

change in this relationship at least until 2024, where we might observe a generational change in U.S. politics with different people coming to the White House and also to Capitol Hill.

Let me conclude my short presentation by going back to Friedrich Schiller. I think it is critically important for contemporary leaders to go beyond their day-to-day institutional interests, beyond their

immediate constituencies or stakeholders, to think not in terms of narrowly defined national interests of their respective countries, but rather in terms of global commons. I understand that that might sound naïve and not very practical, but that's the only way we can assure the survivability of our species. Otherwise, I'm afraid we're moving in the direction of an epic disaster with unpredictable consequences. Thank you.

## First Discussion Session

*This is an edited transcript of the first discussion period during Panel 1: "Can a Strategic Crisis Between the Major Powers Be Avoided?" of the Schiller Institute's November 13-14, 2021 conference, "All Moral Resources of Humanity Have To Be Called Up: Mankind Must Be the Immortal Species!" Participating were panel moderator Dennis Speed; conference speakers Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Ambassador Anna Evstigneeva, and Andrey Kortunov; and discussants Earl Rasmussen, Executive Vice President, The Eurasia Center, and Dr. Nikolay Megits, Professor of International Business, Hamline University.*

**Helga Zepp-LaRouche:** I want to thank the two speakers who are with me here on this panel. I'm very happy to hear what both of you have to say; and naturally, especially Mr. Kortunov talking about Friedrich Schiller, which I think is very important, because if you don't have a vision where you want to go—and the quote you mentioned is one of my most favorite quotes, which is sort of one of my life mottos. Schiller even said you have to despise the opinion of your contemporaries when they are wrong, and I think that's a very healthy attitude, because it liberates you and helps you to pursue what you know is right.

I understand that, naturally, from the standpoint of Russia being one of the major powers affected, for good or for bad, by the developments in Afghanistan, that you would have the pragmatic view you expressed; also, Madam Ambassador, what you said. But still, I think this is not a static situation: This can go either completely wrong and turn the region into chaos for all the neighbors being affected, or it can be the beginning of a new cooperation. I think the drama of the situation, and the fact that all these things will get worse by the hyperinflation effect on food prices, on fuel, this is going to be sort of the revolver at the head of mankind: Are we capable of changing our views when we

can avoid a humanitarian crisis, where literally many, many millions of people could die this winter?

The reason I mentioned Ibn Sina as a name, like an icon of the effort, is because you have to evoke—and that's also Schiller's idea—you have to evoke the best in people. And that, hopefully, will encourage all the participants—the Afghani diaspora, the people who are concerned about the crisis—to act and change the dynamic. I don't think pragmatism alone is enough. So that's what I want to say.

**Ambassador Anna Evstigneeva:** I want to echo things that were said by my colleague Andrey with regards to Russian-American relations at this stage, and the importance of them for the world. And I see it quite well in the [UN] Security Council, where we have to deal not with bilateral relations, but trying to resolve the crises all over the world, and the situations that are discussed in the Security Council: Most of them are very dire and difficult, and very complex. What we are doing in the Security Council is trying to resolve them, and to help the people to get stability, and find ways to overcome the complexity and crises.

And for us, it's fundamental to find solutions, to agree, so we cannot allow ourselves to resort to zero-sum games, but unfortunately, it's very often the case.

Frankly speaking, dealing with Sudan, or Mali, or Central Africa Republic, or Afghanistan, or Syria, or Haiti: Well, the diplomats and the people working on these situations, they usually know where the problem lies, and what are root causes of situations; and how can they be resolved, in the end, if it's power-sharing or resolving some particular issues, or something else. The UN possesses the instruments that could help, at peace-keeping operations, special political missions, mediation support, and etc. So, we do have instruments in our hands.

But so often, we get stuck in two major things that come to my mind. The first one is that sometimes, the



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*Participants in the first discussion session of Panel 1, clockwise from upper left: Dennis Speed, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Ambassador Anna Evstigneeva, Earl Rasmussen, Dr. Nikolay Megits, and Dr. Andrey Kortunov.*

political views of our Western countries do not allow them to act pragmatically, so there are things that they push forward without any reference to the realities in a particular country. The recipes prescribed are the same for every situation.

