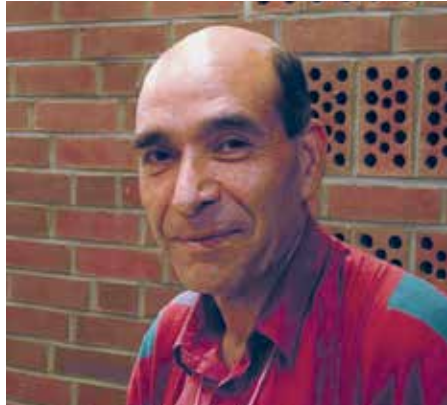


## IV. Interviews

INTERVIEW: DR. MATIN BARAKI

# No More Great Game Geopolitics: Afghanistan Can and Must Be Rebuilt!

*This is the edited transcript of the translation of the video interview conducted February 17, 2022, in German, with Dr. Matin Baraki by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder of the international Schiller Institutes. He addressed the Schiller Institute online [conference](#), “Stop the Murder of Afghanistan,” on January 17, 2022, and is affiliated with the Center for Conflict Research and the Center for Near and Middle East Studies, Institute for Political Science, Philipps University, Marburg, Germany.*



Dr. Matin Baraki

**Helga Zepp-LaRouche:** Dr. Baraki, I would like to welcome you and I am pleased that you want to answer our questions about the situation in Afghanistan. Last week [on Feb. 11], President Biden issued an Executive Order to facilitate the release part of the money that was previously frozen in the U.S. for Afghanistan [to humanitarian agencies]. I believe it was \$3.5 billion but the rest of the money will be withheld and eventually given to the families who were the victims of September 11th. What is your opinion on it?

**Dr. Matin Baraki:** The Afghan money, which the U.S. President wants to keep and distribute among the victims of September 11th, is a theft of Afghan assets. Afghanistan has nothing to do with either 9/11 or Osama bin Laden. Osama bin Laden was one of the United States’ closest allies. And eventually he fell out of favor. Neither the Afghans nor Afghanistan had anything to do with it. It is internationally unprecedented, what the U.S. President presumed to do.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** As the spokesman for the Septem-

ber 11th families, Terry Strada, said in a recent interview: Afghanistan never really had anything to do with September 11th. However, [some of] these families have a lawsuit against Saudi Arabia, which as far as I know has not yet been completed. That absolutely confirms what you are saying. All the Afghan organizations in exile are all very upset about it and are holding demonstrations everywhere. What do you think the demand on the U.S. government should be, regarding this money?

**Dr. Baraki:** The USA has arbitrarily locked up the Afghan assets; they must release them. That money is Afghan money, and must be transferred to the relevant institutions, which own the money, to the Afghan National Bank.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** The German head of UNICEF was in Kabul and two other cities last week. He gave a horrific report saying that in Afghanistan, at that moment, there were a million children under the age of five in a condition that actually would require them to be treated in the intensive care unit in a hospital. Now, of course, these intensive care units do not exist in Afghanistan. Can you say something about it?

**Dr. Baraki:** I have read the report by the man from UNICEF, and I also have direct knowledge. I have contact with my family in Afghanistan, and every day I watch two, three, four TV shows. I am informed of the conditions prevailing there. These U.S. punitive measures don’t affect the Taliban. The Taliban have their houses, their palaces, where they live, they have every-



WFP/Marco Di Lauro

*A mother and her child at a nutrition clinic run by the World Food Program and UNICEF at a camp for displaced people near Herat in western Afghanistan.*

thing they need, they have their Mercedes that they drive. These punitive measures affect these children, which UNICEF speaks of. If the Afghan state is not able, if this state, whether we like it or not, is not able to take care of the hospitals properly, then these children will die. This is a crime that the U.S. is committing against these children.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Yes, it does not only pertain to the USA, but NATO was in Afghanistan for 20 years. These forces obviously didn't build up the country, otherwise the collapse wouldn't have been so dramatic. When NATO left, just about everyone knowledgeable about Afghanistan knew that 80% of the budget came from international aid. And if you cut that off, you would automatically plunge the economy into a massive breakdown crisis. What's your take on this?

