of illegal money operations—money laundering, weapons trade, insider trading—but what is coming to the fore step by step with this, is a pit with seemingly no bottom. It appears to center on the British government right now, and I would like to hear what your take on all of this is, but especially the [Jeffrey] Epstein scandal.

Ray McGovern: If there were any doubt about the presence of evil in this world, I think one need only to look at the Epstein files to see it there, hard and cold. Now, those of us who are not in the Epstein files, and I'm not either, and neither are you, Helga—thank goodness—it's not sufficient for us to say, oh isn't that terrible, oh isn't that awful. Well, we have to sort of seize the moment here. My God, the upper crust of our various governments and economic units have been shown to be the people that they are. Rabbi Heschel, way back



Library of Congress

Rabbi Abraham Heschel, left, presents the Judaism and World Peace Award to Martin Luther King, Jr., December 7, 1965.

during the Vietnam War, told us, “Look, there’s evil in the world, you have to recognize that; and we’re not all guilty, but we are all responsible. When evil comes into sight, we can’t sit back and say, ‘Oh my God, isn’t that awful.’ We’ve got to do something about it.”

And you know, there’s not only evil with respect to the disclosures from Epstein, but we have watched what’s been going on in Minnesota, and I would just like to chip in a little information about what’s really going on there, besides the evil with the brown shirts, with the people who are commanded by Washington and others, the kinds of people who are in the Epstein files to violate all manner of amendments to our Constitution and so forth. A friend of mine, Joanna Macy, a kind of a theologian-philosopher, talked for a long time about a turning point. And my suggestion is that we are precisely now at a turning point.

The Great Unravelling

There was a very good [article](#) published in Popular Resistance just yesterday, and I’d like to quote just a little from it, because it’s from a person who witnessed firsthand and is still there in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her name is Kaia Svien. She says, “I heard Joanna Macy talk about a Great Turning many years ago and now we who are on the ground in metro Minnesota are experiencing a powerful manifestation of it. I, who have been longing for this all my life, did not truly expect to witness the profound realms of connection and knowing of our oneness with all of life that we are encountering day by day in multiple ways....” Carpenters for free repairing doors that have been kicked down. Doctors visiting people who are afraid to come out for fear of being wrapped up and sent into the equivalent of concentration camps. People filming, people training others in filming. She finishes up this way, and I’ll stop with the citation from this wonderful woman. She says, “Back to Joanna Macy who knew that people cannot move from business as usual to the Great Turning; they must go through the Great Unraveling to get here. We are in the midst of a gigantic Unraveling and that pain opens our love since they come from the same source....”—this pain and this love. “And, no one person or group is orchestrating this. It is coming from inside each of us involved.”

Is there hope? Of course there’s hope. And one manifestation of that hope is the way communities are getting together without any really previous plan. There are plans now, of course, as to how to communicate and

all that kind of stuff. And as you probably know, some of the people sent from Washington—[U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement] ICE—and sent from other places, are leaving Minneapolis now. So, we’ll have to see. We here are at a turning point. We’ve had 250 years since our forefathers realized they were at a turning point. And they didn’t just complain about it. They took action. That was our revolution against neo-colonialism. We’re at that point now, and we should recognize that and take hope from the fact that if we do things, if we do not satisfy ourselves with just bemoaning the fact that this is happening, we can stop it. Just as my friend Julian Assange used to say, wars that are begun by lies can be stopped with the truth.

So too, this evil can be stopped with the truth. And our job, as I see it right now, is to unravel this truth and point out to people that they are not helpless. They do not have to sit passively. As a matter of fact, it’s immoral to sit passively and let this happen without intervening en masse—whether we’re connected with other people or whether we’re springing from our own hearts and find connection with other people, because their hearts are truly troubled—and be willing to move them to action.

