

Live Webcast

2025: Nuclear Doom or New Paradigm, with Ray McGovern and Helga Zepp-LaRouche

The following article includes extended excerpts from the Jan. 1, 2025 Schiller Institute dialogue featuring Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute, and Ray McGovern, retired CIA analyst and co-founder of the Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity. The [webcast](#) was aired in both German and English. Helga Zepp-LaRouche's German language presentation was provided in English by simultaneous interpretation. This edited transcript included the English as aired. Ray McGovern spoke mostly in English. Embedded links and subheads have been added.



Schiller Institute
Helga Zepp-LaRouche

In 2003, he co-founded an organization called Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, or VIPS. It's a very rare trait of character these days to be willing to expose false information, as he did, for example, with the lies used to justify the war in Iraq in 2003.

He has bachelor's and master's degrees in Russian language and literature, theology, philosophy, and the Classics. He worked as an extraordinary professor at the University of Virginia; and at Fordham University he also taught Russian—and has many academic credentials.

In October 2024, he [spoke](#) at the University of Southern California about Ukraine.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Welcome, everyone, to January 1, 2025—probably a very fateful year. I thought it would be best to have a very extraordinary American on the show to discuss the world situation: Ray McGovern. He is very well known to many people in Germany and Europe. I would like to mention a few elements of his [biography](#):

In the beginning of the 1960s, Ray was an infantry officer in the Army of the United States. After that, he served for 27 years as a CIA analyst in the U.S. presidential administrations from John F. Kennedy to George H.W. Bush. His task was to give his intelligence estimate to government officials and give the daily briefing to the President. From 1980 to 1985, he provided his analysis to the five most high-ranking security advisors of President Ronald Reagan.



Schiller Institute
Ray McGovern

A Special Format for Today

The citizens of Germany—most of them at least—are greatly concerned about the current state of Germany. The economy is in a free-fall; it seems that what generations after the Second World War have built up is now being torn down in a breathtaking way. We have an acute war danger about which many experts are saying they regard as the most dangerous period—even more dangerous than the Cuban Missile Crisis or the mid-range missile crisis of the 1980s. But today, we do not have hundreds of thousands of people in the street demonstrating against the danger

of World War III. We have a political class which has done nothing to remedy these terrible developments or to avert them or to overcome them.

Now, a lot of people are thinking about, and have become aware—and there’s a growing number of podcasts and video presentations—a lot of people are realizing that in Germany there are difficulties in discussing these sorts of facts, because if you start to do this, then you are automatically in danger that you are seen as a victim of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s propaganda, or even worse, a Putin agent. In the worst case, you have to face repression. I can really say—and I can make a comparison—that from all the societies that are known to me—that is from the United States to some in Asia, some in Europe—the state of affairs of Germany is now the worst. Nowhere else do people have a

greater feeling that they have no sovereignty, that their fate is being directed by powers against which they cannot do anything. That has everything to do with the fact that Germany is controlled very openly by NATO and the European Union. And in the German government, very openly, some institutions are being created to fight against so-called “disinformation” in order to keep control over the “narrative.”

On my own background, many years ago, I was a journalist, and I took this occupation because I was already working for the newspaper of my school. And I thought it was a basic fundamental human right to get factual information. I think 100% that if we have state citizens, citizens who are actually enlightened by fact, only then can democracy work. Democracy cannot work if that is not the case. We are getting very close to a dictatorship, and this cannot be the last word.

Now, if you think about the strategic situation, the belief held by most people, a belief that is almost sacred, is that: “With the war in Ukraine, we are dealing with an unprovoked war against international law.” I think that this belief, as it is formulated in this sentence, is completely wrong. However, this sentence has such a power, that even rational people think they have to—just because the climate is such in Germany—they have to repeat the sentence so that people who are influenced by the mainstream media will actually listen



Photo: Bundesbildstelle

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, seated center, discussing German unification with German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, left, and Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Russia, July 15, 1990, amidst other political figures.

to them. But we are very close to the edge of World War III, and this way of dealing with facts and information is preventing us from finding a solution.

