

A New Philosophical Basis for International Relations

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Feb. 25—*Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Chairperson of the National Board of the BüSo, and candidate on the BüSo Berlin slate in the Feb. 23 German federal election, gave the concluding presentation at the Feb. 16 BüSo internet seminar, “Peace through Development in Afghanistan and the Middle East.” Her presentation was titled “A New Philosophical Basis for International Relations.”*

Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche, founder and leader of the Schiller Institute, within two months of the August 2021 end of the foreign occupation of Afghanistan, [issued an urgent appeal](#) for a project she named “Operation Ibn Sina,” for the development of Afghanistan and the surrounding region. The following is a transcript of her Feb. 16 presentation, translated and edited by EIR. Subheads have been added.



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BüSo

the need for a new international security and development architecture that must take into account the interests of every single state in the world if it is to last.

Now, there may be rays of hope in the situation with Ukraine thanks to U.S. President Donald Trump’s initiative, but the Ukraine conflict is one that, if it escalates, could lead to a global nuclear war. The same applies to the Middle East. If the current conflict between

Israel and Palestine cannot be resolved, there is a risk that a major war will break out in the entire region. And if that also includes Iran—for example, if nuclear weapons are used to disable Iran’s nuclear facilities—then there is also a risk that a global war will break out.

I can pick up where Tobias [Faku] left off, namely the need to overcome geopolitics. Geopolitics is the idea that there is a legitimate interest of a state or a group of states to assert their interests against other states or groups of states, no matter how—even by military means if necessary. And I think that that is a childhood illness of humanity which we must overcome at some point if we do not want to wipe ourselves out through a global nuclear war.

That is why we are linking all of these development projects to the discussion about



Peace of Westphalia (Münster signing), 1648. Painting by Gerard ter Borch.

And then of course there is the idea that EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen came up with about two years ago together with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, namely to link the EU and NATO together and at the same time expand NATO into a “Global NATO.” That is by no means off the table, although of course the fate of NATO could take on a slightly different dynamic now that Trump has moved into the White House. In any case, if there is a conflict in the Indo-Pacific between a Global NATO—or even just the U.S.A.—and China, there is a risk that this too could lead to a nuclear war.

That is why we at the Schiller Institute—but not just the Schiller Institute, but also other important forces in the world—are of the opinion that we need a new security architecture, based on the Peace of Westphalia, which laid the foundation for a European peace order in 1648.

A Radical Change in the World Order

We are now observing a tectonic change in the world situation. Because, in response to the policies of the global West—the collective West—the Global South has regrouped. These countries want to overcome 500 years of colonialism. They are no longer prepared to be just suppliers of raw materials, but they want to use these raw materials themselves to develop industrial production in their countries and thus become beneficiaries of their own resources.

Of course, the rise of China has given them an important economic ally, and in the last eleven to twelve years of the so-called Silk Road Initiative, the world has changed enormously. Fantastic infrastructure projects are taking place. Stephan [Ossenkopp] has already mentioned the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), but there are similar projects: a high-speed railway between Jakarta and Bandung in Indonesia; a high-speed railway between Kunming in China, Laos and Thailand. There are many projects in Africa where China is helping countries to overcome underdevelopment through infrastructure and other projects.

That means the situation is completely different. It is clear that the unipolar world that the West wanted to build after the end of the Cold War has long since collapsed. We already have a multipolar world, but there is still no idea what the new order could look like; there are ideas, but no clear structure, and that is of course an enormous danger.

That is why we are proposing a completely different approach, namely to use the principles of the Peace of Westphalia. The most important principle was: if you want a peaceful order, you must always take the interests of others into account. For the new security



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Indonesia's Whoosh is Southeast Asia's first high-speed train. It makes the 142 km journey from Jakarta (Halim) to Bandung (Tegalluar) in just 46 minutes at speeds up to 350 km/h (217 mph).

architecture, this would mean that everyone would have to be taken into account, including Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and of course the U.S.A., Europe of course, plus the Global South, which has long since become the Global Majority.

China has the three initiatives of President Xi Jinping: the Global Security Initiative, the Global Development Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative. These are three different initiatives that cover the military, economic and cultural areas, and are intended for the whole world.

Russian President Vladimir Putin gave a very important speech on July 14 last year, where he said he was proposing a new Eurasian security architecture that would also be open to NATO countries. Unfortunately, the West never responded to this in any way, but it shows that there is a willingness on the part of

Russia.

And we proposed that a new international security and development architecture should actually be drafted. It should be based on the UN Charter, which is still the most important document in international law, but also on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which were put on the agenda by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Conference [in 1955] and which were supported by President Sukarno of Indonesia and Prime Minister Nehru of India. These are the principles on which the BRICS also cooperate today. The BRICS originally consisted of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and other countries have since joined; there are now 19 members and partner countries, and there are certainly three or four dozen other countries seeking membership.