Zepp-LaRouche: I fully share your view that this moment is a tipping point, where, if people do not move to create a true renaissance of the highest culture possible, then there is the danger of a complete collapse of civilization. But let’s look a little bit more at this Epstein phenomenon, because with all the flood of information, what I have concluded so far is that this was a system where people liked to be associated with the powerful, accepting corruption, being involved in illegal sexual practices involving minors, even supposedly involving babies in some cases, and much worse perversions. But the idea, as I understand it now, is that, in order to get favors, to be part of a club where you are part of the rich and beautiful, and you have insider information, you participate in all kinds of illegal money operations; but the price for it is that you have to prove that you have at least a skeleton or two in the closet so that you are corrupt and therefore blackmailable and therefore reliable.

And there had to be a system where each member of this club would then introduce a newcomer and basically testify for his corruption that he would be reliable, and in that way, you created this incredible network, controlled obviously by the intelligence services

of several countries—especially the British. There is an extremely interesting development in Great Britain right now, where [former Labour Party leader Jeremy] Corbyn went after [former British Prime Minister Tony] Blair, and he went after the connection of the City of London with Silicon Valley. So, this is really taking on incredible circuits.

But I think it is, as a first step, important to understand that system of corruption, where basically, you have to prove that you are worthy to be part of it, and then you have the privileges. Do we have any insight into how that worked? Because I think this is the way this system works, and this is why we get all these terrible things we are lamenting about internationally, including what happened in Gaza; including all of these incredible things happening. What is your view on this?

McGovern: I think you're right, Helga. And in pedestrian terms, I grew up in New York City, and there were a lot of Mafia around, and to be part of the club, you had to shoot somebody or kill somebody to prove your bona fides, mind you, okay? So, the corruption where these people are led into blackmailable situations is not a new tactic; it's just the scale—and the people involved, my God! So, this is what my Irish grandmother called the upper crust, you know? I should explain.

I was going out at the age of 14 to caddy on a golf course at a very exclusive place called East Hampton, Long Island, and my grandmother took me aside. She said, "Raymond, you're going out to be with the upper crust. You have to know what they are." And I said, "I know, I know." She said, "You don't know. No, you sit down, and I'll tell you." And she said, "The upper crust is a bunch of crumbs held together by a lot of dough." Well, a lot of dough and a lot of blackmailable material.

And when you look at [British Prime Minister Keir] Starmer, how long is he going to last in London? He's already thrown aside his most loyal subjects, so to speak, his most loyal accomplices. How long is [French President Emmanuel] Macron going to last? And [German] Chancellor [Friedrich] Merz—these

people are part of that upper crust. I mean, didn't Merz come from some great big finance organization [Black-Rock]? Of course he did. Is it some wonder that he would be financing Rheinmetall [a German weapons manufacturer] rather than social outreach institutions in Germany? No, that's no wonder at all.

So, the task that we need to do, it seems to me, is to expose this, but not only expose it, but take action. Now, somebody said, these muckety-mucks—that's another Grandma expression—this upper crust, they need a good kick in the behind. Well, a non-violent kick in the behind. And maybe we need a non-violent

kick in the behind, because I think what Rabbi Heschel said is quite true. We're not all guilty, but we are all responsible.

We in the United States have made this work, this democracy, this republic, for 250 years now. Are we going to fritter it away because we're passive and we say, "Oh, isn't this terrible," but we don't do anything about it? No. Just as Joanna Macy and this correspondent here pointed out, this should congeal; this should elicit the kind of cooperation and connectedness that people of goodwill—and we're still a majority, people of goodwill—can turn things around, seize it as a turning point or a tipping point or

whatever, and do the necessary to mobilize, to mobilize the rest of the people who would prefer to sit behind the TV, and make sure they realize what the stakes are.

A Republic, If You Can Keep It

For God's sake—you know, the stakes are so high. I remember that after our founders in the United States created the Constitution, Benjamin Franklin, one of the prime movers there, was asked by a lady from Pennsylvania, she said, now, Mr. Franklin, what have you given us now? And he said famously, I've given you a republic if you can keep it. Now, there have been flaws in the past, and we've suffered real setbacks in the past, but so far—250 years is no small thing—we've kept it.

