

of nuclear warhead-equipped submarines and warships in Sebastopol by residents, who are mostly ex-Russian Navy soldiers, President Putin declared the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, after the residents in Crimea voted for independence from Ukraine, and annexation to Russia.

Then, President Barack Obama visited Tokyo on April 23-25. On April 23, he had a dinner meeting at the most famous Sushi restaurant—"Jiro" in Tokyo—with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. After the dinner, Mr. Abe was asked by Japanese journalists if he enjoyed sushi. Unlike other occasions, Mr. Abe said, in a very bad temper, that he could not enjoy the dinner because he was completely occupied by business talks, mainly with Susan Rice. What unraveled later was as follows:

Number one: Both sides were represented by three people in addition to President Obama and Mr. Abe. They were the ambassadors of each country—Caroline Kennedy for the United States, and Mr. Sasae for Japan; and National Security Advisors, for the U.S., Susan Rice, and for Japan Mr. Yachi.

And then, secondly, President Obama did not eat sushi nor speak. It was Susan Rice that kept pressuring Prime Minister Abe to introduce economic sanctions on Russia, despite the fact that Japan had already contemplated its own sanctions on anonymous Russian individuals and companies who seemed to have been di-

rectly involved in the annexation of Crimea.

As a result, Japan announced additional economic sanctions on Russia, which included a certain number of Russian financial companies.

By including the sort of financial sanctions described above, three Japanese mega-banks which had extensive operations in New York and London, in order to be involved in U.S. dollar trading, came under a huge pressure to be very careful of any transactions involving Russian companies. They were afraid that U.S. authorities would unilaterally condemn any specific operation related to Russian companies as violations of sanctions and penalize them. Under such circumstances, it would be very difficult for them to challenge that legally. So, they have become very cautious in even opening up bank accounts which would be used by Japanese companies in their business with Russian companies not related to any business in Crimea.

Accordingly, regardless of many promising projects identified in the eight areas, the actual development of projects has been very slow. It is true that companies involved can avoid problems if they agree not to use the U.S. dollar as the currency for settlement. However, we have not reached such a stage, with companies in Japan and Russia still maintaining their preference for U.S. dollars. How long will such an attitude be sustained? That I don't know.

Thank you very much.

Caleb Maupin

## Sanctions Against Syria, Conflict with China: Who Benefits?

*Caleb Maupin is a U.S.-based journalist and political analyst and is the founder of the Center for Political Innovation. This is the edited transcript of remarks he delivered to the first panel, "The March of Folly: Can Mankind Still Extinguish the Now-Lit Fuse of Thermo-nuclear War?" of the May 8, 2021 Schiller Institute conference, "The Moral Collapse of the Trans-Atlantic World Cries Out for a New Paradigm." Subheads have been added.*



Schiller Institute

Caleb Maupin

Greetings, friends. I want to thank you for the opportunity of addressing this very important web conference, about the topic of Syria, and the need to end the criminal sanctions imposed on the country by the United States, and the need for the United States to change its policies in how it relates to countries around the world.

Syria is a country that is led by the Ba'athist Arab Socialist Party, and the Ba'ath Party of Syria—its name, "Ba'ath," literally means re-

naissance or rebirth in Arabic—and the policies of the Ba’ath Party have been dedicated to raising the population from poverty, improving living standards and restoring the very proud history of the Arab people in advancing human civilization.

Now, if you want to look for evidence of the success of the Syrian government and its policies, you can look at sources like the *Avicenna Journal of Medicine*. The *Avicenna Journal of Medicine* reports that from 1970 to 2009, the life expectancy in Syria increased by 17 years. During this time, the rate of infant mortality decreased from 132 deaths per one thousand live births to only 17.9 deaths per thousand live births.

Another great source of information about the Syrian Arab Republic and what it has done to help the population, is the [country study](#), published by the U.S. Library of Congress. According to that country study, in 1981, 42% of Syria’s adult population was illiterate, but by 1991, illiteracy in Syria had been wiped out! The country study published by the U.S. Library of Congress also praises the Syrian government for its efforts to build infrastructure and provide economic opportunity. The U.S. Library of Congress country study reports:

Massive expenditures for the development of irrigation, electricity, water, road-building projects, and the expansion of health services and education to rural areas contributed to prosperity during the 1980s in Syria.

It’s worth noting that the Soviet Union was a significant ally during the 1980s. Over \$100 million was spend on hydroelectrical power plants that were constructed in the country. Over 900 Soviet technicians went to Syria to aid in the process of electrifying the country. Huge strides have been made in Syria to create a modern country. In Syria, you have different religious groups, Sunnis, Shi’as, Alawites, Christians, living together in peace and united by a secular government. In Syria, you have labor unions in the factories, you have different parties represented in the government. Syria remains one of the most modern and democratic governments in the region.

### **U.S. Aligned with Extremists**

However, rather than befriending this government, the leaders of the United States have been determined

to overthrow the Syrian government. They have aligned themselves with some of the most reactionary forces in the region, Wahhabi extremists who seek to bring back the 1400s, who seek to carry out sectarian religious warfare. The Christian community of Syria, the Alawite community of Syria, other religious minorities, as well as the overall Sunni majority in Syria have *rejected* these moves. But yet, the drive to remove the Syrian government—“Assad must go!”—as was stated by the Obama administration, those sentiments seem to be very well alive in the circles of power.

