

Her Excellency Naledi Pandor

How Should the South Respond?

Dec. 8—The following is an edited transcript of Her Excellency Naledi Pandor's presentation to Panel 1 of the Dec.7-8 Schiller Institute conference, "In the Spirit of Schiller and Beethoven: All Men, Become Brethren!" Dr. Pandor has held several cabinet posts in the Republic of South Africa, including in the fields of education, and science and technology. While Minister of Science and Technology, she was [inter-viewed](#) by EIR in Cape Town for our Nov. 4, 2011 issue. Most recently she was the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, 2019-2024. She had been scheduled to speak on the first panel of the conference but, because of schedule conflicts, she spoke on Panel Three, "The Science Drivers of Physical Economy Today." The panel was moderated by Jason Ross, science advisor to the Schiller Institute. The full video of that panel is available [here](#).

At the close of her presentation, we have included Dr. Pandor's interchange with Helga Zepp-LaRouche and Jacques Cheminade, and her response to a question from a French viewer.

Subheads have been added.

Thank you very much to the Schiller Institute and particularly Dr. Helga Zepp-LaRouche for inviting me to be part of this important conference. I should have spoken yesterday on the global issues panel, and I will try to reflect on some of the remarks of Mr. Cheminade today.

Our world today is experiencing a most profound and disruptive level of toxic politics, dominated by aggressive self-interest and neglect of the value of global cooperation. Multilateral bodies such as the United Nations have not been able to respond decisively. And the most powerful organ of the United Nations, the Security Council, is held hostage by great power competition and uneven use of the veto. Many commentators have referred to the past five years as a most toxic geo-



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H.E. Naledi Pandor

political environment, testing international relations and fraying long-established bonds that helped to avoid a world war for more than five decades. The period is also viewed by some as an inflection point, a period that offers up room for a new collective of progressive ideas that will seek to put people rather than interests first.

The South Must Step Up

There is hope that the South will step up. The concept of "South" is a contested one, as the region does

not have a coherent connected grouping of nations with a shared hegemony such as exists with nations of the North. So, we are still grappling with the meaning and unity of the South. There are, however, promising signs of the emergence of new formations and policy perspectives. For example, South Africa has shown a positive commitment to international law and to the United Nations system, through its approach to the International Court of Justice in the effort to end the ongoing war against Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian Territories. South Africa, in doing this, placed human rights and concern for those who suffer harm at the forefront of its foreign policy actions.

This was reminiscent of former President Nelson Mandela, who played a key role in several peace initiatives on the continent of Africa, and who shaped South Africa's foreign policy as one that is based on the concern for others, on the promotion of human rights, and on international solidarity. So, "I care for you, because you care for me." This relates to a very ancient African philosophy of *Ubuntu*, which means "I am human because you recognize in action my humanity."

A second positive development is the increased maturing of the BRICS forum into an expanded body that seeks a more inclusive approach in global politics and international partnerships. BRICS has emerged as a positive forum in that it seeks to discuss new ideas on key issues such as science, innovation, trade, inter-

national financing, and the development of the South. The establishment of the BRICS New Development Bank and its early success give further hope for the creation of new institutions and new practices.

One of the realities, while we certainly agree with Mr. Cheminade on the critical importance of science and innovation, is that grant funding to Africa rarely includes funding for research, funding for innovation capacity, funding for advancing science on the African continent.

We also believe that devoted attention to United Nations reform and democratization of the Security Council is another positive opportunity that we should use to reshape world relations. The General Assembly meeting of last September committed to advancing reform processes, and to making the Security Council more effective, more efficient, more democratic, and more representative.

