

### III. International

EU-CELAC and G20 Summits

# Nations of the Global South Assert Their Independence

by Daniel Platt

July 21—Faced with the imminent threat of nuclear war and a worsening economic catastrophe, the nations of the Global South are finding their voice and stepping forward on the world stage to challenge the Anglo-American “rules-based order.” Leading neo-cons are increasingly alarmed at this situation; a watershed moment occurred in May of this year when Fiona Hill, a British-American former official at the U.S. National Security Council, delivered a [lecture](#) at a conference in Tallinn, Estonia, in which she lamented that “in 2023, we hear a resounding no to U.S. domination and see a marked appetite for a world without a hegemon.”

The July 17-18 summit held in Brussels between heads of state and government of the 27 nations of the European Union (EU) and the 33 members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), bore out Hill’s fears. CELAC nations defied EU attempts to include a condemnation of Russia in the summit’s final document and forced through a watered-down statement that never once mentions Russia, expresses “deep concern” about the Ukraine conflict, and supports diplomatic efforts to achieve a “just and sustainable peace,” in line with the principles of the UN Charter. Brazilian President Lula da Silva rattled his hosts by denouncing the current system of “world governance” for being incapable of addressing the vital needs of developing nations.

Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche referred to the EU-CELAC summit in her weekly webcast of July 19, noting:

The Western countries were trying extremely hard to get the countries of the Global South to



EU-LAC Digital Alliance

*At the July 17-18 heads of state and government summit of the European Union (EU) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the CELAC nations defied EU attempts to include a condemnation of Russia in the summit’s final document. Brussels, Belgium.*

join in declarations condemning the “unprovoked war of aggression” by Russia. The countries of the Global South did not want to sign that, because they don’t believe it, so why would they sign something they see differently; because they have their own experience of colonialism, they see who gives them real development, in terms of railways, bridges, ports. It’s

not the West! The West had 500 years to overcome colonialism—or 600 years for that matter—but they didn't.

### The EU-CELAC Summit

After eight years of ignoring Ibero-America and the Caribbean, the European Union had hoped to make the EU-CELAC summit a lovefest, a rekindling of a dormant friendship. As European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen gushed in her opening speech, “Europe aspires to be the partner of choice for Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Von der Leyen didn't try to hide the European Union's intention to counter China's presence in the Caribbean and Ibero-America, posing the fraudulent Global Gateway Agenda as something akin to China's Belt and Road Initiative infrastructure development program. She offered €45 billion in investments through 2027 to CELAC institutions and governments, and promised that 135 projects were ready to be launched at any moment.

Green hydrogen, renewables, decarbonization, digitization of services, and extraction of “critical minerals” for local processing are part of this “development” agenda. In an obvious swipe at China, she smugly announced that “unlike other foreign investors,” the EU isn't just interested in the extraction of natural resources.

During the summit, individual CELAC nations signed agreements with EU governments in a variety of fields. But, as Associated Press reported on the morning of July 18, a “diplomatic fracas” erupted as CELAC leaders refused to accept EU-proposed wording in a final statement that condemned Russia's “aggression” in Ukraine. Amidst growing tensions, ambassadors from both blocs worked overnight Monday into Tuesday morning to come up with a bland-enough formulation that could finally be accepted by everyone. Only Nicaragua refused to sign onto the final document.

There is a reason why CELAC leaders rejected



European Commission  
*Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission: “Europe aspires to be the partner of choice for Latin America, and the Caribbean.”*

the EU's bald attempt to invite Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to the summit. In his opening speech, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva pointed out that the current model of global governance doesn't work.

[It] “perpetuates asymmetries, increases instability, and reduces opportunities for developing countries. [The war in Ukraine] is one more confirmation that the UN Security Council doesn't respond to the current challenges for peace and security. Its own members don't respect the UN Charter.

[Brazil] supports the initiatives promoted by different countries and regions in favor of an immediate cessation of hostilities and a negotiated peace. [But,] resorting to sanctions and blockades without the backing of international law serves only to punish the most vulnerable populations. We need peace to overcome the great challenges before us and this implies profound systemic changes. Dividing the world into antagonistic blocs is irrational. It is urgent to reform global governance....

Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and current rotating chair of CELAC, warned in his speech:

[The Ukraine war] continues to consume abundant resources and provokes the unnecessary shedding of blood, and the world economy also bleeds unnecessarily, as the war and combat provoke enormous pain and additional suffering to the poor in far off lands through the increase in the prices of food, oil and loans. Let there be constructive peace conversations, not unproductive posturing in search of imperial hegemony or domination.

