

Schiller Institute Weekly Dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Time To Shut Down U.S.-UK ‘Special Relationship’: Schiller Institute Webcast

The following is an edited transcript of the Feb. 26, 2025, weekly Schiller Institute dialogue with Schiller Institute founder and leader Helga Zepp-LaRouche. Embedded links and subheads have been added. The video is available [here](#).

Harley Schlanger: Hello, and welcome to our weekly dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder and leader of the Schiller Institute. This is Wednesday, February 26, 2025. I’m Harley Schlanger and I will be your host. You can send questions and comments to Helga via email to questions@schillerinstitute.org or post them to the chat page.

I think the leading story we should look at today, Helga, is the effort to bring an end to the war in Ukraine. It’s producing wild swings, conflicting resolutions at the United Nations, a group of European leaders going to Kiev, and a whole parade of them coming to meet with United States President Donald Trump, including Prime Minister Donald Tusk from Poland, French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, and acting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. There are several people who ask the question: Where do things stand now? In your view, which way is this going, and what will bring this war to an end?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Given the fact that there seems to be an agreement between President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, as it was expressed in a phone call they had, the meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Riyadh, and subsequent interchanges, it seems that between the United States and Russia, there

is an agreement to, indeed, end the Ukraine war, which obviously, is a good thing, because all the experts confirm, and agree, that the war is lost; that any continuation of this war is just grinding people up, killing people for no good reason. So, it’s really a very important development that this war ends. This is creating a complete turmoil in the Atlantic Alliance, because it is almost as if the situation is completely reversed, whereby the United



President of Ukraine website
President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky, second from left, at the G7 leaders’ meeting in Kiev, Ukraine, Feb. 24, 2025. From left, Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission President; Zelensky; Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada; and European Council President António Costa.

States is seeking peace and the Europeans want to continue the war. Actually, it is quite hysterical.

I think the worst case is the British. As you say, Prime Minister Starmer will come to Washington tomorrow for meetings with President Trump, and they already have announced that, for the British, everything is at stake—the British special relationship with the United States, NATO, AUKUS, and various other such deals. And obviously, the British-American special relationship is at the core of everything which went wrong in the post-end of Cold War period. That was the driving motor to create the unipolar world, with all the ugly aspects which came with it—interventions in more than 100 countries around the world for regime-

change purposes, interventionist wars, all in order to protect an empire which was based on this special American-British relationship, using the model of the British Empire as the way to rule the world.

Now, if that is coming to an end, it is the best news you can get. President Trump is obviously determined to end that war, for sure. And naturally, the British are absolutely in a turmoil: Starmer just announced that he wants to increase the British military budget to 3% of GDP, and they really want to keep the war going. That's the significance of all of these people—European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President António Costa from Portugal—all descending on Kiev, promising to keep supplying Kiev with money and weapons. I mean, it just shows you that these people are not in the real world.

I must say that I find the European establishments, which have been defending the Anglo-American interests for so long that they completely forgot what their own interest is, now, all of a sudden, they start screaming that Europe has to defend its own interests, that Europe must become independent, strategically autonomous—this is Friedrich Merz, the newly elected Chancellor-to-be in Germany. The French apparently have brought, according to the *Daily Telegraph*, some unnamed official quoted by the

Telegraph, who said that now the French nuclear umbrella should be extended over Germany; France could easily put a couple of nuclear-capable fighter jets into Germany. And it's complete hysteria, because if you look at the actual military strength of the Europeans, without NATO, that is, without the United States, it cannot work, but it makes Germany and France, and all the other countries that are going along with it, very juicy targets if the conflict with Russia escalates.

So, I think that this is really a terrible situation, but I have the feeling that the European elites have really lost the connection to reality for such a long time, that they cannot somehow adjust to a changing strategic situation. Now, there is a very good word for the description of such a condition, when somebody has lost all touch with reality, you normally call them

insane. I think that that is an adequate description.

I think it's very dangerous, and I'm especially, naturally, upset about the German situation, where the election result, not surprisingly, brought Germany the coming Chancellor, in all likelihood (it's not yet certain, but very likely) Friedrich Merz, former CEO of BlackRock Germany, and maybe we can talk about that some more in a second; but I think we have a real crisis point, because this split-up of the trans-Atlantic alliance is really not yet settled at all, and if this militarist tendency in Europe continues, I think that forbodes a very bad development.