Lastly, I believe the task of the next five decades is certainly the adoption of workable strategies for the fundamental transformation of Africa. Our continent has to address the difficult challenges of inequality, poverty, and joblessness. Africa has a significant, impatient youth population, eager to achieve a prosperous, democratic, empowering Africa. The global community should therefore work closely with our African Union to advance implementation of our African blueprint for development, Agenda 2063. In this blueprint, we set out the critical areas of development, including water, renewable energy resources, infrastructure, and logistics for intra-African trade, agriculture, and food security. And we require that our partners should provide support to the continent to enhance capacity for implementation of this development agenda. We don't need new plans; we need to make sure that existing plans are effective and that they work to the good of Africa, to the good of all humanity in the South.

We believe that the South can be a source of progress, of peace and security. Countries of the South should embrace democracy, the practice of human rights, and respect for international law as key guarantees of the means to end the toxicity of power competition that has truly eroded human relations. In fact, the erosion of respect for human rights, of respect for international law, poses a very serious threat to the practice of science, because undemocratic governments hate the honesty of scientific research, hate the opportunity of innovation. And thus, it is incumbent on all of us to

adopt the ideas set out in the Schiller Institute development framework to really ensure that all the aspects of human endeavor which advance human progress are embraced by governments in the South as well as governments in the North.

We should encourage a new human relation across the world; one that is devoted to empowering all human beings and ensuring that we develop a more prosperous, a more engaged, a more skilled humanity able to address the fundamental problems that confront all of us. Because alongside the problems, we have a human capacity—an ingenuity—of problem resolution; and we need to unite in drawing that capacity together and ensuring that we use international relations to resolve the problems of the world.

I look forward to the deliberations on our contribution. Thank you very much.

Jason Ross: Thank you, Naledi Pandor. We will now move on to a brief discussion period including Dr. Pandor, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, and Jacques Cheminade. I'd like to ask Helga, for starters, if you have anything that you'd like to bring up in response to what you've heard this morning or this afternoon.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Yes, I want to express to you, Your Excellency Dr. Pandor, my deepest happiness that you give us the honor of joining our conference, because we have been following what you have been doing, and noticed that the South African government has taken over the moral leadership for the world, which the West in this period seems to have abandoned. So, you also already in your remarks answered what I was planning to ask you.

Nuclear War To Preserve Hegemony

But let me restate my question to you. Yesterday, we discussed the strategic situation, which several people, including Scott Ritter, myself, and others characterized as the most dangerous period in all of history, even more dangerous than the Cuban Missile Crisis, for the very fact that we seem to be heading like almost a train ignoring stop signs towards a nuclear catastrophe.

This was underlined by a remark made by Rear Admiral Thomas Buchanan at the CSIS meeting on the 20th of November just now. He stated that in order to keep U.S. hegemony, they regarded it as legitimate to use nuclear weapons. However, he said they should

keep a certain amount of them [in reserve] in order to be able to fight off future adversaries. This implies the ridiculous idea that you can win a regional or limited nuclear war and then keep on going afterwards, which is obviously not the case. Because, as Ted Postol and others have convincingly argued, if you come to a nuclear war, the likelihood that it is ending all life on the planet is very high, if not certain. So, the question therefore is, what can we do to get off this incredibly dangerous track?

I have been thinking about this for a very long time, and if you look at the relationship between the United States and China, NATO and Russia, it seems to be almost hopeless. The United States' Kurt Campbell, who is the Undersecretary of State, recently stated that China represents the largest threat in the history of the United States ever. In Germany for example, Defense Minister Pistorius talks about making Germany "war ready." Europe is in a process of militarization.

How To Resolve the Migrant Crisis

I think the only hope to avoid certain catastrophe, which would mean the end of the human species, is to persuade the Western nations to stop the confrontation with the Global South. The Global South is already, according to Cambridge statistics, 85% of the human population; that's the Global Majority by far. And could we do something to persuade the Europeans and even the United States to cooperate with the BRICS, for example, in the development of Africa, in the development of Latin America and Asia, in order to industrialize, to help the Southern Hemisphere to finally overcome the remnants of colonialism, which would also be in the interest of the West because it would be the only human way to solve the migrant crisis.