### **A Possible Initiative by the Panel**

I will give you just one example: Every time I come to the Security Council to discuss some issues, I hear “elections, elections, elections, elections, elections.” So “you have to have elections.” Nobody questions the democratic necessity to hear the voice of people, but in many cases it’s so irrelevant to push for conducting elections, and it will not resolve the issues and it in most cases leads to another crisis, when they’re not prepared, when there is no social agreement on the share of power. But the Security Council—I call it a parrot, parroting, you know—calls for it. It happens in Somalia and Sudan and in Afghanistan; the elections that were conducted there, what did they lead to? Was it a democracy? It didn’t lead to any kind of solutions in this country—no. But we still talk about the Scandinavian type of “human rights” to be imposed, the elections and different types of these recipes. And so, we hear a lot of mentoring.

The second thing which is very detrimental is the

atmosphere in relations between the U.S. and Russia, U.S. and China, and the inability of Americans and their unwillingness to admit that in many cases the U.S. dominance is not relevant anymore. Afghanistan is a good example, that the complete failure there is not admitted fully. It also happens with France, in many countries in Africa: When they are losing their grip, but they’re still not able to admit in new realities in these countries. These affect our discussions in the Security Council as well, when in the end, without trying to solve the real issues, having instruments at hand, we end up in the zero-sum game on many issues.

I see also my role and my path here in New York, just to try to make these steps to overcome this thing of a zero-sum game, in order to find solutions, maybe tiny, maybe small steps like the one that was mentioned on the Syria cross-border mechanism. Every piece of the puzzle matters. I really hope that our partners can do the same.

**Andrey Kortunov:** Since the issue of Afghanistan was raised, let me make my five-cent contribution to the discussion. Just this week I had a meeting at my office with the EU Special Envoy to Afghanistan, Tomas Niklasson. We discussed whether it is possible to come up with an integrated position on the preconditions for the

new authority's recognition in Afghanistan. He shared with me the EU position on Afghanistan, and if you go through the list of terms on which the European Union might consider formal recognition of the new government in Afghanistan, I think that we can agree with most of what is listed there. Basically, it's first about safe, secure and orderly departure of all foreign nationals and Afghans who wish to leave the country.

I know that Russia has a footnote to this provision, but this is not completely against what Russia believes to be appropriate. Second, it's about promoting, protecting, and respecting all human rights; in particular, the full enjoyment of rights of women and girls, as well as children and persons belonging to minorities. Of course, that refers to religious minorities and ethnic minorities as well. It's the provision that the Taliban should allow the implementation of humanitarian operations in Afghanistan, in line with the general princi-

## The Migrants in Belarus

**Earl Rasmussen:** I'm the Executive Vice President of the Eurasia Center. This is kind of a broad question, but let us kind of try to refocus it. One, I want to thank all the speakers. I agree with all the perceptions and their perspectives, and it's very critical—we're just in an intense environment. Right now, we're faced with multiple, different tense situations going on: You've got the migrant crisis, which is continuing; and now Europe's seeing more along the Poland-Belarus border; but a lot of that is as a result of Western policy, whether that's the Middle East, whether that's Afghanistan.

Additionally, we've got the energy crisis going on, and which also leads back to some policies that the European Union made themselves. And we've got other, very tense situations: Ukraine, Syria, South China Sea, Taiwan. And at the same time, I don't know what positive steps are being made, very positive, on the news on

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**So, I think what we can do right now—and by “we” I mean, independent think-tanks and expert networks—we should work on this list to specify these terms and hopefully even, we could turn these general terms into some kind of roadmap. If we're able to put together a coalition, I think we can pass our findings to Ambassador Evstigneeva and her colleagues in New York, and maybe they could turn some of our ideas into another UN Security Council resolution.**

—Andrey Kortunov

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ples of humanity, neutrality and independence, with full respect of humanitarian law. Then, it's about preventing Afghanistan from becoming a base for hosting, financing and exporting terrorism to other countries. And finally, of course, it's about the inclusive and representative government through negotiations.