Right now, we're going to face the violation of our Constitution, the bragging of our leaders that they have



CC/Simon Dawson / No 10 Downing Street
British Prime Minister Keir Starmer

their own morality, and that international law doesn't really apply; but we can do it so long as we keep this Constitution in effect. And there are a lot of lawyers and people on the ground in Minnesota and elsewhere—in Sydney, Australia, for God's sake. If you saw those demonstrations two days ago, when the police tried to corral thousands and thousands of people, that's the hope. We need to get out there and speak with our feet. We need to take a stand.

I'm a Catholic, but one thing I very much admire about Martin Luther is, you know, his talk about standing. [spoken in German] "I stand here, I can't do anything else. God help me, God help us." Sorry for the quote.

Zepp-LaRouche: I fully agree. As a matter of fact, on Jan. 12, just a little bit more than four weeks ago, we had an [emergency meeting](#), where we had a panel discussion of important representatives from different countries to address this situation, because when the President of the United States says international law is not necessary; when you have interventionist wars again—Venezuela, the kidnapping of President [Nicolás] Maduro—and many, many other such things, we thought that we have reached a point where we absolutely have to have an international movement of world citizens; that is, of people who say that they put the interest of humanity as one, first, and then define a national interest in cohesion with that idea of the One Humanity. So, we had this wonderful panel where we decided to create a world movement, or try to initiate an international movement of world citizens in all countries, of people who would devote their activity to that idea of really causing a paradigm shift in the thinking of the people.

Now, that was before the Epstein scandal really became so big in the news, and that has just reconfirmed that we have reached now a point where the morass, the swamp, the cesspool has become so openly threatening to the existence of any kind of morality of the human species, that we have to change it. My idea of changing it is that in each country we have wonderful traditions, high points of culture, and low points. And what we have to do in every country is to revive the best traditions—of Germany, of the United States, of Africa, of Latin America, just every civilization and nation. Revive that, and then have a dialogue among them which will spark, without any question in my mind, a new renaissance.

Be Victorious for a Good Idea

So, this moment, while it is terrifying, and we will come to some of these terrifying points momentarily, I think if enough people do what Schiller demanded in one of his theoretical historical writings, *History of the Revolt of the Netherlands*, where he said, if people come together and unite for a good plan, they can bend even the most stretched arm of the tyrant and be victorious for a good idea. So, I think we are at such a moment, where people do have to unite for a good plan. You mentioned the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. If Americans would go back to the ideas with which the American Republic was founded—a republic devoted to the common good, a foreign policy which is not there to chase foreign monsters, but to live in peace, in an alliance with republics around the world—the whole world would welcome that United States. Right now, you see that in Germany, for example, they are giving out travel warnings that you should under no circumstances go to Florida, because you may be arrested if you don't have blonde hair and blue eyes.

So, we should really inspire people to join our movement of world citizens. We will have another big [emergency conference](#) on the 2nd of March, where you can register, participate, where more of these ideas will be discussed. And the purpose of it will be to create an international movement of world citizens, to create a new security and development architecture, which this time must take into account the interest of every single country for it to work. Because if you leave out one or more countries, it is the stepping stone to the next war. That lesson you can learn from history. So, that would be my answer to what you said.

McGovern: I agree, Helga, and I would go back to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whom we celebrate at this time of year. And when we look at the revelations from the Epstein files, well, let me just repeat my favorite paragraph from Dr. King's "Letter from the Birmingham City Jail." He's talking about how you confront that kind of corruption, how you confront that kind of deceit; and he compares it to a boil. A fitting analogy, it seems to me, with what we've just been seeing. Like a boil, it can never be cured unless it is opened up with all its pus-flowing ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light; so, too, lies and injustice must be exposed, with all the friction that their exposure creates to the air of human opinion and the conscience of humankind. Now, that's our job in the first instance. I think people



CC/Lorie Shaul

Thousands demonstrate in Minneapolis against the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, January 23, 2026.

have enough examples of pus-flowing ugliness now. The question is, are we still up to the standards that our forefathers here in America were, and are we going to take some action? When I say people need maybe a non-violent kick in the behind, I think if this [the Epstein revelations—ed.] doesn't do it, nothing will.