And now, in their continuing efforts to destabilize the country, and prolong a horrendous war, these criminal sanctions on Syria continue. The Biden administration is carrying them out. And it’s worth noting that the result of the efforts to violently overthrow the Syrian government has not only been creating millions of refugees, but it has been making Americans less safe. ISIL, or ISIS, or Da’esh, or whatever you want to refer to them as, that horrendous terrorist group is a result of U.S. efforts to overthrow the Syrian government. These groups were armed and trained, and many of the so-called “moderate rebels,” who were supported by the U.S. government ended up joining the ISIL terrorist campaign. Arming extremists and arming religious fanatics to overthrow the Syrian government, has had catastrophic results, as we’ve seen all across the world.

Now, it’s also worth noting that Syria is very close to China, and in fact, the Jamestown Foundation wrote in 2007, that hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in Syria, in order to modernize the country’s aging oil and gas infrastructure, and that the policy of trying to destabilize and overthrow the Syrian government, with crippling sanctions, by arming extremists, mirrors the trade war against China.

### **The Beauty of China’s Economic Miracle**

China is also a country that has lifted itself up, taken control of its economy, forced the economy to serve the nation overall, and raised millions of people from poverty. In China, there have been many huge power plants constructed. In fact, the biggest hydroelectrical power plant in the world is the Three Gorges Dam, and it was created by the Chinese Communist Party. Eight hundred million people have been lifted from poverty. At this point, China has the biggest telecommunications manufacturer in the world. And not too long ago, China was known as the “sick man of Asia.”

The turning around of China, from being a deeply impoverished country, into being an economic superpower is one of the most beautiful stories in the 20th and 21st century. And it is deeply, deeply mistaken on the part of our leaders to set up a situation of hostility with China. Joe Biden's recent speech, where he talked about the need to "win against China in the 21st century," made me think, the 21st century is not a horserace. We need to stop viewing politics in terms of a zero-sum game, in terms of one country can only win at the expense of another. It is certainly not in the interest of the United States, with so much mass unemployment, with so much crumbling infrastructure, to cut itself off from the massive amount of growth that China is leading.

China is not only helping itself to expand, but all across the world, China is building power plants, it's building hospitals, it's building roads, it's building infrastructure. China is trading with countries throughout Asia, throughout Africa, all with the aim of raising them up out of poverty: win-win cooperation.

### **The Hope and Promise of America**

My hope is that U.S. leaders will abandon their policy of trying to destabilize Syria, and that U.S. leaders will also abandon the policy of trying to escalate tensions with China. There's only one human family. There's only one global community. And the more we are cooperating with each other, around things like technological development, poverty alleviation, eliminating the scourge of drug addiction and terrorism, the

better the world will be. U.S. policy toward Syria, U.S. policy toward Russia, toward Venezuela, toward Iran, toward China, toward many countries, is deeply problematic. The road to peace, the road to raising countries out of poverty, the road to a better world for all, the road toward eliminating terrorism and narco-gangs, is the road of international cooperation.

So, this is the message that we largely need to communicate, to our friends, to our coworkers, to everyone we know. We need to explain that sanctions are economic warfare, they destroy people's lives, they prevent people from getting access to medical care, they hurt ordinary people, and the human rights rhetoric used to justify them is often laced with hypocrisy!

The U.S. government claims to be a supporter of democracy, but we see them aligned with the government of Colombia that is shooting people down in the streets, we see them aligned with the austerity regime of Haiti, we see them aligned with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with its public beheadings and its autocratic monarchy; human rights rhetoric should not be used to wage economic warfare against independent countries, no matter where they are in the world.

So, let's hope that our conference today can play an important role, not only in educating people, but also, in perhaps changing the tone of discourse and setting the stage for a new direction in U.S. policy, where, instead of tearing down countries with sanctions, we are cooperating with them, to do what's necessary as we look ahead toward a brighter future.

## **Discussion**

*This is an edited transcript of the dialogue among panelists and conference participants following the presentations of the first panel, "The March of Folly: Can Mankind Still Extinguish the Now-Lit Fuse of Thermo-nuclear War?" of the May 8, 2021 Schiller Institute conference, "The Moral Collapse of the Trans-Atlantic World Cries Out for a New Paradigm." Participating were Harley Schlanger (moderator), Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Prof. Dr. Wilfried Schreiber, Prof. Dr. Hans Köchler, Sayed Mujtiba Ahmadi, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Afghanistan in Canada, and Caleb Maupin.*

**Moderator:** We have a number of questions, actually a flood of questions coming in. The first question

comes from someone from France, who asks Helga, but others as well: "Why does it seem as though the West wants to destroy the world which does not agree with American ideas? Where is the concern for the human factor?" Helga, why don't we start with you, and then anyone else who wants to say something about that can jump in.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I would not say "the West." Because, if you look at the people in the United States, or in Germany, France, other countries, if they would have the real choice for what was discussed here, most people would say, "That is completely insane. We shouldn't be doing this." I think what has happened is that the trans-