These countries are in the process of building a new economic order based on win-win cooperation. This is an attempt to complement the neoliberal economic system. They have by no means said that they want to fight this, but rather they want to complement it with an economic structure based on the mutual interests of all member states. In other words, a win-win cooperation in which no one exercises unilateral dominance over the others, but rather observes the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: absolute recognition of the sovereignty of the other state, non-interference in the internal affairs of the other state, respect for the other social system that comes from the culture of the other country, and cooperation in mutual goodwill.

This system is open, so it would also be open to the U.S.A. and the European states, if they would just come down from their high horse and say: “Okay, we’ll cooperate.”

Locking Out Refugees Is No Solution

Now, the so-called migration crisis is a huge issue in both the U.S.A. and Europe. Trump wants to build a wall between Mexico and the United States. The EU is currently falling apart due to tensions between the countries that refuse to accept any refugees and those that are more liberal. But in Germany, too, the liberal wing is now really in retreat. Friedrich Merz, the Christian Democratic Union’s candidate for Chancellor, is in favor of strict conditions so that refugees can no longer simply come to Germany, and a consensus is emerging.

But neither Trump’s wall nor the current issues in the EU—screening, securing external borders, expanding Frontex—are a solution. Frontex is the paramilitary organization that is supposed to push back refugees in the Mediterranean with speedboats, and then build refugee camps around the Mediterranean, which Pope Francis—rightly, in my opinion—has described as concentration camps, where refugees are locked up behind barbed wire, NATO wire, and some of them cannot get out for years.

None of this is a solution to the problem. We at the Schiller Institute have therefore made a different suggestion, namely that the BRICS countries and the countries of the collective West, Europe and even the U.S.A., should work together to overcome the causes of flight.

If we assume that 2.5 billion people will live in Africa alone by 2050, including over a billion new young people, then it is clear: In order to tackle the refugee problem at its roots, we must create two to three billion new productive jobs in the Global South—Latin America, Asia and Africa—by the middle of the century—if we want the people there to stay in their home countries and help to build these countries.

And that can only be done with development projects such as the Ibn Sina Plan for Afghanistan and the Oasis Plan—not just for Israel and Palestine, but for the entire region from India to the Mediterranean, from the North Caucasus to the Persian Gulf. An electricity supply must urgently be created in Africa, because 600 million people there alone do not have access to electricity.

We have also outlined a plan for Africa, since 1978. That is when we first published the plan on how to create the conditions for the development of industry and agriculture through investments in infrastructure—ports, railways, roads, waterways, communications, energy production and distribution—and thus help these countries to overcome the relics of the colonial era, for which we also have a responsibility.

Because Europe has made a big mistake: we have not helped to develop the countries of the Global South. And now that China is doing this, that China has achieved the strength to be able to do this, there is a lot of outcry and people are saying: “Oh, look what China is doing, look what Russia is doing in Africa!” But the Europeans have been asleep for 70, 80 years and have not done this, and therefore have no reason

to complain about China in Africa now.

We must make this leap, and achieve cooperation between the BRICS states and the collective West. This is the prerequisite for maintaining world peace, and it is also the prerequisite for achieving a new paradigm where we no longer have a zero-sum game—where the idea is that if one wins, the other must lose—but develop a completely new concept of foreign policy.

This goes back to the ideas of Nicholas of Cusa. He was a thinker in the 15th Century who had the idea that peace in the macrocosm can only exist if all microcosms develop and declare each other's development to be in their own interest. This is the same idea that was discussed two centuries later by Gottfried Leibniz, who said that the most developed parts of the world—which were China and Europe at the time—must work together to elevate the region in between them, and also to develop the South, i.e. Africa and Latin America.

This is more relevant today than ever before, and it is absolutely possible because the BRICS countries are already doing it.

A New Philosophical Basis

It does mean, however, that we also have to develop a different paradigm for the philosophical basis of our policies.

In history, it can be clearly demonstrated that there has always been a contradiction between the Promethean concept of man and the state, and the oligarchic con-



Ibn Sina

cept. The Promethean idea was that all people potentially have enormous creative potential and it is the task of the state to help people to develop these creative abilities, while the oligarchic system has always had the idea that conditions must be ordered in such a way that only a small upper class has privileges, and the majority of the population is kept as backward as possible.

In this sense, the Promethean model is committed to promoting the common good, and the state in particular has the duty to strengthen the productive forces of society by promoting scientific and technological progress and thus to improve the living conditions for citizens.

All this is possible because we are human beings and not animals. And we can therefore consider our best cultural contributions, which every nation and every culture has produced, as the basis for a dialogue in which we support the best tendencies in each other's cultures and make this a dialogue that will then, with absolute certainty, result in a new Renaissance for humanity.

I think we are going through such a dramatic change today that it is really important that we win over lots of supporters who will support these ideas. Because, while in quiet times you often cannot influence the shape of history for decades, when you are in such a dramatic change as we are right now, then a lot really depends on the civil courage and bravery of individuals to stand up for these ideas—and then you can take humanity a qualitative step forward. And we are determined to do that.