Gonsalves also pointed out that there are many

more conflicts beyond Ukraine that are devastating their populations—Haiti, Palestine-Israel, different parts of Africa, the Mideast and Asia. They also face immediate challenges, he said, and questioned the “disproportionate” attention paid to Ukraine, although he said that achieving peace there is indeed urgent. EU leaders were disgruntled when Gonsalves also said he hoped the summit would discuss “the historical legacies of native genocide and enslavement of African bodies” and propose “something towards reparative justice.” Reparations for the nations whose populations were victimized by the African slave trade is absolutely justified, he said.

Honduran President Xiomara Castro, who will be the next rotating chair of CELAC beginning in January of 2024, warned in her speech:

[The war in Ukraine] must come to an end. The European Union and CELAC are obliged to find a way to obtain peace. We cannot live with the nightmare that any day hell may be unleashed on us all. Billions of dollars in weapons are sent to war, yet we aren’t capable of building a comprehensive development for humanity.

Castro called on the summit to approve a resolution demanding an end to the 60-year-old blockade of Cuba:

We have to end the piracy and confiscation of goods, because we’re all vulnerable to one day finding out that our reserves have been frozen in foreign banks.

### **CELAC Nations Refuse to Condemn Russia**

While corporate media blamed Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua for the disagreement over the final communiqué’s wording, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, and other governments have increasingly made their positions clear on the issue of Ukraine and sanctions and have resisted arm-twisting by Washington and its NATO allies. The Ukrainian government, and President Zelenskyy himself, have been pressuring CELAC governments to speak out against Russia, with little success. And, while European leaders tried to secure an invitation for President Zelenskyy to the summit, most Ibero-American and Caribbean leaders firmly rejected this.

It is instructive that in the summit’s [final Decla-](#)



European External Action Service (EEAS)

*Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and current rotating chair of CELAC: “Let there be constructive peace conversations, not unproductive posturing in search of imperial hegemony or domination.”*

[ration](#) Russia’s name does not appear once. In Point No. 15, “deep concern” is expressed about the war in Ukraine, and mention is made only of the two UN General Assembly resolutions, the first one from March 2, 2022, which demanded that Russia end its military operation in Ukraine, and the second one from Feb. 23, 2023, which called for an end to the war in Ukraine and immediate withdrawal of Russian troops. Only the resolution numbers and dates are mentioned, not their wording. The Declaration then asserts, “[W]e support all diplomatic efforts aimed at a just and sustainable peace in line with the UN Charter,” mentioning respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.

*Sputnik International*, on July 19, cited an unnamed U.S. [news site](#), (confirmed to be *Bloomberg*) and one UK paper, which complained about the difficulty in getting CELAC countries—but really the nations of the Global South—to line up against Russia.

That same [issue](#) of *Sputnik* quoted *Bloomberg*’s report:

“Insiders also claimed that EU officials were disappointed over Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s unwillingness to accept any strong language on Russia when it comes to its special operation in Ukraine,” and that “the dispute underscored the wider challenge that the EU

and its Group of Seven (G7) partners face in getting Latin American countries onside, when the BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—are gaining in influence.”

An earlier July 6 *Sputnik* article had reported that when drafts of the final communiqué were being debated by both blocs weeks before the summit, the drafts sent by the EU to CELAC contained several paragraphs on the conflict in Ukraine, but the drafts sent back to Brussels by the 33 CELAC governments “deleted everything about Ukraine,” one EU diplomat reported. The CELAC draft also called for reparations for victims of the African slave trade.

Citing anonymous sources, *Bloomberg* reported July 6 that for countries like Poland, the Czech Republic and Baltic states, omitting any mention of Ukraine “would be a red line for Europe.” These same anonymous sources complained:

[Dealing with CELAC is terribly difficult] because CELAC countries lack a permanent organizational structure, and the presidency is currently held by the small Caribbean island of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, which represents the position of countries with more radical views such as Cuba.

Those “colonials” are so uppity!

### **Colonialism Continues To Be a Bone of Contention**

Dr. Gonsalves’ call for reparations clearly hit a nerve: Point No. 10 of the final Declaration states:

We acknowledge and profoundly regret the



Agencia Brasil

*Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil: Unwilling to accept any strong language against Russia’s Special Military Operation in Ukraine.*

untold suffering inflicted on millions of men, women, and children as a result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. [Slavery and the slave trade] ... were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity ... and that slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity.