After the German Election

Schlanger: A lot of the listeners are hoping that you'll be able to unravel some of the complications and

complexities in the situation with NATO. For example, we have someone asking for your thoughts on the outcome of the German election: Can Merz pull together a stable coalition government? Will he get support, if he goes ahead and suspends the 'debt break' [a cap on the debt level—ed.], in order to spend a massive amount of funding for the defense sector? And what would you say is the way out for Germany?



CC/Steffen Proßdorf

Friedrich Merz, the likely next German Chancellor, wants an additional €200 billion for an arms buildup against Russia, while Germany's economy is going to pieces.

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, Merz, because of the election result, where the AfD [Alternative for Germany] is the second-largest party, now with 20.8% or so, the only possible coalition right now is the CDU-CSU [Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union] and Social Democrats [SPD]. Now, just today, I think the new faction leader of the SPD is Lars Klingbeil, and he replaces Rolf Mützenich, who was more pro-dialogue and diplomacy and peace; and Lars Klingbeil is somebody—he's a terrible, third-generation partisan of the trans-Atlantic school: He rewrote the entire history of the Social Democracy, basically blaming Chancellor Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr for the war in Ukraine, you know, by being "soft" to the Russians, blah, blah, blah. Now, that is really unbelievable, and I find it still hair-raising that so many Social Democratic members would go along with that, because without the Ostpoli-

tik of Willy Brandt, the peaceful reunification of Germany would never have taken place.

Now, there are many people, in the East in particular, right now, who think that was a very bad development, and retrospectively, one has to really say that the whole chance that the German reunification represented was utterly lost, due to a practically colonialist takeover of the East of Germany by the West. So, people have very mixed feelings. That's one of the reasons why the AfD is so strong. In the East, they're practically the strongest party in most of the East German states.

So, I think they probably will succeed to form a government. But, will it be a stable government, in this dramatically changing environment? If the contradiction between this European faction and the Trump administration remains, I don't think any government in Europe will be very stable: Because, to understand what's really going on, one must know that the present British, French, German, Scandinavian, and Baltic leaderships have been absolutely tied to the Biden administration, to that kind of America. And now that Trump has caused a complete upheaval, changing the game completely inside the United States, these pro-Atlanticist Europeans, linked formerly to the Biden administration, are left sort of hanging in the air, and they're scrambling, and they're hysterical about the implication of that. But realistically, I don't think that they're— If you look at the German Bundeswehr, the British army, the French army, they are not at all in a position to— Even if they go for a wide armament program, in case it gets to a conflict with Russia, they will be smashed. Germany will be smashed; France, Great Britain, all of these countries will be annihilated. Therefore, what they're doing right now, I find *extremely* dangerous and extremely unreasonable.

And, indeed, as the question posed it already, what Merz is trying to do now, he wants to use the present parliament, which just was voted out, to change the *Grundgesetz* [Germany's Basic Law—ed.], which is necessary if you want to change the debt break, to loosen the debt break, because the debt break has been written into the *Grundgesetz*, and for that, you need a two-thirds majority. So, they want to use the fact that the Greens are still in the present strength, whereby they can use the interim government combination to

get this loosening of the debt break. Maybe Merz will do it some other way, with a special, outside, military budget—that is still being discussed. But it is very clear, Merz is talking about an additional €200 billion, separate budget, to be created one way or another, for the military build-up; and that, in a German economy which is in free fall!— I mean, this is insane! It's totally crazy. So, what will that do? It will only be possible with massive cuts in the social areas, and that will definitely find a lot of opposition among the people; and it's just the wrong way.

So, what would be the way out? The way out would be that Germany, and other reasonable countries, basically say, it's a good thing if there is a peace between



kremlin.ru

Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump met on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany in 2017.

the United States and Russia, settling the Ukraine crisis, which was a proxy war from the very beginning, and we support that! And we will find a solution to peacefully settle this thing; but to keep the war going with Russia, when the U.S. is making peace with Russia is just insane. And I can only hope that enough people will wake up and realize that this cannot happen.

So, what Germany should do—I mean, the present government will not do it, but if there are reasonable people—they should reach out to the Global Majority, because that's the future; that's also the future for the German economy: That's where 85% of the world population is, and they're completely determined to go in a completely different direction. But I think it does require some more major organizing, in order to accomplish that.

Schlanger: Well, Helga, it appears that a lot of our

viewers share your sense that this is trending toward insanity. Julia, who's an activist in the United Kingdom, wrote: "Helga, it looks like you are absolutely right about the British going crazy over the prospects for peace. Now you have this recent proposal for a British-French nuclear umbrella for Europe. Isn't this a completely insane idea? Is this connected to Merz's proposal for independence from the United States?" You sort of answered that. But if you want to say something about the Anglo-French nuclear umbrella protecting Europe, I think that's what she's asking.