So, I think what we can do right now—and by “we” I mean, independent think-tanks and expert networks—we should work on this list to specify these terms and hopefully even, we could turn these general terms into some kind of roadmap. If we're able to put together a coalition, I think we can pass our findings to Ambassador Evstigneeva and her colleagues in New York, and maybe they could turn some of our ideas into another UN Security Council resolution.

I fully agree with Helga: Winter is approaching: It's not just about food; it's about fuel, it's about basics, medicines. I think that urban areas in Afghanistan already suffer a lot, and they will suffer more when it gets colder. And we need to do something, and we need to do something really fast! I suggest that we should start working without any further delay.

Afghanistan. But we've got a lot of rhetoric, we've got sanctions diplomacy occurring as normal. What seems like a very tense situation: Let's just pick on, Poland-Belarus and that area there—what steps can we take to kind of step back? It seems like an accident could easily occur which could blow up quite easily.

**Kortunov:** Specifically on the Belarusian-Polish crisis, it is important for the two sides to establish direct communications. I understand that Poles do not want to talk to Alexander Lukashenko; they do not recognize Lukashenko as the legitimate President of Belarus. But these crises cannot be resolved if Belarusian authorities are not directly induced, and this is clear. Second, I think that we should somehow separate the specific situation from adjacent complications and crises.

For example, in the West, they tried to link this crisis and the military exercises that Russia conducts with Belarus now; or, with the alleged concentration of Russian troops on the border with Ukraine.

First of all, you know this concentration has never been confirmed, even by the Ukrainian side. But second,

I don't think we should put everything into the same basket, because there are various issues, including the gas export of Russia to Europe, and the recent breakdown of communication lines between NATO and Russia. We should take one piece after another.

And finally, speaking of the migration crisis, I think that we should start thinking about a continental migration strategy. Unfortunately, cooperation in migration management has never been strong, between Europe and, let us say, Eurasia. But the reality is that you cannot separate one part of the continent from the other part of the continent. We need to have mechanisms to exchange statistics, to exchange best practices and failures on migration, to exchange information on readmissions, and many other issues which in my view can be separated from political disagreements.

Migrations are likely to become more and more important, and we spoke about Afghanistan: If and when they open borders, I can foresee a major flow from Afghanistan, to Pakistan, to Turkey, and arguably further, to Europe. We should be ready to see a new wave of migrations rising, and that calls for more cooperation, not only between donor countries, but also between recipient countries.

**Evstigneeva:** In my view it's much about responsible decision-making on behalf of Europeans in this case. It's so evident now, that some decisions taken in European capitals and in Brussels, are made on the basis of some political sentiments, anti-Russian, anti-Belarusian, anti-whomever. But in the end, these countries were not thinking about what it can lead to.

Frankly speaking, I thought the situation with Ukraine should have taught Europeans that following the American line on making these reckless decisions, as it happened in 2014 with the change of power in Kiev, leads to consequences. I hoped that it would teach them, in the situation with Belarus as well.

But what we see is that it's not the case. Poland and other European countries on the other side of the border, and our Baltic colleagues, should understand that if they do something so, it will lead to consequences, and nobody knows how it can backfire on them. Including on migration and what they say about human rights, about their attitude toward people. So, they have to see that there are two sides at this point, and it can backfire at their border, and closer than they thought. Understanding of the consequences and responsible politics to their neighbors, bearing in mind their interests, is fundamental.

It's also related to the energy crisis in Europe: We have a lot of discussions on climate change and how it's related to peace and security, what could be done to mitigate the effects of climate change. But here, as well, the decisions should be responsible. Other countries, like China and Russia, could be accused of being opportunistic here, but making decisions that might lead to an energy crisis is not something that they should have pursued, and a lot here was also dependent on the decision taken in the European Union about changing the sources of energy supply; and also, how they communicated and treated Russia in the past.

As you know, we are a very tolerant people and our President and our leadership have always underlined that cooperation and hearing each other, and taking into consideration mutual interests, is fundamental. That's how we can deal with it. But this is the bumpy road, that's clear.