**Dr. Baraki:** The U.S. never intended to rebuild Afghanistan. On the contrary, they destroyed the infrastructure, they destroyed the Afghan economy. Because of this, Afghanistan is unable to keep its economy afloat without the United States. The U.S. funded the administration with \$4.2 billion annually, and the military with \$4.2 billion annually, in Afghanistan. Afghanistan was

made completely dependent on the United States, both militarily, and financially and economically. These are the consequences we are seeing in Afghanistan today. After the USA withdrew from Afghanistan, the NATO countries withdrew, everything collapsed. This is the result of a targeted, destructive policy, an economic policy, that the U.S. has been pursuing in Afghanistan for the last 20 years.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** There is now news that two regional conferences are to be held in March to deal with economic reconstruction and humanitarian aid, one to be held in Islamabad by the OIC, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the second to be held in Beijing with neighboring countries. What are the hopes for these conferences?

**Dr. Baraki:** This week there will also be a conference in the Gulf region with all the Gulf emirates. Both the Gulf emirates and the conference to be held in Islamabad and Beijing all say the same thing. You have to integrate this regime into the regional and international organizations and structures. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan gave a speech yesterday, a very emotional speech. I heard it live. He said we must finally be ready to internationally recognize the government in Kabul. And that is also my assessment and my suggestion. We have to recognize this government, whether we like it or not. We must try to integrate it into regional and international structures to help stabilize Afghanistan, both economically and politically.

If the current Emirate in Afghanistan were to fail, then the more radical Islamist forces of the Islamic State might take power in Afghanistan. And that is neither in the interest of the international community nor in the interest of our regional neighbors, and also not in the interest of Afghanistan. If the IS (Islamic State) were to take power in Afghanistan, then there might be another war, and the USA and its NATO allies would invade Afghanistan again. I believe that given the experiences of the last 20 years, with



CC/U.S. Institute for Peace

*Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan: The government in Kabul must be internationally recognized.*



U.S. Army

*“Destabilization is part of U.S. policy in the Middle East and near East. We saw that in Afghanistan.” Here, two Afghan border police speak with a U.S. soldier, June 13, 2012.*

what NATO has done, it would be completely irrational to act in this way.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** But that would be to a certain extent the continuation of the policy of the British Empire for Afghanistan, the so-called Great Game: to geopolitically exploit the neighboring nations and above all, of course, to destabilize or weaken Russia and China.

**Dr. Baraki:** Former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice published a paper demanding that we (meaning the USA) foment all sorts of small wars in this region, with the result that those involved would then buy weapons from the United States [to fight in those small regional wars], and would never find peace and thus would never become a threat to us. Destabilization is part of U.S. policy in the Middle and Near East region. We saw that in the case of Afghanistan; we’ve seen it in Iraq, Libya, Syria and so on. That is the U.S. strategy for this region. And since we are directly affected, we as people who come from this region, have to raise our voices and say: “Leave us alone at last. We will solve our problems ourselves—and return the money you have stolen from us. And we are still ready, even though you caused a lot of destruction here and killed 250,000 people. Nevertheless, we are ready to work with you at all levels, culturally, economically and politically.”

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Yes, this idea is a positive solu-

tion. Of course, that’s what the Schiller Institute is aiming for. We just had a joint event, a virtual [seminar](#) with the Russian International Affairs Council, and we began to promote this idea to connect the aid program to Afghanistan with the figure of Ibn Sina. Ibn Sina was one of the greatest physicians in the history of mankind. Since he developed the idea of quarantine for combating epidemics, it of course makes perfect sense to formulate an aid program for Afghanistan in his name at the time of the pandemic. What do you think of this idea?