So I want to ask you, can we not enter some kind of a dialogue to put this on the agenda? To move from confrontation to cooperation in such a strategic impact way that it really solves this problem? That would be my question to you.

No Substitute for Reason, Creativity

Naledi Pandor: Well, thank you very much, a very complex question. The first response would be, I think, that what we need are mature, rational leaders, scientists such as Mr. Cheminade was referring to. If you don't have that level of logic and rational thought, you then really resort to the illogic that you can hold sway

at all times. And I think this is an extremely wrong approach; it excludes so much of the world from being part of advancing the world in a positive fashion to a future in which all of us are prosperous, all of us feel that the world makes a difference, and actually recognizes our needs and our capabilities. So, what we need are mature leaders who can have a very complex discussion about how the most powerful economies—which are the United States of America, China, and then Europe to some degree—can relate to each other in a positive fashion. And I'm sure that with proper discussion, with an openness toward arriving at a positive outcome, they would be able to resolve the current tensions among themselves.

I think the notion of preparing for war is a very poor example of leadership. What we should be preparing for is using our innate abilities in order to advance the world. We're at a point where many countries hold very worrying and lethal weapons. I come from South Africa, which is a country that agreed to destroy the nuclear weapons that it had had the opportunity to build in the *apartheid* era. One of the first decisions of the new government headed by Nelson Mandela was that we would be against the holding of nuclear weapons. And that while we have nuclear scientific capability, it would be put to peaceful purposes and not be directed to weaponizing South Africa against any country in Africa or any part of the world.

So, I believe that what we need is fresh thinking. We need a civil society, and particularly intellectual organizations, to be more visible and vocal in presenting alternative perspectives on how we should view the world, and setting out from research clear examples of what we can anticipate should we go the route of a negative confrontation between the most powerful in the world. This will harm all of us. If the great powers are able to reach a rapprochement, it will allow for enhanced development, particularly of the poorest countries of the South. It will set the world on a very new trajectory and would offer an opportunity for real change and independence that we've not had since the beginnings of the end of imperialism and colonialism on the African continent.

So, this environment, while toxic, offers a new opportunity to engage in a very different way through international relations in building new partnerships among all the various regions of the world. But it is the most powerful who must make the decision to do

something positive. Otherwise, they are going to generate a reaction which will lead to the destruction of the world and increased world instability as we are seeing from week to week in different parts of the world today.

Ross: Thank you very much. I'd like to ask Jacques Cheminade, is there anything you would like to bring up with our distinguished guest?

Can We Mobilize the Diasporas?

Jacques Cheminade: Your Excellency, I want to ask you a question that responds both to what we are fighting for, and what Helga and you have said. Don't you think that the mobilization of the diasporas of the Global South inside the countries of Europe and the United States can be a very good way to educate our own nations with these people who, as we meet them in the streets of Paris and we meet them in other countries, are more advanced in political awareness, in knowing what's happening in the world, are more advanced than our own people? So, don't you think that with the mobilization through the diaspora we can organize something together?

Pandor: I certainly think that that's a possibility, because to achieve the détente through the Schiller Institute, you do need us as humanity to embrace the idea that we should be working more closely together. It also requires us to embrace diversity, and this is something that democratic South Africa has done. The recognition of unity and diversity is a core part of the Constitution of South Africa. Because we realized that racism, prejudice, and hatred of others due to orientation or culture or religion is actually a negative for a society. What we need to do to build a nation that could work together is to embrace the notion of unity in diversity.

So, I think certainly working more closely with the diaspora, making those who are strangers in our countries feel welcome, tapping into their expertise and their understanding of the world from which they come. But also, having them contribute to development in *their* countries, developing models for example such as for South Africa. Many of our trained medical professionals work in Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. There's no contractual provision that they could spend part of their time working in our country—South Africa—or another part of Africa. So, what we've done

as countries of the North is, we have denuded Africa of critical skills and haven't worked to develop a more inclusive arrangement that would ensure a sharing of these skills.