## The Real New Deal, Ending Poverty

**Moderator:** We just got a question from Dr. Edward Lozansky, founder and President of the American University in Moscow. His question is: "Taking into account this most dangerous situation, is there any way to poll the American people about their attitude toward the current U.S. policy toward Russia?" I just wanted to put that in, Helga, because he had that as a specific matter he wanted to ask you.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I want to also comment on what was said previously, including by Mr. Rasmussen, and the question he asked. The conceptual problem—unfortunately, our Chinese speaker is not able to participate in the discussion, because of the 12-hour time difference, and it's too late—but she made, emphatically, the point, which is Chinese policy in general, to alleviate poverty as being one of the primary policy goals of China; and I think that goes also for Russia and some other countries. But that poverty alleviation is being regarded by certain people in the West—I mention Klaus Schwab—as that which destroys the planet, because it supposedly impacts the climate and therefore it must be stopped.

The EU Commission, [President Ursula] von der Leyen in particular, are pushing the Green Deal, which explicitly is based on the policy of shifting the trillions, going completely out of fossil fuels—but also related industries—which will lead to lowering the energy-flux density in the production process, and therefore will give room for many, many fewer people to survive.

That is a conflict which I think we cannot talk around, because, you know, [such people] regard poverty alleviation as [a target]—which I think human life is the most precious we have because of the creative potential of every single human being—and they regard the climate as so important, that they are willing to sacrifice industrial nations and entire continents. That is a conflict we cannot get around discussing.

We have panels tomorrow, with a lot of scientists from around the world who debate the IPCC's thesis about climate change, as the only relevant explanation for changes in climate. So, I think that that is a very important point.

The other point—what I tried to come to in my initial remarks—is that we are in a hyperinflationary breakdown crisis. I do not think that the argument by the Federal Reserve, that hyperinflation will be “temporary,” is very credible. I think we are in the collapse phase, where the prices of energy, food, and all kinds of other basic commodities will go up; this will worsen the crisis in the developing countries, the migration problem will get worse, and therefore, I think what is urgently needed is a contingency plan, how to address the whole situation.

I think the Belt and Road Initiative and the development plans which the Schiller Institute has worked out for decades, which we collected in the [book](#) *The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge*, are a blueprint for overcoming the underdevelopment in the developing countries. I don't think we will solve all of these problems if we do not change our attitude and say, overcoming the underdevelopment in large parts of the planet is a primary task which needs to be solved. It's morally, economically, and for many other reasons, an absolute must.

So, this is what I would like to put on the table. I would hope that countries like Russia and China and other major countries—the United States could go back to their tradition of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the real New Deal, not this fake new deal which they talk about now—should make a contingency plan! Because this crisis will come, and it will put itself on the agenda with a big bang. That is my conviction, and then the countries who can act will have plan for what to do!

**Moderator:** We have one final question from Dr. Nikolay Megits. You are from the Institute of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Is that correct?

**Nikolay Megits:** Yes, that's correct. And I'm also a

professor at the Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, teaching there in international business.

Thank you for a very interesting presentation! I learned quite a bit from each presenter, and I may pose a little bit different opinion and different view on what was discussed today. But first of all, I would like to admire Dr. Kortunov for his open-minded presentation. I felt from his presentation like he is open, despite that he represents a special government view on the situation in the Eastern European region, specifically where I focus in my research. But at least he posed some suggestions—I feel sad and agree with Dr. Kortunov that there is no short answer to this problem that is arising in Eastern Europe.

Between U.S. and China relationship as well: But unfortunately, there is no one solution that will fit all the problems, that provides one answer to all the problems, U.S.-Russia, Russia-China, or U.S.-China relationship in Africa. I strongly believe it should be a targeted approach to each crisis.