French Ministry of Defense

A French Rafale fighter jet equipped with nuclear cruise missiles.

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes, that's now coming more and more into the discussion. It was raised at previous times, where it didn't go anywhere, because Germany felt that if there are some French nuclear-equipped fighter jets, that Germany should have a say in the deployment. And naturally the French, being the French, they denied that, so it did not progress. And Macron, one should also understand, is in an extreme minority position; he can't get a budget through. So, Europe is not in a good position. And I can only hope that all peace-loving people keep organizing, mobilizing, as if the election campaign would be in the hot phase, to really raise the conscience of the population, because, it's just the future of all of Europe which is at stake.

Splitting Russia from China?

Schlanger: We have some more questions for you, Helga, and people can still send in their questions to questions@schillerinstitute.org.

This one is from a U.S.-based podcaster, who said, "It appears as though a Trump-Putin summit is coming soon. But I keep reading that some establishment analysts believe it is possible to split Russia from China, and that Trump wants to do that. What do you think about that?"

Zepp-LaRouche: I would not put it behind Trump that he wants to do that, because that is what he did, or tried to do, in the first administration, and that's what Steven Bannon is famous, or infamous for. But I don't think it will be successful. Because what has happened since Trump left the White House four years ago, the world has changed dramatically. It is no longer Russia and China, but you have right now the BRICS. The

BRICS has 19 countries as members or partners, and many more have applied for membership in the future.

Now, Trump is regarding the BRICS as an enemy, because Marco Rubio, I think on his first trip, went to Panama and put a lot of weight—American weight—on this small country, that they should not prolong the MOU of collaboration with the Belt and Road Initiative. And there are reports that pressure is being applied by the United States on other countries, that they should not cooperate with the Belt and Road Initiative and the BRICS.

But I think the best that can do is to create havoc and damage. I don't think it can prevent it, because if you look at the dynamic, what was formerly called the "Third World," or the Non-Aligned Movement, or the countries of Global South, they have a different partner, now. They have China, which is now the strongest economy, really, by far. If you [compare](#) the incredible economic growth which is taking place in China, of 64 critical technologies, China is the leader in 57. They are making huge breakthroughs in space science and travel, in thermonuclear fusion research, in AI, in any area you can imagine, and the effort by the United States to curb China so they would not match up in terms of the chips and semiconductor industries, it's not functioning. It's trying very hard, but it's not functioning, simply because China is a very big country: They have an enormous turnout of new science and engineering students every year. And the Chinese government has put an absolute premium on innovation, on high-quality productive new forces, as they call it, which is the permanent injection of new technologies into production.

So, China is the partner now for the Global South,

for countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America; and many projects, like the [railway from Kunming to Laos](#), which will go to Thailand; then other projects, like [CPEC](#), the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; the [high-speed railway from Jakarta to Bandung](#) in Indonesia; the [Chancay deep-water port](#) in Peru: What these countries have experienced, is when they work with China—and Russia for that matter—they get real economic benefits, real development, infrastructure, cooperation in crucial projects. And when they worked with the West, up to now, they didn't get any of that, but they could get military bases (the U.S. has more than 800 military bases around the world); they could get security training; they could do joint missions—but not a build-up of their country! And therefore, from the standpoint of what is in the interest of these countries in the Global South, they absolutely will not go on the side of the United States or Europe, against China and Russia.

That was reflected, by the way, in the many votes in the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council, where the countries of the Global South, with the exception of some dwarf states which are completely in the pocket of the West, did not want to take sides in the Ukraine war, because they didn't want to condemn Russia as the aggressor, because they looked at the prehistory, and they came to the conclusion that that was not what was going on.

So, I think the situation is much more complex, and therefore, I think the aim to split Russia and China, I personally would think it's impossible. Because both countries are led by competent leaders, Putin and Xi Jinping, and I think that they very clearly are aware of the fact that if they let themselves be divided, then that will lead to their both being on the target individually, and I don't think that that is in the cards at all.