We are the publishers of a news service, and we had an active concept of how to intervene at the end of the Cold War; we were not passive observers, but we tried to change the historical process.

Ray, I would like to ask you to tell people, what was the mood and the circumstances at the end of the Cold War from the standpoint of the United States?

Ray McGovern: Let’s go back to February 10, 1990, when James Baker, our Secretary of State, was in Moscow on behalf of George H.W. Bush, President at the time. He offered a deal to Soviet President Gorbachev and to Shevardnadze, the Foreign Minister, and he said, “How would this be? We’d like to have a reunited Germany.” Now, I know enough about history to know how Russians look at the prospect of a reunited Germany, after losing 27 million people in World War II. So, I imagine that Gorbachev swallowed hard and said, “What’s the quo for this quid?” And Baker said, “Well, we will promise never to move NATO one inch, not one inch—a couple of centimeters—East,” of what was then the East German border. Suffice it to say, the Russians acquiesced in that, only to see that violated time and time again to the degree that NATO expanded

by 100%. It had 12 members at the time; it became double that, and even more.

So, what am I saying here? That was viewed by the Russians as a betrayal. As a matter of fact, I had occasion about ten years ago in Moscow to ask one of Gorbachev's key advisors at the time, Kuvaldin, a professor, Viktor Borisovich. I said, "Mr. Kuvaldin, why is it that you did not get that agreement written down, as important as it was?" He looked at me and said, "I'll give you two reasons. The usual reasons: Germany hadn't agreed to it yet, and the Warsaw Pact still existed. But the real reason, Mr. McGovern, is," and he looked me straight in the eye, and he said, "we trusted you."

Zepp-LaRouche: It would be good if you could repeat for the listeners why this NATO expansion from the viewpoint of the Russians was unacceptable, because the military causes and reasons are never printed in the media or discussed in the newspapers. If you are listening to the daily news, you hear a lot of things about the Ukrainian speakers. If you listen to the Deutschlandfunk news radio, it will always be primarily the Ukrainian viewpoint. You never hear the arguments of the Russians. I think it would be very important to explain why we are in a situation that is riskier than the Cuban Missile Crisis. You were at that time already active. Maybe you can say something about the parallel to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

McGovern: Sure. Let me start with a little vignette. It will not take very long. I was in Germany about 10 years ago. I saw a button; you know, the button you put on your suit there. I'll show it here if you can see it. It says, "Putin *Versteher*." I looked at that button, and I said, "Oh, *gottes willen!* Finally, somebody in Germany is willing to try to *verstehen* Putin." For English people, that's to understand. I said, isn't that a good thing? "Let me have one of those buttons," I said to my friend, "I'm going to put it on my lapel here." And he said, "Don't do that! For God's sake, don't do that! That's a pejorative. If you're a "Putin *versteher*," you're beyond the pale here. We can't deal with you, because we don't want to understand Putin, we just want to make sure he's weakened and," well, you know the rest of it. So, that's the battle here. The battle is that people don't know these things, because the German populace is kept in the dark. I daresay, that as bad as the mainstream media is in the United States, it's worse in England, and

it's just about as bad as England in Germany.

Let me give you an example. I'm in Berlin about eight years ago, and Operation Anaconda, the biggest military exercise since World War II is about to start with NATO members against the borders of Russia. Happily, I had an interview with Wolfgang Hellmich, head of the Armed Forces Committee of the Bundestag, that was arranged by some friends of mine. He was very kind in seeing me for an hour. It happened the day that Anaconda began, and so I said, "Herr Hellmich, what's going on here? My God!" He said, "Germany is not part of this." I said, "Herr Hellmich, there are German troops participating." He said, "Yes, but..." Well, it was clear that he, head of the Armed Forces Committee of the Bundestag, wasn't with this. He was SPD [Social Democratic Party], but he couldn't say that to anybody, except *sotto voce* to me, and not even *sotto voce*, but just by body language. He thought this was crazy; and it *was* crazy! Why didn't he speak out? I don't know. I think he's still in the Bundestag. I hope that I haven't embarrassed him, but there was no commitment not to disclose our conversation.