Just to repeat the American analogy, it was James Madison and George Mason who drafted the Constitution of the United States. Mostly George Mason, a Virginian. Where did he learn what he knew? Well, did he go to William and Mary, or where did he study? He studied at home. His father drowned in the Potomac River. He lived with his uncle, who had a library of all kinds of philosophical, political theory; all kinds of history books—and he learned that way. So he was uniquely prepared to help James Madison draft the Constitution.

They had a final draft, and then George Mason said, sorry, Jim, I can't approve this. I can't sign this. And Madison said, this is crazy—you drafted most of it. And Mason said, Jim, it doesn't have a Bill of Rights. It doesn't have freedom of speech; freedom from seizure; freedom, freedom, freedom. I can't sign this. And what Madison said to Mason was, George, okay, I un-

derstand. But would you just keep quiet about this? Because if you tell everybody, this is not going to work; and they made a deal. Mason said, if you get those Bill of Rights approved in a reasonable period of time, I won't say anything. And indeed, the gentlemen kept their promises. The Bill of Rights was approved.

What Is the Bill of Rights?

But what's the Bill of Rights? The first one is freedom of speech. Well, my God, there are certain things you can't say in republics, in democracies now. Freedom of speech. But the big one, and especially in Minnesota, is the Fourth Amendment. Okay, the Fourth Amendment is simple. It results from the general warrants that were issued to British soldiers to go into any colonist's, any American's house and stay there and take care of their women and that kind of stuff. All right. So the Fourth Amendment reads as follows:

"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to

be seized.” Whoa! What’s happened with ICE in all these cities, especially in Minneapolis? So, our amendments are being completely disregarded. Our Constitution is at peril. And so, you all in Europe and we here have a similar task. And that’s, again, another reason why we have to sort of combine, and from our individual situations, make sure that we’re aware and connected, as Joanna Macy said, connected with others who are striving for justice and who do not fear—do not fear sticking their necks out for justice.

Now, there are a lot of people still doing that. A lot of people in Minnesota and the community that have coalesced around this oppression, has already resulted in some 300 or more ICE people being withdrawn from Minnesota. I think the Minnesotans will have won the people there. And I think we could take a good example from that, because there are places in Europe—not only in Britain and France and Germany, and elsewhere—where people realize what’s going on. They’ve seen the pus-flowing ugliness. And if they can’t rise up now, when this turning point has been achieved, well—

Let me add one other thing. I’m a Catholic and very much devoted to Father Daniel Berrigan, who was one of my tutors. At some point after he had been jailed several times for protesting the unjust war in Vietnam and revealing all the pus-flowing ugliness that came out of that, he was sort of on sabbatical down in South Africa, and they sent him to South Africa, which was then under Apartheid. And he was asked to preach during Holy Week, the week before Easter, as most of you know. And he preached at a white church, the only church he could preach at. And on Easter Sunday, he was receiving the people coming out of the church, and a middle-aged couple came up to him and said, “Father Berrigan, your words are eloquent, but if we risk prison, and if we do what you tell us to do, what becomes of our children?” And Berrigan looked them straight in the eyes, and



Creative Commons/Thomas Good
Father Daniel Berrigan

children?

Zepp-LaRouche: I would like to shift briefly to a couple of additional political topics, and then we can come back to what we should be doing; because today is the day when [Israeli] Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu is meeting with President Trump. And from reports, I saw that this visit was moved up to occur a week earlier than planned, because apparently Netan-

he said this: “Mark these words, and if you do not do this, what then becomes of your children?” So, this is the defining moment.