For example: Let's look at the situation what's happening just recently in Belarus. Yes, I agree with Helga on the situation on the border of Belarus and Poland is bad. It's sad. But let's look, what caused that issue? How did those thousands of immigrants end up there as refugees on the border? Who sponsors them? Where'd they get money to fly from Syria and end up on the border with Poland? There's no border between those two countries [Syria and Belarus]; they have to fly! They have to get a visa! Someone has to sponsor them. It costs a couple thousand dollars to get this. And now, when the situation is created, we're all sorry about what's happened. I don't want to blame anyone, I don't want to blame Russia, but sounds like, [with] all the facts that we have, Belarus is the one who created this problem, and now they have to deal with this issue by themselves.

Look at Russia-Ukraine relationship. Number one, we don't like sanctions, OK? Nobody likes sanctions, but sanctions are a fact. What is the proposal from the Russian side to end the sanctions? Is it going to be forever that Russia will say, “No, we don't care what America is doing”? Or does Russia have a strategic plan how to move one step toward resolution so that America can ease those sanctions? And where are those troops? Russian troops ended [up] on Ukrainian soil in Donetsk. OK? And, definitely, the situation in Crimea, the election and annexation of Crimea can be disputed, based on the history. However, the issue of Donbas, Donetsk region has to be resolved, and Russia has to play a more

significant role in resolving this issue! That would be probably the first step from East side towards the West.

### **A New Economic and Security System**

Again, I would like to see this, it's more not a question, but more like, what do you propose? What are you working on, to commend to your government, Russian government, in resolving this issue, on easing those relationships between Russia and United States? My question is: What is the Russian approach to easing those relationships between two countries?

**Kortunov:** Well, if it's a question to me, it's a big question. Speaking of the situation at the Polish-Belarusian border, I think one of the reasons why Lukashenko is not so cooperative, is because he doesn't want to remain ostracized. He wants to be accepted as the legitimate leader of the country. And this is difficult, because in Europe, especially, no one really wants to recognize Lukashenko as a rightful President of a sovereign country. I think that they will have to restart some kind of communication between Poland and Belarus. It is indispensable, though I also understand some people in Poland might benefit from the current crisis, because that distracts attention in Europe from many problems that Warsaw has with Brussels.

I don't want to get into details, but definitely, for the ruling coalition in Poland, this crisis is seen as an opportunity to consolidate its electorate and to strengthen its domestic positions.

Now, when we get to Russia and the United States, I agree with you that Ukraine remains one of the most important issues which divides the two countries. And I think the gap in perceptions in the United States and in Russia about what's going on in Ukraine, is not likely to disappear any time soon.

However, I will sound trivial, but we should think about small incremental steps in the direction of the implementation of Minsk agreements. I understand that it's difficult to imagine how these agreements can be implemented in full; I think it will probably not happen, but we [at the Russian International Affairs Council] give advice to our government on specific measures in the military field, in order to stabilize the situation; to reduce the risks of an inadvertent escalation; in order to make sure there is a process of gradual stabilization of the situation in East Ukraine; and that includes monitoring missions; diminishing and expanding the number of OECD observers; and many other things, which will

not produce a revolution, but which might make the situation a little bit more predictable and hopefully a little bit less explosive.

If you go beyond Ukraine, I think what we really need to do, strategically, is to come up with some common understanding of what kind of world order we would like to have, in five years down the road, ten years, twenty years down the road. I think that, until we come to this common understanding between major powers, including the United States, and China, and Russia, and the European Union—until we get to this point—it would be very difficult to work on specific issues.

That's why I'm a strong supporter of the idea that there should be a meeting, maybe in New York, maybe elsewhere, where they should discuss not only strategic stability, which is important itself, but they should discuss more general issues about how they would like to see the new global security eco-system; I would even say security and development eco-system, because if there is no understanding of the future, it's very difficult to deal with the problems of today.

I don't think we will have any kind of breakthrough any time soon, but I think that the instinct of self-preservation—something that Mrs. LaRouche referred to in the beginning of her presentation—the instinct of self-preservation which hopefully is not lost by our species, should push the leaders in the direction of the more open, and hopefully more strategy-focused dialogue.

Again, I'm sorry, I don't have enough time to get into detail, because your question, of course, implies a much more detailed, a much more specific answer. But at least, you know, we should start moving.