That's an example of how not only the German media, as I understand it, but the German government is so afraid of criticizing things that could make them a "Putin *versteher*." Oh my God, they can't be that. So, what is that all about? Well, it comes from a lack of understanding, a lack of history, for God's sake. Every Russian has had a grandfather or an uncle or somebody affected by those 27 million casualties, killed dead, in World War II. Now, Germans should remember that as well, because they also had millions and millions—not even half as many as the Russians—but they had millions and millions. What about Americans? We had this big ocean between Germany and Russia—two oceans actually—so we escaped unscathed. How many people did we lose, killed in World War II? About 420,000. Compare that with 27 million; you do the math. The Russians look down at us, and say, "The Americans don't know what war is like. They have never been damaged in a war, except for Pearl Harbor. The people running America have never served in uniform. They get patsies and careerists to rule the military, and they just do what they're told." So, this is a very serious situation; they don't know the dangers.

Worse than the Cuban Missile Crisis

Zepp-LaRouche: What's the difference? Kennedy and Khrushchev had a red telephone, but today there

are many reports that there are no negotiations. Trust is at zero, a freezing point, and I myself and many other people think that the situation today is much more dangerous than during the Cuban Missile Crisis. What's your thought?

McGovern: The Cuban Missile Crisis, up until now, was unique in history. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev thought he could get away with putting offensive missiles in Cuba, and turn the balance, so we were threatened with a 10- or 12-minute time from launch to target that would hit Washington, our naval bases on the East Coast, and even deeper into the United States. That was the challenge that President John Kennedy faced. Now, Kennedy said, "No, this is a challenge that we can eliminate, and we're prepared to risk nuclear war to do it." He put an embargo on Soviet ships going to Cuba. Embargo? That's illegal. Well, he called it something less than an embargo, but it was an embargo. Then he talked.

Now, that's the big difference. He talked to Khrushchev. In those days, it was teletype. Jack Matlock, my good friend, was on the Moscow Embassy end of this teletype, translating madly from English to Russian and back. They talked about this. What Kennedy said was, "Neither of us want World War III. Let's see if we can avoid destroying the Earth." And Khrushchev backed off. So, what's the lesson there? The lesson is, when a nuclear-capable country is threatened with an existential threat, as Kennedy saw this challenge from Khrushchev, they're going to do what's necessary to meet and to defeat that threat.

Now, that was the understanding, and six months or eight months after that agreement, Kennedy spoke at American University. And among the things he said, in a wonderful speech, what he said was, look, the thing we have to avoid most is putting one nuclear power in the position of humiliating retreat, that choice between a humiliating retreat and using nuclear weapons. That had been kept ever since the Cuban Missile Crisis, until the United States decided to challenge Russia, by using Ukraine as a proxy. And



State Dept., JFK Library

President John F. Kennedy meeting with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna, during the Cold War in 1961, one year prior to the Cuban Missiles Crisis.

openly stated by our Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin was that, among our objectives was to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia.

Now, you wouldn't know this from the media, but guess what? It's not that Putin has lost—and I'm not just saying this as somebody who tries to understand Putin—it's that Ukraine and NATO have lost with a definitive defeat, and that's what is going to face President Donald Trump in just 20 days. So, the lesson here is that you don't face another nuclear power with an existential threat. There's no need for the United States to threaten Russia that way, but Russia would be loath to let itself be defeated. And they've made it clear with their new nuclear policies, that if their existence is threatened—even if it's just by conventional means—that that would be a sufficient cause for them to consider resorting to nuclear weapons....

So, does our new President Trump want [a peace deal]? I believe he does. I believe his reasons are not so good, because he wants to turn his attention to China, for God's sake—there's no reason to do that. But he wants a deal. Is there leeway there? I believe there is, and I caution those who are listening, that I'm an outlier on that. A lot of people are interpreting Putin's terms as a kind of ultimatum, that he'll never, never give on

any of those things. I think there's plenty of give. If there's a will, there's a way. And I see a will, so far, on both sides, Russia and America.