So, the West should really make a step to overcome this idiotic, geopolitical thinking—I mean, if you look at the countries of the Global South, the BRICS, they live the idea of a “win-win” cooperation, to the mutual benefit of each. That is a normal, good foreign policy! The West has this incredible leftover from the empire, and the colonial time, when you have to have an enemy to motivate your military-industrial complex, you make profit via war, and you always think that the world is a zero-sum game, where if one wins the other one loses. That thinking is epistemologically so flawed, it's almost like a childhood disease, which adults should not get any more! The idea of geopolitics—Really, I don't hate anything, but I came to hate geopolitics, because it

is really, it's really almost like you have a bug in your brain and this bug is eating you away and prevents you from thinking. And I think geopolitics is something to be rooted out and replaced with a much higher conception of foreign policy, basically, like the Peace of Westphalia, where you take the interest of the other country into account. Anything which does not do that is bad, and leads to war, and therefore should be eliminated.

Hope for Southwest Asia

Schlanger: Now, here's a question from someone who says she's been on a number of the International Peace Coalition Zoom calls, which take place every Friday, and there will be another one this Friday, Feb. 28. She asks: “Do you have any update on your campaign, and the Schiller Institute campaign to win support for the [Oasis Plan](#)? Have you presented it to the Egyptian and Saudi leaders, who are having a discussion now on how to rebuild Gaza? Could they incorporate it into their plans?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes, the Schiller Institute has done an enormous campaign. Not only have we discussed it at [conferences](#) of the Schiller Institute, and IPC meetings; we had separate, private discussions with diplomats from many countries, and we have made it very clear, that that is our contribution to take up—I think U.S. National Security Advisor Mike Waltz had said that Trump's proposal to have a Gaza “Riviera” would be the best proposal on the table, and if anybody had a better proposal, they should just come up and present it. So, we made an effort to make it known to all relevant places that we *do* have a better proposal. But so far, I don't have any report back of a breakthrough. So, on March 4, there will take place a big conference on Cairo, organized by the Arabs, where they will make their counter-proposal which I only know will include the idea that Egypt will take responsibility for the reconstruction of Gaza, but with the Palestinians remaining there. And it has all kinds of sub-features.

I have not yet seen that the Oasis Plan has been mentioned in any form: Therefore, I'm asking you, you the caller and all other listeners, to help us in this campaign. Because, the situation remains absolutely incredible: The dying of Palestinians is continuing, the replacement of Palestinians in the West Bank by settlers is still continuing, so there is no break in the situation yet. The peace ceasefire sort of is holding, but not really. Today is supposed to be another four hostages from Israel, exchanged for several hundred

Palestinians, which hopefully will take place.

But I think it does require more mobilization of people. So, if you have any love for what will happen to the region, and you want this horrible situation to end, then join our campaign. I do not yet think we are in a good situation.

Schlanger: Here's a question from Martin from Oklahoma, who starts by saying, "Congratulations for your role in pushing through the confirmations of Tulsi Gabbard and Kash Patel. These leaks that are coming out on USAID and the various other non-governmental organizations involved in color revolutions, seem really important. Do we expect more to come? This is so crucial to expose the role of U.S. government funding of regime change." That's his question for you.

Zepp-LaRouche: I for sure hope that there is more. I know that there is a demonstration, I think in Washington, I think of laid-off people from USAID, protesting that they were kicked out. And that's the only news that's reported in Europe. But this is a perfidious problem: Just today, the Romanian presidential candidate Georgescu, who won the first-round election, and then that election was overturned by the Romanian high court; then there were so many protests by Romanians who thought this was a horrible, illegal interference into the Romanian elections, so they had to call new elections for the beginning of May, and it's expected that Georgescu would win that with a high percentage. And then what happened today, he was arrested, shortly before he wanted to bring his presidential papers to apply for the campaign! So, this is incredible. And there are reports that the EU is now considering to replace the USAID money, which is no longer coming, with money from EU channels.

So, the problem, for sure, will not go away. And just to remain in this realm, Friedrich Merz announced, I think today, that he wants an answer from the present Scholz government, who funded the big demonstrations in Germany against the right. Remember, already



CC/Focus Crestin

Romanian politician Călin Georgescu, who is not hostile to Russia, won the first round of the presidential election. It was promptly annulled and Georgescu has been arrested.

a year ago, when the farmers were organizing, all of a sudden, this [phony journalists' organization](#) started to hype the Potsdam meeting where supposedly the AfD had a secret meeting on re-migration, and within two days, hundreds of thousands of people in the street were demonstrating against the right. So that same apparatus was mobilized just in the last weeks of the election campaign, against Merz accepting the votes of AfD in a resolution against migration, which essentially is the same thing as what the AfD was accused of. Now, Merz, after the election, is asking that the Scholz government should reveal where the funding comes

from for these large demonstrations; and an initial list of participating groups which has been published shows they are all organizations like Greenpeace, BUND, all NGOs, which have very large government funding. So that is really a scandal, because it means that the Scholz government was using government money—taxpayer money—to interfere in the election, in this case, against Merz. And now Merz, after the election, is coming out with this story.