There is at least an implicit message regarding the reparations Dr. Gonsalves brought up, although not explicitly mentioned.

Regarding the long-festering problem of British occupation of Argentina’s Malvinas Islands, Point No. 13 says that “regarding the issue of sovereignty over the Islas Malvinas/Falkland Islands” the EU “took note” of “CELAC’s historical position based on the importance of dialogue and respect for international law in the peaceful solution of disputes.” The fact that the document even mentioned the “Malvinas Islands”—the correct historical name for the islands, before the British seized them illegally in 1833 and renamed them—provoked howls of hysteria from London which demanded that the EU, of which the UK is no longer a member, “clarify” its position and retract all mention of the dreaded “Malvinas.”

*Politico’s* coverage of the summit mentions that the EU has its eye on the mineral resources of South America, “banking on the resource-rich region to power the wind turbines and electric vehicles it needs to meet its climate targets. Brazil is the largest exporter of strategic raw materials to the EU by volume, while the ‘lithium triangle’ spanning



teleSUR

*Alberto Fernández, President of Argentina: “This was the first time we had the opportunity to discuss a mechanism that would take us away from the extractivism in Latin America ... that has prevented us from industrializing.”*

Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia hosts about half of the world’s lithium reserves.” And leaders of the continent are not oblivious to this fact.

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This was the first time that we had the opportunity to discuss in such clear terms a mechanism that would take us away from extractivism in Latin America, this whole idea that Latin America is just a producer of raw materials, and that has always prevented us from industrializing.... It took five centuries, but we managed it—I'm saying that half in jest, but we have at last succeeded.

### The G20 Finance Ministers Also Say 'No'

Similarly, the G20 Finance Ministers' meeting, held over the same two day period in Gandhinigar, India, ended without a joint communiqué. Again, the Western finance ministers were pushing for a statement on Ukraine that targeted Russia, and not everyone was willing to accept that, probably not even the host, India. Therefore, the Indian hosts simply issued a communiqué on their own.

The war in Ukraine was also controversial for financial reasons. U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen was pushing for more aid to Ukraine, claiming that the "peace through escalation" approach advocated by the Zelenskyy regime will do the most to revive the economy. Developing countries correctly argue, as CELAC governments did in Brussels, that money going to Ukraine is money that is not going to their development needs, or to helping them pay off their debts.

Yellen is also pushing "friend-shoring" with regard to supply-chain restructuring. "Friend-shoring" is one of the new generation of neocon neologisms that are designed to make more palatable the traditional geopolitical strategy of dividing the world into antagonistic blocs; if a nation agrees to join the NATO-oriented bloc and oppose the designated enemies such as China and Russia, that nation will be regarded as a "friend" to be offered preferential trade arrangements. Yellen said she sees India as an indispensable partner in the U.S.'s "friend-shoring strategy," adding that the U.S. would continue to cut off Russia's access to the military equipment and technologies that it needs to wage war against Ukraine.



CC/Office of Sen. Mark Warner

*Janet Yellen, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, pushed debt restructuring that rewards energy austerity, ostensibly to combat climate change.*

### The Question of Debt

Speaking for the City of London, *Reuters* complained that "debt restructuring talks made little progress during the third finance meeting of the G20 countries in India as the bloc was unable to overcome key differences." Treasury Secretary Yellen did her best to court India, meeting with the Indian Finance Minister before the general meeting. She is pushing debt restructuring of a sort that rewards debtor nations for adopting energy austerity policies desired by the West, ostensibly to combat climate-change, as opposed to policies designed for "poverty reduction."

As Lyndon LaRouche emphasized throughout his life, the debt of the Global South can never be repaid within the constraints of a commitment by the Anglophile-dominated financial institutions to a continued policy of colonialism, in the form of a policy which suppresses actual development in order to pursue what Argentine President Fernández called "extractivism." In 1975, LaRouche issued a groundbreaking [proposal](#) for an International Development Bank, in which he argued that permitting the development of the Global South would be enormously beneficial to the already-industrialized nations in terms of revitalized trade, *even if the debt were never repaid*:

It is our view that most of the development credit never need be repaid. However, for those who wish to be sticky about the point, we assure them that the developing sector would have little problem "repaying" after 10 to 15 years of serious development.

Lyndon and Helga LaRouche have also insisted that the present, acute war danger is rooted in the ongoing bankruptcy collapse of the dollar-denominated financial system, and that only a global renaissance of development, of the sort envisioned by LaRouche in 1975, can provide the antidote.

*Cynthia Rush and William Jones contributed to this article.*