### **A Summit of UN 'P5' on Needs of Humanity**

**Evstigneeva:** Just a few words, taking note of the two books that our moderator mentioned about whom to blame and what to do, questions that are very important in this context.

Emphasizing that Russia should do something to make a step forward, is of course important, but we have to be sure that the other side, and in this case we're talking about Washington, is ready to make a step, because the Ukraine issue *is* a Ukraine issue, first of all. But, it's also an issue of Russian-American relations and the attitude of the relations between the West and Russia; and it's important that our ministers and also the President, when talking about Ukraine and any possible way forward, they always refer to how it all started.

In 2014, Russia was open for cooperation for agreements, not only to people who were in Ukraine at that time, but also partners—with [U.S. President] Barack Obama and Europeans—on how to get out of this Maidan situation in the best possible way. But it's well known that the coup happened the very day after these important, President-level conversations took place and we thought that [there was] agreement where some kind of an understanding was found.

Since then, the situation around Ukraine has been spiraling without control. And I must say, there probably were some miscalculations on our side. But every time we made a step forward—there was a tiny opportunity to find some solutions on particular issues—Kiev was making a step back, and two steps back. And the situation, it's very easy to follow the events about a document that was adopted by the Normandy Four, and of course, fundamental to the Minsk Agreement, but after that, the meetings of Normandy Four would agree on something, and it's not implemented. You can imagine that Kiev, in this sense, having also huge internal problems in terms of moving forward, but every time we see there's something that's holding them back from implementation of Minsk Agreements. We're not there yet.

Here, I come to what Andrey has just said: I think that at this point in time, it's very important that there is a frank discussion, a mutually, respectful discussion about how we see the international system now, and what could be the balance of powers, and a new approach to relations between Russia-U.S., Russia-Europe, and U.S.-Russia-China, etc.—the major powers of the contemporary system.

And here comes the idea of our President to hold a summit of the P5, the permanent members of the Security Council. I think the idea was first floated a couple of years ago, to start this conversation about the approaches to the world, to regional conflicts, to the strategic issues. It didn't happen since then. COVID contributed much in not holding it, in person, but it didn't happen even in VTC [Video Teleconference] form.

Please rest assured that it was not Russia blocking its own proposal. I still hope we're working for this meeting to happen. Hopefully, there is an understanding that such a conversation is very, very needed, now, for all of us, for our countries, but also for the world. Thank you.

**Speed:** Helga, do you have anything that you want to add at this point?

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I think that sometimes when two people or two groups of people have tensions, they cannot resolve that if they only speak to the issues which divide them. Sometimes the only way how you can make progress is that you address an issue which is of higher importance, and the importance of all of mankind. It has been my conviction for a long time, that the proposal by President Putin for a P5 meeting would be an absolute important step in this direction, because there must be a *Gremium*, which has a plan of how to address the issues which are exploding right now: the migration, the famine, the pandemic.

We have an existential crisis, and I think if the P5 nations (I'm frankly not so optimistic about the British component of that combination, but so be it); that if there would be a plan how to overcome these three problems: the famine, the COVID pandemic effects, and the migration which is the consequence of all of this. And there would be a plan for how to work together, to develop Africa, to develop Southwest Asia, and some other areas like Haiti, and maybe other countries as well.

If there would be a joint statement and a joint plan from the major powers, it would have the support of the whole world! I think that kind of leadership is really what everybody would be extremely excited about, because first of all, it's very urgent, and secondly, right now, the international situation reminds me more of a lawless situation. The UN Security Council is still there, but, ever since the Libya intervention, it was lied to, sort of.

In any case, sometimes, the way how to overcome tensions among major countries, and also people, is to define a goal which addresses the need of humanity as a whole. You would then have the support of all the countries in the world, except maybe, two or three. But I think such a plan, such a vision is urgently needed.

**Moderator:** I want to thank particularly Ambassador Anna Evstigneeva for being with us. We are going to close out this section, and Helga, Dr. Lozansky wanted to get an answer to his question, but I think you've got a series of Americans we're about to hear from, so, do you either want to answer that question now, or do want me to just continue, because we have a set of other presentations?

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I think we should continue, and I will reflect about the answer.