People back in the early 1930s in Germany decided they wouldn’t face it. And as one legal scholar at the time, watching things, January, February, March, April, and May of 1933, put it: The people knew what was going on, but they reacted with *Schafsmässige Ergebenheit*. Now, the English for that is “sheep-like submissiveness.” (It’s almost easier to pronounce that one in German, isn’t it?) Sheep-like submissiveness. So, I mean, we could do that, and then we’ll lose our republic—and then what becomes of our



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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House, Feb. 11, 2026.

yahu is not happy about the negotiations between the United States and Iran. So, I'm extremely worried about that, because the Western media are pursuing a narrative which I'm absolutely certain is a complete lie. They say in the Western media that the Iran-Mullah regime killed 50,000 people, demonstrators fighting for their rights and freedom. But the reality is that even the U.S. Treasury Secretary Bessent, in a hearing in the [U.S.] Senate, made an absolutely unbelievable admission, where he said, basically, we caused a run on their bank. The central bank, therefore, had to print a lot of money. This caused inflation, and in a situation where—this is now me speaking—the sanctions had already worsened the economy of Iran for a long time. This was just too much; this was the straw which broke the camel's back. So, people went into the streets.

Bessent said, they demonstrated, but basically, we did it, and he called this economic statecraft. He admitted to color revolution by putting on economic warfare, making a run on the bank, causing a devaluation of the currency, triggering inflation on top of sanctions which are already designed to make the population suffer so much that they turn against the government and cause a regime change. Now, that is peddled by the Western media as a narrative.

The Iranian government has said that they had sympathy with the demonstrators in the beginning, because they saw that their complaints were right, and they promised to remedy the situation. Then [former U.S. Secretary of State Mike] Pompeo put out a tweet saying every demonstrator had a Mossad agent at his side. There are other reports that the CIA distributed 40,000 Starlink devices for the demonstrators. The Iranian government said that these foreign forces brought in weapons, and they caused the ISIS-like violence, killing all these people.

How can we have a situation where the Western media are doing the job of whom and what? So, what is your take on this Iran situation since you have been following it for a very long time?

McGovern: The first thing to say is, what kind of threat does Iran pose to the United States of America? I'll give you about another 10 minutes, and I might be able to manufacture one. As my friend Julian Assange says, if wars can be started by lies, they can be stopped or prevented by the truth. So, what's the truth? The truth is that we are doing the bidding of Israel. The Zionists in Israel want Iran destroyed. We have done a lot to de-

stroy them economically. They, until recently, had very few friends. Right now, they're very friendly with the BRICS countries, including especially Russia and China. The tide has turned.

Now, I have not seen the latest. I think that Netanyahu and Trump are probably speaking at the White House as we speak now. But, Netanyahu says [about Iran], look, they're going to get a nuclear weapon. That's standard, that's boilerplate; they're always going to get a nuclear weapon. The President of the United States said within a month, maybe, just recently. That's, as the British would say, bollocks. They're not getting a nuclear weapon.

Last March, [U.S. Director of National Intelligence] Tulsi Gabbard testified that there is no indication that Iran is working on a nuclear weapon. Did you get that? Nuclear weapon. Enrichment, that's something else. Are they working on enrichment? Yes. Are they entitled to work on enrichment? Yes, they are. Are the Israelis worried about enrichment? Well, they pretend to be, but without a nuclear weapon, enrichment doesn't matter very much at all. So, that was decided in 2007 by an intelligence community that told the truth, and said Iran stopped working on a nuclear weapon at the end of 2003. What's that? Do the math. How many years ago was that, 23? And have not resumed work on it; that was unanimous—all intelligence agencies. It was expressed with high confidence.

So, what happened? [U.S. President George W.] Bush and [Vice President Dick] Cheney did not get their war on behalf of Israel against Iran during their last year in office. That was 2008. They fully expected to have a war going, and they would get out in the western sunset, blessed by all Zionists in the world for having perpetrated that. So, that should do away with the nuclear weapon aspect, except for this footnote. Last month, January, four weeks ago, the U.S. defense strategy guidance document came out. What did it say about Iran and a nuclear weapon? It said there may come a time soon when the Iranian officials will think again about the possibility of developing a nuclear weapon. But so far, there's been no change in the religious instruction, the *fatwa*, which prohibits it. Oh, wait a second. So, the U.S. intelligence community and the Pentagon—this is a Pentagon document—and the Iranians are saying the same thing.