Was Russia provoked?

Zepp-LaRouche: I would like to come back to the question of the so-called “unprovoked” war of aggression. The West has been issuing provocations for five decades against Russia. And there is no doubt that the Russians, particularly since the promise was made for no NATO expansion, but especially since the 2008 Bucharest NATO summit, when President George Bush, Jr. insisted that Ukraine and Georgia could be given the promise to be accepted into NATO, perceive these provocations as an encirclement of Russia. So, how can you go now and say “There is no provocation”?

As I see it, there's a chronology that led to something that we are seeing today. There was one provocation after the other.

McGovern: There was. And let me refer you to an interview that Putin gave to visiting Western journalists in St. Petersburg in June 2016. You will not have seen this; you have probably not heard of this. He talks specifically about how his overtures toward the West had been rejected, and how Russia had been forced to wonder about these installations in Romania and now in Poland, because they have the capability, these capsules have the capability of firing ballistic missiles, of firing cruise missiles, as well as ABM missiles. The capsules stand up in the ground, there in Romania and now in Poland. They have caps on them, because they're capsules, right? And you can't tell whether there's an ABM ostensibly aimed at Iranian missiles, or whether it's a cruise missile or something more advanced which would need just 10 minutes to reach Moscow.

What they're really concerned about—that is, what Putin is really concerned about—are missiles that can reach Moscow *in 5 minutes*.

Now, on December 21, this is worth recalling, he assembled his four-star generals and admirals and the Defense Minister. He said, “Look, there are these situations in Romania and going into Poland, where there will be offensive strike missiles. They—the United

States, NATO—are also going to put them in Ukraine. And when they put them in Ukraine, if they're hypersonic missiles, which the United States will eventually develop, I will have five minutes to decide,” in effect—he didn't say exactly this—“five minutes to decide whether I destroy the planet.”

Now, I could not see the reactions of his generals and his admirals, but then Putin said: “Now, we need hidebound agreements; we need signed documents to make sure this doesn't happen.” Then, in my mind's eye, I could see the generals and admirals saying, “Vladimir Vladimirovich, wasn't the ABM Treaty signed? Wasn't the Intermediate-Range Nuclear For-



White House/Erin Scott

President Joe Biden said the U.S. had no intention of putting offensive strike missiles in Ukraine, but the “collective Biden” decided otherwise.

es Treaty signed? Wasn't Open Skies—Vladimir, we need more than signed documents. See if you can get a personal pledge from President Biden.”

Well, next thing you know, the Kremlin called the White House. “Mr. Putin wants to talk to Mr. Biden as soon as possible.” The White House is flummoxed. It's the 30th of December; our negotiators are going to meet, as agreed, in Geneva as agreed just 12 days hence. Why does Putin want to talk to Biden? The Russians said, “Please, it's a matter of urgency.” To his credit, Mr. Biden took the call. He was in Delaware. He was at home alone during Christmas time. In other words, the “Collective Biden” was not there—Blinken, Sullivan were celebrating the New Year. So, Biden took



State Dept./Chuck Kennedy

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, herald of the “rules-based” order of the dying elite Western speculative-financial dead system.

the call. We know the read-out says, “The President of the United States said that the U.S. has no intention of putting offensive strike missiles in Ukraine.” Whoa!

The next day, Ushakov, Putin’s right-hand man on this said, “My God! The Americans are finally taking us seriously. That addresses fully five of the seven principles we had in that draft treaty. Let’s get this done!” What happened? When the negotiators arrived in Geneva, Wendy Sherman, the delegation head, said to Ryabkov, the Deputy Foreign Minister, “I don’t have any instructions on that.” He said, “What do you mean? Your President undertook—” “No, I’m not going to talk about that at all.”