The whole thing is so corrupt, I think if they keep doing these things, the voters' disgust with the so-called "democracy," and all of these meanings and leanings, will just grow, the AfD will for sure win more votes, and probably on the left side as well.

Thinking on a Higher Plane

Schlanger: I have one more question for you, a long email on your opposition to geopolitics and why he agrees with you. He says he was so excited when he saw the speech by [U.S. Vice President Vance at Munich](#), that seemed to him to be a real turning point, but he just can't get behind Marco Rubio, given what he is, and what he's seen; and when Rubio talks about an end of the unipolar world, he's not quite sure where that's going.

But then he mentions that there's been a lot of talk about a possible "New Yalta," with Putin, Xi, and Trump being the big three. And he says, "This seems to be a prescription for a new order based on superpower

competition, which would be a return or a continuation of geopolitics. Do you have any thoughts on this?"

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, that is still in a relatively early stage of formulation, and therefore, what that means for the Schiller Institute is that we will double and triple and quadruple our effort to put on the agenda the idea that we need a completely different conception of foreign policy and statecraft. That is, to build on the Peace of Westphalia, and any agreement must always take into account the interest of the other—all others. That must be one of the most important conceptions. And then, we need to define the interest of the one humanity, first. That, I have tried to propose in the [Ten Principles](#), like you have to have absolute sovereignty of every nation-state. Because supranational structures give room for this kind of imperial bureaucracy that we see in the EU right now.

Then, naturally, one of the first aims must be to eliminate poverty. Poverty of billions of people, which still exists, is such a gross violation of human rights, that especially because it would be so easy to end it, by just increasing agricultural production, not in the interests of the cartels but in the interest of the common good, whereby every nation produces enough food to have a healthy diet for all of its citizens; secondly, healthcare, the most advanced healthcare for every country and every citizen; the idea of a universal education for every child and every adult; the idea of infrastructure development as the precondition for industrial development, so all of this can happen; a new credit system to finance all of that; a security architecture, which takes into account the security interests of all countries.

Please, read these Ten Principles, because, I think if we do not manage to catapult the whole discussion to a higher plane, where we start with the interest of the one humanity first, then nothing will function, and we will not overcome the geometries that led to two world wars in the 20th Century. On the other side, the countries of the Global South are already experimenting to build a different system, based on the UN Charter, which will remain extremely important; and on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which is essentially articulating what I just said before:

- i. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
- ii. Mutual non-aggression,
- iii. Mutual non-interference,
- iv. Equality and mutual benefit, and
- v. Peaceful co-existence.

So, I think that this is a debate we need: We need ordinary citizens, as well as universities, think tanks, elected officials, trade unions, business associations—they should all engage in a discussion, how can we self-govern as a human community in the world, in such a way that we stop these totally wasteful, military and subversive activities, which have been the technique of the empire, after the end of the Cold War in particular? So, I think if there is a "New Yalta," that is something we all have to make sure we define with these ideas on a much higher level.

Schlanger: Well, Helga, you just gave a good introduction to the final question I have for you, which is, I'm assuming we'll have another International Peace Coalition Zoom call on Friday, Feb. 28. Can you tell us a little bit about what you're planning on doing?

Zepp-LaRouche: We will try to have speakers comment on this unbelievable turmoil going on in the trans-Atlantic community. You cannot say any more, because it's just breaking apart. This is such an earthquake that I think it will be very useful to get the perspective, hopefully from somebody from Europe, from France, from Germany, from the United States, because I expect the mass media will try to paper this over, cover it up, and demonize Trump, demonize Putin. But the true story is quite different, so we will try to cover that topic, and naturally, we will take a very sharp look at where the discussion for Gaza is going, and what the implication is.

Lavrov was just in Tehran, meeting with the Iranian Foreign Minister, and Iran just said that they will not accept being bullied by the United States. So, this also is another extremely important topic.

So you should definitely join and bring some friends with you, and [join the discussion](#).

Schlanger: That will be this Friday, Feb. 28, at 11 a.m. Eastern Time, and the link is available on the Schiller Institute homepage. Helga, thanks so much for your clarity and your optimism today. This is a moment when we need to have the level of thinking, the critical thinking that you always introduce. So, see you on Friday.

Zepp-LaRouche: OK, till Friday.