Who's saying something different? The Zionists and the Zionist-infected media in our country, I'm sad to say. So, if you're looking for evidence, you have

the intelligence community, you have the defense guidance, and they both say [the Iranians] may start thinking about renewing the nuclear weapons program that they closed down in 2003. That's the documentation here. You never see it in our press, but you know the reason why.

Now, what's the big tipping point now? Well, in June, the Iranians showed that they could wreak havoc in Israel. They showed that they have the kind of weaponry that cannot be defended against, and it could destroy Israel. What have the Iranians said lately? They have said, look, even a measured or a half-offensive, any strike on Iran will call forth a complete retaliation against all people who support this. That includes U.S. bases, and of course, it includes Israel, even though Israel has tried to sort of step aside this time and let the U.S. do its bidding. So, what are the Israelis insisting on now? A ban on those missiles. In other words, there's no nuclear capability, but the missiles can do this, so now they want a ban on the missiles, and they also want a ban on any Iranian support for other Shi'a or other movements in the Middle East that cannot exist without Iranian help, and that, of course, is something Israel has always wanted.

Consequences of Iran's Retaliatory Capability

So, what will happen? You know, Trump has a lot of Zionists advising him. As a matter of fact, it's hard to think of one with any influence that isn't a Zionist. But the U.S. military, I believe, has gone to Trump and said, Mr. Trump, I mean we tried that, we supported that popular uprising, but when the Russians helped the Iranians vitiate all the Starlink links, that uprising fell apart. We've missed the window of opportunity now. We're not going to be able to escape without hundreds, perhaps thousands of body bags coming back of U.S. servicemen from the bases that ring Iran. And, you know, I know you love Israel, but they're going to be decimated, if not completely destroyed, by Iranian retaliatory capability. In other words, Mr. President, we forgot to tell you that Iran has a deterrent now that they never had before; and now they've openly promised to use it, so it might not be such a good idea.

Now, I hasten to add, I've been saying this for two months, okay? Now, so far, it's turned out as I had expected, but there's no guarantee I'm right. I mean, who knows what Epstein-type material Netanyahu has on Trump that no one else has? I mean, after all, Epstein,

his father-in-law, so to speak, was a Mossad agent, and we have a Mossad agent testifying to that now, Ari Ben-Menashe. So, who knows how this is going to come out? But if it comes out in a way that Trump decides to go ahead anyway, we have a regional war in the Middle East; and we have it on false pretenses because a) the Iranians are not working on a nuclear weapon, b) they're willing to talk about it as they did just last weekend, and c) they're not going to give up those missiles, which represent the only way they can retaliate against an Israeli or U.S. attack. So, it's not so much the evidence, it's the logic of the situation.

If someone tells Trump, look, tell Mr. Netanyahu that you don't want him to go off half-cocked and destroy his own country, and that's also what will happen if we, the United States, attack Tehran. The Iranians have promised to do that. We believe they have the capabilities to do that. They're also going to hit U.S. bases. It's not a good idea. Let's not do that, and you know that we have midterm elections coming up. That would be a long war. We're going to run out of ammunition. It's a bad look, Mr. Netanyahu, it's a bad look. Would Trump be able to say that? He should be able to, but Trump is not his own man; and he showed that with respect to the Russians. He can't do what I believe he would like to do with respect to renewing the restrictions on strategic weapons, and he can't do very much that Netanyahu tells him not to do.

So, Zionism is the key here. U.S. policy makes no sense at all in terms of defending U.S. interests. As a matter of fact, it's just the opposite. And over the next week or so, we're going to find out whether cooler heads prevail, namely the U.S. military, or whether the Zionists prevail. And you'll have all kinds of ostensible causes for this war, all traced back to things like Iran's insatiable desire to get a nuclear weapon, which they've been saying for three decades now but has never been true—except maybe a little bit before 2003.