Then, on the 21st of January, now we’re talking about 2022, exactly a month before the special military operation, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is in Geneva with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken. And Lavrov says to Blinken, “Hey, what about what your President said on the 30th of December?” And Blinken said, “Forget about it! Forget about it! He was all alone. He didn’t have his advisors there. He didn’t really mean that. We’re not going to— We have every right to put offensive strike missiles, including

hypersonic ones, in Ukraine. And we’ll do it if the Ukrainians ask us to. We might be willing to talk about limiting the numbers. But forget about it.” That was a month before the special military operation.

One of my favorite Russian historians, who works as a professor out there on the West Coast, he points that out as the crucible, where—his name is Gordon Han, very well-respected—he said that among all these tricks, he called them deceptions, he called them perfidy; among all these things—starting with the first agreement not to enlarge NATO—he said the worst one was when Biden promised not to put offensive strike missiles in Ukraine, and then his people reneged on it just several weeks later. Then came, one month later, the special military operation.

What am I saying here? I’m saying that the Russians look at this and perceive that what Defense Secretary Austin said must be correct; that they’re using Ukraine in a very cynical way to weaken Russia. He said it! And that’s the whole name behind the game.

Now, when you think that a half-million—this is the accurate figure; some people say 600,000—Ukrainian armed forces, young and old Ukrainian men, are now dead. Crank in another 100,000 Russian soldiers. What kind of cynicism is that? What? All to weaken Russia? You know when they had the agreement in April of 2022, six weeks after the invasion, and the UK and U.S. said, “No, this is not about Ukraine. This is to weaken Russia.” And Ukrainian President Zelensky went along with that? There’s a lot of history that Americans, as well as UK and German citizens don’t know. But this is one key facet that I pointed out very early on. All you had to do is read the read-out of the conversation between Biden and Putin on 30 December 2021, just two months before the special military operation.

So, was it provoked? All I would say, to finish up on this one, is that to say it was provoked is supported by the facts, and it doesn’t make you look like you’re in Putin’s pocket. If it does, it’s still true based on the facts. Facts are what we adduce here, not interpretations, not guesses, not the mainstream media interpretation.

Zepp-LaRouche: Rear Admiral Thomas Buchanan said on November 20 at the CSIS conference in Washington, that the U.S. does have the right for preemptive nuclear attacks to sustain the hegemony of the United States in the world. We would just have to be sure that

enough nuclear weapons are left over, so that future potential adversaries can also be attacked and defeated in nuclear war.

There is so much nonsense in this notion, that you could have a limited nuclear war and win it, which I think is absolutely absurd. And Ted Postol referred to this and has also given his arguments as to why this is false.

McGovern: Now, with respect to Admiral Thomas Buchanan: This is an outrage! This was a very prestigious think tank that he spoke to in November. And he said, yeah, we're going to save enough nuclear weapons so that we can prevail. My God, you know! It's crazy! It's *heller Wahnsinn* [pure folly]. That's a nice word that the Germans have that we don't have, but it's worse than *verrückt* [crazy]. So, what's he doing? He's head of one of the main parts of Strategic Command in Omaha! Now, do the Russians, do the analysts in Russian intelligence services, do they read what Thomas Buchanan says? Of course they do. And do they tell their leaders? Of course they do. And how do I know that? Because Sergey Lavrov, the Foreign Minister, quoted Buchanan, and named him, when he talked to Tucker Carlson, just about a month ago, if memory serves.

So, these are important things. I talked about the admirals and generals looking over Putin's shoulder. I mean, they have to be saying, "This is STRATCOM! These are the people tasked with waging nuclear war, and some of them, Buchanan, for example, think it can be won. My God! That's how *labil* [unstable] the situation seems to me.

Empathy

Zepp-LaRouche: There is one aspect that has been going on in my mind for a long time, the incredible lack of thankfulness on the part of Germany, especially the political institutions. The Soviet Union lost 27 million people; Germany was the decisive factor in killing these people. And only a few decades later, the Russians were in favor of the reunification of Germany, which was very, very generous on their part.