So, really, we need a new ethos, a new approach to development, a new approach to international relations, a new approach to interaction and cooperation among ourselves as citizens of the world. We also have to embrace the notion of a dependency between all of us—that wherever I come from, whatever my race, whatever my gender, if we work together, it can be to the good of all. Isolation or exclusion doesn't help us to create a better world.

Ross: Hear, hear! I'd like to ask Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche, is there anything else that you would like to add at this point before we move on with our panel?

Can the South Do More?

Zepp-LaRouche: No, Dr. Pandor, you have given us a lot of food for thought and follow-up. I'm looking forward to strengthening that kind of collaboration, because I think that I would only emphasize the role of the Global South a little bit more, because in Bandung at the first conference of Africa, Asia, where Zhou Enlai and Nehru and Sukarno agreed on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, they also noted that if it ever comes to a nuclear war, the South will be affected as much as the North. It may be a couple of weeks later, but eventually, they will die as well. I think that fact gives the Global South right now the moral integrity and right to speak out more strongly. Because I think their voice is much more reasonable than what we have seen in the West in the recent period, which I think is undergoing a tremendous cultural crisis.

Therefore, I would encourage you and other leaders from the Global South to take an even stronger role in addressing the situation. That's my thought.

Don't Underrate North-South Collaboration

Pandor: Thank you very much for that, Dr. Helga. I just wish to complete by reminding all those in the North that they made an incredible contribution to us achieving our freedom in South Africa. Because they all agreed that they would become part of the international solidarity campaign against *apartheid*. It was the international push alongside our own national struggle

that really made such a major difference to us achieving freedom. I think we need to revive international solidarity for all people who suffer harm and oppression today. The world showed, in the instance of *apartheid*, that we could work together; that the United Nations could be drawn together, could establish a committee against *apartheid* that would ensure that the name of Nelson Mandela was kept alive; that *apartheid* would be declared a crime against humanity.

So, what I think we should be doing now is saying to the world, “When we work together on positive objectives, there is a great deal that we can achieve, and we can even defeat evils such as *apartheid*.”

China’s Role in Africa

Ross: We have a written question that comes from France: “Your Excellency Naledi Pandor, here in France, many people are influenced by media bashing against China. So, they see negatively the role of China toward cooperation in China and Africa. They say that China is doing the same imperialism that Western

countries did in the past. They seem to forget how many enslaved people were victims of colonialism, and they are blind towards the Western neo-colonialism still occurring today. Could you please give us your point of view on this China-Africa cooperation? And if you see some hope coming from Western countries to recognize their potential role to expand a wider cooperation towards a positive direction?”

Pandor: Well, firstly it’s absolutely untrue that China has a colonial relationship with the African continent. In fact, through the partnership with China, many African countries have achieved a level of infrastructure development that they would not have achieved in the past 15 years, had it not been for resources provided from financial lenders in China.

What we have seen though more recently is rather than state-owned companies being the provider of grant or loan funding to African countries, it has become much more the private sector of China taking up that role. So, there have been concerns about increased indebtedness of African countries, but I think it’s an absolute creative imagination that suggests a similar relationship to the colonial experience. The roads that we see in several African countries, the development of railways, the building of bridges, the enhancement of port infrastructure are very different from the trade character of African countries under colonialism.

In the context of the G20, there is now much closer discussion about how the more developed countries, which include China as a G20 member, could collaborate more effectively in enhancing support to African countries. I think that’s a very positive development. Nonetheless, China remains a significant trading partner for the African continent, both in terms of exports from Africa, which are largely commodities, but also imports from China into Africa.

The change to the private sector has seen the establishment of local business plants in the African continent, so adding some productive capacity, which has for many decades been a desire of Africa. So, I think it remains a positive relationship. The issue of funding and particularly the growth in private sector debt is an area that many countries’ governments are now having to pay close attention to. But it is very different from the underdevelopment that we saw in the imperial and colonial periods.



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