**Dr. Baraki:** I think it’s extremely good because the Afghans are currently under threat of death. Over 50% of the Afghan population are under the immediate threat that they will not survive this winter. We urgently need humanitarian aid, but that is only one aspect. The other must be to make Afghanistan viable. And that’s where we have to focus on working together at all levels, and working together economically. Only in that way will this country become viable and be able to stand on its own two feet in the long term, providing work to its own people to provide for themselves and to keep the country’s health system running properly.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Ibn Sina was not only the great physician who wrote *The Canon of Medicine*, which was the standard work for medicine in Europe until the 18th or even 19th century, but he was also a great philosopher and had great influence on all of philosophy in the Islamic and the European world. Albertus Magnus, Nicholas of Cusa, and Dante all studied Ibn Sina. I think that this would be a reason for the Afghan people and the people of Afghanistan’s neighboring countries to proudly remember the great tradition of their own history and take hope for a better future from it.

**Dr. Baraki:** Yes, that’s right, but the U.S. came and destroyed Afghan history, Afghan culture, Afghan society and the Afghan people. They wanted people to practice the “American way of life” in Afghanistan, which contradicts Afghan culture. And it didn’t work, which is why they failed, not just militarily, but also economically and culturally. Ultimately, however, we must recognize this. And that’s the problem, unfortunately, the U.S. hasn’t learned adequate lessons from its defeats throughout its history. Whether it’s regarding Vietnam or now in Afghanistan.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Nevertheless, I am hopeful that we will manage to find many forces to save Afghani-

stan. I think this is an existential question for of all mankind, because if we don't help Afghanistan in such an emergency situation, then we won't be able to help ourselves either.

**Dr. Baraki:** That is exactly right. Above all, I don't understand the Western countries. The Federal Republic of Germany is a major regional power, a large European country with all the potential it has available. Yet it still clings to the USA. Afghanistan is a door opener for regional cooperation. Afghanistan has always been, and will continue to be, a door opener for Western countries in the region. That's why you have to try, as I said, to cooperate with Afghanistan and finally to free yourself from the shadow of the USA and to create your own strategy and policy in connection with Afghanistan.

The Afghan administration attaches particular importance to this, also in connection with the Federal Republic of Germany. I was very surprised that the spokesman for the Taliban was incredibly well informed about German-Afghan history and pointed out that there was

a tradition of cooperation between Afghanistan and the Federal Republic of Germany. And this is where we have to start again in order to reactivate this cooperation.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** But let's get back to the humanitarian crisis. David Beasley of the World Food Program has warned that a total of 23.4 million people are at risk. Can you tell me once again where people who also want to provide humanitarian help can go if they want to donate? Maybe you can tell what people should do.

**Dr. Baraki:** There are many different UN organizations that are active in Afghanistan, and I think it would be best if aid were channeled through these international organizations so that it gets to the people.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** OK, thank you very much for answering my questions and maybe we will be able to continue this soon. Hopefully, we can.

**Dr. Baraki:** And have a nice evening!

## 'The Fate of an Entire Generation of Afghans Is at Stake'

UN and partnering organizations are providing food, medical care, and winter supplies to Afghanistan, as shown here in units of blankets, heating stoves, tarps, and other such items from the UN High Commission for Refugees. On March 31, the UN, Germany, Qatar, and the UK will host a pledging event for more aid. Earlier in March, China will host a support meeting for Afghanistan, with its neighboring nations; and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation will meet in Islamabad on the situation. But even stepped-up humanitarian relief cannot make up for the necessity for Afghanistan's national institutions to have the resources to function, especially its banking sector and government budget, which were undercut by the U.S. and other Western nations' seizure of \$9 billion in Afghan national assets. "The fate of an entire



generation of Afghans is at stake," warned Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Representative for the UN Secretary General, in a March 15 UN press release. "A staggering 95% cent of the population is not eating enough food." Of these, 24 million people are at critical levels of hunger, including 5.3 million children, of whom thousands are now dying from malnourishment directly or through illness, while Western media cover up the death rate.