McGovern: Well, let me bring this back to a human level. After Stalingrad, toward the end of the war, when defeated German troops were being marched through provincial capitals of Russia, there was one scene where a platoon of defeated German POWs was being marched

through a town in Russia, on their way back to—well, probably into a POW camp. And they were hungry and distraught, and looked like they were on the edge of death. And understandably, the Russians looking on were shouting at them, "Why did you invade our country?" And finally, there was one 18-year-old young troop, a German; they stopped. There was a halt, and then, a Russian *babushka* [grandmother] went out into the middle of that big avenue with the little sack that she had, and she pulled out a piece of bread and she gave it to the German soldier. And peace reigned. There was no more shouting. It was almost as if people remembered, love thy neighbor as thyself, or even we're supposed to love our enemies. That was a tall order, I grant you. But what we need to do is reach out, and try to understand one another before it's too late!

And that just occurs to me, because, yes, there was great suffering, in Germany as well as in Russia, but at least this Russian woman showed empathy, and that's what's lacking in many Western leaders, how Western leaders cannot have empathy with genocide in Gaza. I can only say, a lack of empathy in that case, must be combined with sociopathy, sociopaths, people who have no ability to empathize with people. How can there be, in this day and age, a genocide going on, with my government and the German government not only not condemning it, but supporting it!

We have to start acting human again. We have to look at other people, not as our enemies, but as our friends.

Zepp-LaRouche: I can say that you have a growing fan-club in Germany. There are a lot of people who give you their regards. Many people see hope in the work of your Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity.

McGovern: This is a liminal time. We need to step over that threshold and make sure we change the intelligence apparatus, and they give you good intelligence, for a change, and also rein in these cockamamie schemes by the operations part, for example (something that has not been mentioned yet, but should be), the exploding of the Nord Stream pipelines back a few years ago. Who did that? It's very clear who did that. Read [Seymour Hersh's account](#) of that.

I do hope that the censors in Germany are not so strict, that no one has that available, because he reconstructs—and he's the best investigative journalist that we've had in this country—he reconstructed ex-

actly what happened. It was the CIA that was instructed to do that by U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, part of the “Collective Biden,” and that’s very, very clear how it was done. This business about people renting a sailboat [laughs] I mean, is this some sort of a joke? If it’s a joke, it’s a very sick joke. And, of course, we know—I just have to mention that, because we’re talking Germans—Olaf Scholz. He’s with Biden just before the Russian military operation into Ukraine. And there at the [White House](#), a very talented Reuters woman journalist says: “President

Biden, you say, if the Russians go into Ukraine, there will be no Nord Stream pipeline.” “Yes.” “How can you do that? You don’t control it.” Bilingual: she turns to Chancellor Olaf Scholz. [Speaking in German, she asks] “Chancellor Scholz, what do you think of that?” He was caught by surprise, so I felt sorry for him. So he said, “Well, we do everything together—together, we do everything together.”

OK, I want to ask, was he told at the time about Biden’s plan for the CIA to blow up the Nord Stream pipeline? Or, was he not? Was he not told until the fol-



Danish Defence Command

Site of the ruptured Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea.

lowing September, when it was blown up? And was he told then, or not? What kind of German Chancellor can sit there and let the German people be deprived of a livelihood, and a good existence and a warm Winter, by letting something like this happen.

Maybe I’ll just add this one thing: During 1933, there was a young German jurist, studying to be a judge in Berlin. His name was Raymond Pretzel, but he wrote with the pen name of Sebastian Haffner. And he talked about his witnessing what happened in Germany in the early part of 1933, when the Reichstag was

burned down, and how the horses came in to clip in. And I just want to advertise this book, *Geschichte eines Deutschen: Die Erinnerungen 1914-1933*, and it was translated by his children. And what he talked about in those days was this: I just want to read one sentence. I think everyone should get this. [Reads in German.] For English, the best translation—and this does appear in English, also—*Defying Hitler: A Memoir*—is “sheepish submissiveness.” That doesn’t do the translation quite right, and I have to tell you that 80 years—And I was alive for all of World War II; I was only a week old when it started, but I know about World War II. During those years, what happened? Well, there was a lot of “sheepish submissiveness” on the part of the German populace and it’s well described by Sebastian Haffner in this.