Zepp-LaRouche: Since you mentioned the New START Treaty, it is now basically a question of the past. Trump said that he may want to work on a newer, better treaty. But I'm not so optimistic, because he will try to involve the Chinese, and the Chinese for sure will not agree to that, given the fact that they feel that they have not anywhere close to as many nuclear missiles as the United States and Russia. But this will have devastating consequences because, for example, the Heritage Foundation just produced a new report where

one Robert Peters, who is a research fellow for their strategic deterrence, made the point that now it is possible to basically triple the number of nuclear warheads of the United States, from the present 1,500 to 4,600-something by the year 2050.

You can already see signs everywhere that the people who still stick to geopolitics take this as an opportunity to rearm like never before, like not since 90 years ago—because what is happening in Europe right now really reminds you of the military craziness which occurred 90 years ago. So, what can be done in terms of the effect of—I fear that there is no trust right now. The Russians, who gave a lot of credibility to Trump in the Anchorage [Alaska] meeting [between President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, on Aug. 15, 2025], I think they are having second thoughts exactly about the point you just made. Can Trump really deliver on what was supposedly agreed upon? So, I just think that we are still in an extremely dangerous situation. The Ukraine war will come to an end, but there are still people in Europe who keep encouraging the Ukrainians to continue at a point where the war is lost already.

So, what is your view on these matters, the New START Treaty, and what should come after?

McGovern: Well, Trump's lack of ability to say yes when Putin very formally, at a National Security Council meeting in the Kremlin, said, look, the New START limits are going to expire on Feb. 5. We agreed to adhere to them, the offensive strike missiles and so forth, and bombers. If you agree, all you have to do is say yes. That was the 22nd of September, Helga. Trump wouldn't say yes. Did he want to say yes? That doesn't matter to the Russians, you know. What Trump may have had in his mind, he couldn't do, okay? Now, are the Russians used to this? Yes, the Russians are used to this. Back in 2016, so that's exactly 10 years ago, Putin gathered some Western journalists together, and he said, look, I know that you're not going to even report what I say to your editorial people, but I want to just tell you what's going on. And he said, look, ABM [the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty]: Forget about it, it can always be defeated. We have missiles coming on. You won't believe what we're going to show.

Two years later, at the State of the Union address, Putin had a show-and-tell; six graphics, videos. This is what this was. They [new Russian missiles—ed.] can go around the South Pole. Oh, this one, we have a

Poseidon [a nuclear-powered underwater drone]. Now we have an Oreshnik [a hypersonic medium-range missile, which can reach speeds up to Mach 11], we have a Burevestnik [a low-flying nuclear-powered cruise missile]. And guess what? They're online now.

What the Russians Know

So, are the Russians relaxing? No. They just don't know what's in the heads of these crazies. Well, I guess they do know; they know that it's a military-industrial complex, pure and simple. That Trump himself is powerless, even if he wanted to act against them. So, there will be a multiplicity of missiles and all kinds of armaments. But the Russians don't care; they don't like it, but the tripwire is much, much more dangerous. But they can live with it, because they have this obvious deterrent of missiles. One of them is powered by nuclear power, etc. Can you imagine? It's a small enough thing, and it can stay up in space or in the air almost indefinitely.

So, you know, unless the U.S. strategists are crazy or they don't listen to people like us right now, then the Russians are saying, well, it's unfortunate, but we'll just go ahead, make sure that we do a lot cheaper and a lot more effective what we need to do to make sure that there's still a balance of terror. And that has kept the peace ever since 1972.

I would add that I was part of the U.S. effort in 1972. I was in Moscow for the signing of the ABM Treaty, which, from a personal point of view—I mean, I was one of those people that hid under my desk in grammar school to protect myself [during Cold War bombing raid drills—ed.]. And here I am witnessing a new arrangement where there was a balance of power which could not be violated. It lasted 30 years. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces [INF Treaty—ed.] lasted 32 years. And Trump got out of the second one; Bush got out of the first one.

