

Third World War or New World Economic Order?

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

When President Bush talks about the Iranian nuclear program in the context of World War III, the world had better wake up. The danger of a Third World War is indeed posed, but not from the possible construction of Iranian nuclear weapons. The Russian government, whose engineers are building the nuclear power plant in Bushehr, have once again stressed, that they have no evidence that Iran is working to develop nuclear weapons. The American intelligence services themselves, in their official National Intelligence Estimate, have come to the conclusion that Iran, from a purely technical point of view, is at least five years from the possibility of developing nuclear weapons; and ElBaradei spoke recently of a breakthrough in the access to the Iranian nuclear facilities being given to IAEA inspectors.

On the other hand, a number of American sources, including Presidential candidates Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) and Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.), journalist Seymour Hersh, intelligence agent Philip Giraldi, and numerous retired generals, have warned of the artificial staging of an incident à la the Gulf of Tonkin, on the Iraqi-Iranian border or in the Strait of Hormuz, which would be used to create the pretext for a U.S. military strike against Iran. The consequences of this would be an uprising of the Shi'ites in Iraq, a fundamentalist coup in Pakistan, which could lead to a preventive strike by India against Pakistan—and a Third World War as the result.

For Russia, which has its own security interest in making sure that Iran uses nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes, the American plans to station missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic are very threatening. Once they have been installed, these systems could be quickly converted into offensive systems, and could reach Moscow in three minutes. In view of this potential threat, Russia's Novosti military

analyst Nikita Petrov warned of a new Cuban Missile Crisis in reverse, in which it would be unclear whether the agreement reached at the last minute between Kennedy and Khrushchov in 1962 could be achieved this time.

In view of the aggravated situation in both of these crisis situations in Iran and East Europe, the last Prime Minister of East Germany, Lothar de Maizière, was absolutely right, when he opened the Seventh Petersburg Dialogue in Wiesbaden [Germany] (Oct. 13-15) with the words that this forum of German-Russian discussions was taking place amid omens of a certain explosive nature, which he linked especially to the image of Russia in the West, which, in his view, is not always the best—a somewhat euphemistic reference to the anti-Putin campaign in the Western media.

The last President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachov, looked at this “explosiveness” from the standpoint of: What kind of defense alliance is NATO, when the allies are not once asked for their opinion about such a profound question as the missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic? And when the U.S.A. made its plans known, Western Europe did not respond, although the people of Poland and the Czech Republic are also against the stationing of these systems. It's probably because of [Robert] Gates' inexperience as Defense Secretary, noted Gorbachov ironically, that Gates said that it might be necessary to wage war against China and Russia. In any case, all arms control treaties that have been concluded are now called into question, and could fall apart.

Similar dissatisfaction with Europe was expressed by Prof. Igor Maximychev of the Europe Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who pointed out that Russia had long pleaded with the West to desist from the eastward expansion

of NATO, which could only have nasty consequences, and not to foment an anti-Russian campaign in the media. On both points, the European Union remained silent, and these actions have continued, to the point that Russia has been put up against the wall.

Professor Schultze of Göttingen University indicated that the high point of the European Union was at the end of 2005, and that the eastward expansion of the EU turned out to be a pyrrhic victory. And, as for the absorption of Georgia into NATO, neither the EU nor Russia has an interest in destabilizing the areas between them in Europe.

At the Petersburg Dialogue, the schizophrenia of the policy of Germany's Grand Coalition was perfectly evident. Only in the working groups that dealt with questions of economic cooperation, education, and science, was it clear that qualitative progress has been made, and that it serves the interests of both sides. Thus there are about 4,600 German *Mittelstand* [small and medium-sized] enterprises that have invested in Russia, and that have made excellent deals there. The chairman of the East Committee of the German Economy, Dr. Klaus Mangold, stressed: "Russian businessmen that want to invest in Germany, would be welcomed with open arms." On the Russian side, it was stressed emphatically, that still more engagement of this sort is desired.

Sophistry of the West

In dramatic contradiction to these most welcome, fully rational debates over economic ties, were the discussions about politics, the EU, Russian relations, civil society, democracy, human rights, etc. These themes were handled by the Western side in a critical and sophistical manner. Many Russian participants characterized these discussions as "absolutely frightful." The middle-sized powers in the West simply refused to understand, that the brutal exploitation that Russia was subjected to by the oligarchs, with Western help, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, had made the word "democracy" a curse word.

In fact, people in the West seem to have forgotten that the so-called "reform policy"—shock therapy à la Jeffrey Sachs—reduced Russia's industrial potential by 30% from 1991 to 1994. Mikhail Margelev, chairman of the Committee for International Affairs of the Russian Federation, formulated it thus: "In the 1990s, we were hungry." And if Russia has now become economically strong again, this does not mean that it has become "fearsome." We are working to build a sovereign state, not an empire, he said. But we absolutely do not want to be an "Upper Volta with missiles"—an allusion to the attempt of Anglo-American political opponents, after 1991, to degrade Russia from a superpower to a raw materials-exporting Third World country.

Those on the German side that are interested in a good relationship to Russia, stressed the necessity of meeting Russia at the same eye level.

Representatives of the anti-Putin campaign left no doubt

of their preference for the former Yukos chief and oligarch Mikhail Khodorovsky.

Gorbachov, who expressed his full support for Putin, made an important point, that in relations between Russia and Europe, more ideas and more projects must be generated. But this was missing at the Petersburg Dialogue, as the "talk show" style is ill-suited to the discussion of ideas, and the level remained several rungs below that of the Kiedrich conference of the Schiller Institute, which took place in the middle of September, on the building of the Eurasian Land-Bridge as a project to promote peace in the 21st Century, and a cultural and scientific renaissance.

President Putin, who participated in the dialogue at the closing dinner, along with Chancellor Angela Merkel, and went from there to Tehran, to a summit meeting of the Caspian Sea countries, introduced the idea of problem-solving through dialogue: He demanded the solution of the conflicts over Iran's nuclear program, on the model that the North Korean problem has been solved—also with great patience in negotiations, and with a view to the justifiable interests of Iran.

The Development Alternative

It was clear that the Kiedrich Schiller Institute conference was much closer to the ideas that can change the world in a positive direction, in light of the Arctic Energy Summit of Oct. 15-18 in Anchorage, Alaska. There, the subject was progress in the railroad and tunnel projects across the Bering Strait, which would link Siberia and Alaska with a 6,000 km railroad bridge and a 100 km underwater tunnel. The Russian members of the "Interhemispheric Bering Strait Tunnel and Railroad Group" told the press: "At this moment, where we are standing, the work on this project has already begun." Russian Academy of Sciences member and president of the Kurchatov Institute of Nuclear Physics, Yevgeni Velikhov, underlined the importance for nuclear energy and high-technology variations for all component parts of the projects. Alexander Sergeyev, of the firm RosHydro, stressed that Russia has already begun to build its part of the project, WorldLink. The machines are already working to build the hydroelectricity for building the railroad lines.

The fact that prominent American representatives, including the former governor of Alaska, Walter Hickel, and the current governor, Sarah Palin, support the project, and that U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Ak.) and Assistant Secretary of State Dan Sullivan took part in the conference, gives reason for hope that the development of the northern Arctic and the northern region of the U.S.A., Russia, and Canada, will be a key for an alternative to a new Cold War or a new Cuban Missile Crisis. Just at the point that the systemic collapse of the globalized world financial system is becoming ever more obvious, this construction of the world economy with the implementation of the Eurasian Land-Bridge at its core, must be on the international agenda.