White House/Adam Schultz

More voices are pressing the question, will German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (left) ever demand an answer from President Joe Biden on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline explosion?

And now, it's 80 years ago, for God's sake! *Um Gottes willen!* When will the German *Volk* be informed enough to say, Herr Scholz, did you know that the Nord Stream pipeline was going to be blown up? Did you know that the Americans want to put offensive strike missiles in Ukraine, and now, in Germany next year? Did they tell you that, or did they just say, "Here, *unterschrift*, please sign here." So, forgive me for saying untoward things for a German-speaking audience, but I think it's time, frankly, for Germans to grow up and, however easy it is to understand after the war, stop behaving like children, and then adolescents.

When Willy Brandt came in, and I was in Germany at the time, there was great hope that there would be *die Erwachsenen*, there would be grownups. That was a long time ago. If this particular benchmark, this liminal space is not the time for *Erwachsenen*, for adults in Germany, I will despair that there will ever be, even during the next 85 years. Sorry, to be so blunt.

The Power of Ideas

Zepp-LaRouche: A question has come in from Los Angeles, California: "Can the exoneration of Lyndon LaRouche silence the drums of war?" Ray, what do you think?

McGovern: I think it would help. I think the people have a totally erroneous idea of what he said and what he stood for. I can only hope for general education to find out what that's all about, and why he was treated the way he was. I spent some time in jail—never as long as Lyndon LaRouche, and never as persecuted.

I remember a memorable phrase used by a Bundestag member, Sevim Dağdelen, from the new party that has been established, Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW): "*nicht dumm machen zulassen.*" [not to allow yourself to be made stupid] "Our first duty, by this kingdom of lies, is *nicht dumm machen zulassen.*"

I think there is ample hope that things will loosen up a little bit, and people can hear the right words. I don't think there are CIA people working in all your newspapers or media outlets now. There are doubtless some hangers-on, but, get rid of 'em! Make people open to the truth. Free people to get out and exercise their rights, and avoid sheepish submissiveness.

Zepp-LaRouche: In regard to my husband Lyndon LaRouche, the worst thing was not that he went to jail

innocently. That was terrible. And they tried to kill him in jail. But the worst thing was that so many Americans were cut off from studying his ideas, and to study the solutions that could have led America out of this crisis—and America is in a big crisis. I believe that if the United States doesn't leave the path of the neocons and the neoliberal class and go back to its tradition as the first anti-colonialist republic, we will not be able to solve any problem in the world. And in my opinion, the question of the exoneration of Lyndon LaRouche is the key to that.

McGovern: Well, I just want to say that ideas, Lyndon LaRouche's ideas, imaginative ideas, well, that's what's going to save us. And let's remember, "*Die Gedanken sind frei!*"

Let me just add a little vignette here: A friend of mine, Elizabeth Murray, and I toured major cities in Germany seven years ago, talking about "*Was macht den Krieg?*" [What makes the war?] And we were coming from Rostock to Berlin, and we were in a *Zug*, in a train. And in one car Elizabeth was teaching me *Die Gedanken sind frei*. And I'm a little slow learning, so I had to get the message, and two very elderly ladies in the same car, in the same *Wagen*, were listening to us. When I finally got it—[sings] *Die Gedanken sind frei*—these ladies joined in, and then before you knew it, the whole car, the whole *Wagen*, the whole part of this train was singing, *Die Gedanken sind frei!*

So, I'd like to remind us all [sings]:

*Die Gedanken sind frei,
wer kann sie erraten,
sie fliegen vorbei
wie nächtliche Schatten.
Kein Mensch kann sie wissen,
kein Jäger erschießen
mit Pulver und Blei:
Die Gedanken sind frei!*

[Thoughts are free,
who can guess them,
they fly by
like night shadows.
No one can know them,
no hunter can shoot them
with powder and lead:
Thoughts are free!]