Now we have zero, but we do still have mutual assured destruction, as they like to call it.

Zepp-LaRouche: It is not a condition, I think, where one can sleep well, because the stupidity and criminality of many people, as we discussed in the beginning, is a factor where I would not want to put my trust that they take good care of humanity.

So, we're coming up on time; we have to come to a conclusion. You were in Germany in July, and you gave a presentation at our conference. I would re-

ally like to see you coming back to Germany, because Germans in particular need to hear from Americans like you. So, I absolutely think you should come back this year; we will think about an appropriate occasion.

But in light of all of what we discussed, do you have any specific message? I know that this program is not just heard by Germans, but do you have a specific thing you would tell the German people, whom you know and you speak their language, and maybe with a bearing for other people as well, but especially for the Germans?

McGovern: Enough is enough [spoken first in German, then English—ed.]. Now even during the Third Reich, *die Gedanken sind frei*—thoughts were free. A little vignette here. A colleague of mine and I were rehearsing *Die*



Portrait of Martin Luther by Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1528.

Gedanken sind frei, wer kann sie erraten [Thoughts are free, who can guess them?] in a German *Zug*, a German railroad car, from Rostock down to Berlin. We were rehearsing, and some elderly women across the aisle heard us and started singing the same song. Thoughts are free. Who can figure them out? And so, before you knew it, the whole railway car was singing *Die Gedanken sind frei*. Thoughts are free. So, I went over to these elderly women. They were older than I was, actually. I said, I bet you couldn't sing that during the Third Reich. And you know what they said? Mark this. I said, I bet you couldn't sing it then. And they said, "Doch!" For you Americans, "You

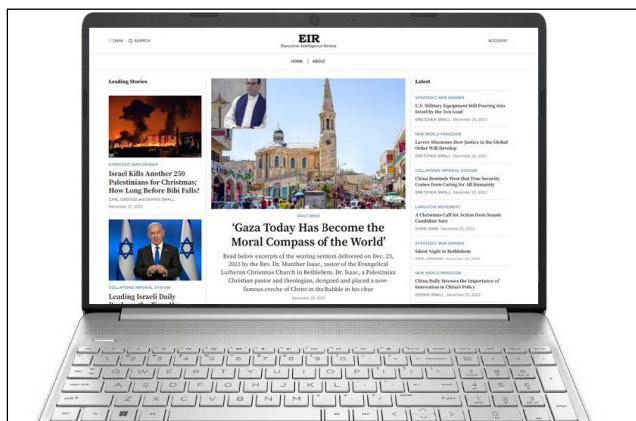
fool! Of course we could sing it then."

My point now is, it doesn't suffice to sing the song. Okay, your thoughts can be free, but they're no longer allowed to stay inside yourself. We need to take stands. Martin Luther is not my favorite person, because I'm a Catholic and was not trained to admire Martin Luther. But he did say this, and maybe I could close on this note: *Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nichts anderes. Gott helfe mir.* Amen. I take a stand here. I can't do anything else out of conscience. *Gott helfe mir. Gott helfe uns.* God help all of us. We need to take these stands.

We need to cooperate in communities. But we need to also individually risk our necks, because the stakes are high. The republics or the democracies are in peril. And what are we going to tell our children if we don't do what we can now? Thank you for having me on, Helga.

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, thank you so much. And I wish that your courageous spirit sort of inspires people in the United States and Germany and elsewhere. The Thomanerchor [Germany's St. Thomas Choir of Leipzig—ed.] was reduced to only three boys in the Thirty Years' War. And they said exactly what you just said. "*Hier stehe ich und singe.*" [Here I stand and sing.]

With that, we should really work together to get a new renaissance and open a new chapter of the history of mankind. So, thank you very much for your being on my discussion.



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