We went to those two elderly ladies—they were as old as I am—and we said, “I’ll bet you couldn’t sing that song during the Third Reich!” And you know what they said to us? “*Doch! Doch!*” You bet to hell we could! And we did!

Now, we have to sing that song internally; we have to translate it to outward expression—if “*Die Gedanken sind frei*”—so we can act on those *Gedanken* and make true that we change this world to a better world. Here we are starting a brand new year. We can do better. We know we can. We just have to remember that we remain *frei*. We remain free; we remain as free as our *Gedanken*. Thanks for letting me do that.

Zepp-LaRouche: We have another four weeks until the German Federal elections on Feb. 23, 2025. The forecast is that potentially, we go from a bad to a worse situation, by a combination of a coalition of parties that would do more to send Taurus missiles to Ukraine, send more weapons to Ukraine. So, things can really change dramatically here, despite Trump entering the White House. And the situation on the battlefield is showing that the battle cannot go on forever.

What is your word for the Germans? You know Germany, you lived years in Munich. You know the German population. What would you say to the Germans in this period of history?

McGovern: Well, I would say, we need to seize the moment: *Carpe diem*. We know that when Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan, of all people, decided that intermediate- and smaller-range nuclear weapons were not needed in Europe, I know that Ronald Reagan came to us intelligence analysts and said, “Is he serious, Gorbachev? Is he serious?” And we said, “Well, we’re not sure, but he’s doing some other very revolutionary things. Why don’t you try them?” Long story short: 1987—[the INF Treaty] a treaty that not only prohibited future missiles, but destroyed an entire class of intermediate- and smaller-range ballistic missiles, in place, with their nuclear warheads—Pershing II missiles in the West, SS-20 missiles in the East. I never thought that could be done. It was done, and one of my best friends, Scott Ritter, was the first on Russian soil to verify that all these missiles were cut up and could not be used again.

Now, what I would say to the German people is, why? Why are you sitting there and letting not even NATO, it was just Scholz and Biden who issued a joint statement this past Spring, which said, Oh! We’re going to put intermediate-range nuclear-capable missiles back in Germany, in 2026, next year! *Warum! Warum!*—Why?! Well, that’s I think *wahnsinnig*, really crazy!

Now, last thing I’ll say has to do with the present moment, and that is, as you know, the Collective Biden has waffled. The Collective Biden was going to approve the use of ATACMS missiles, and Storm Shadow, and SCALP missiles farther into Russia in September of 2024, this year. What happened? Our military, that is the U.S. military stood up and said, “That’s not a good idea, President Biden. We don’t think that’s a good idea.” And they were able to persuade Biden at that point, to say, “No, I won’t do it.”

Fast forward to two months: Somebody, the Blinkens and Sullivans of this world, changed his mind. Now, we have longer-range missiles going into Russia proper, from Ukraine, but things that are guided and could not be used without U.S. support.

Why do I mention that? Well, if there’s one thing that Scholz did that I applauded, is that he said, “We’re not going to let Taurus missiles in.” Now, as most of you know, Taurus missiles have almost twice the range of an ATACMS. I think it’s almost the range to Moscow, not quite. So, he had the sensibility to say, “No, I don’t think this would be a good idea,” and the Luftwaffe generals agreed! And there’s an interesting conversation we can talk about later.

Anyhow, what am I saying here? I’m saying that if anybody thinks that approving Taurus missiles, which can be delivered deeper into Russia than even U.S., French, or UK missiles can reach—*heller wahnsinnig!* in my view. *Heller wahnsinnig!* And this is the kind of danger that could prompt Putin, as cautious a man as he is, to move forward even more forcefully in Ukraine, finish off the war, and make his terms even more stringent than they are now. So, I don’t know what this has to do with the German election. I’m a nonpartisan intelligence analyst. But I do know that anyone that would advocate sending Taurus missiles into Russia proper is, in my view, *wahnsinnig*, and it should not be done. That’s the end of my comment on that.