

III. International

INTERVIEW: Chas Freeman

We Must Change America To Avert War

This is the edited transcript of an interview with U.S.-China diplomat and scholar Chas Freeman conducted Feb. 1, 2023, by Mike Billington. The video is available [here](#). Subheads and embedded links to sources have been added.

Mike Billington: This is Mike Billington, with the *Executive Intelligence Review*, the Schiller Institute and The LaRouche Organization. I'm pleased to have once again an opportunity to interview Chas Freeman. Chas was famously the interpreter for President Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972, which began the opening up of China-U.S. relations. He then served in several high ranking diplomatic positions over his 30-year career in the Foreign Service, including Deputy Chief of Mission in China and in Thailand, and Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. He also served as an Assistant Secretary of Defense in the 1990s.

Since retiring from government, Ambassador Freeman has been involved in arranging joint ventures internationally. He served as President of the Middle East Council, the co-chair of the U.S.-China Policy Foundation, a Director at the Atlantic Council, and was the co-founder of the Committee for the Republic. He is a prolific writer and speaker on a wide range of political and international issues, which, as he likes to say, are often in a tone which is not in tune with the official narratives of the day. Do you want to say anything else about your history?

Ambassador Chas Freeman: No, I'm flattered to have that introduction, Mike, and it's a pleasure to be back with you.

Billington: The [interview](#) we did on November 29, 2021 had a significant impact around the world. It stirred up some very useful responses, shall we say.

Impact of Sending Battle Tanks to Ukraine

Let me start by asking for your view of the decision last week to deploy Leopard 2 tanks and the M1 Abrams



EIRNS

Chas Freeman, career diplomat and scholar.

tanks by NATO and by the U.S. to Ukraine. What do you think the impact of this will be on the military situation on the ground and the likely Russian response? And how will Russia respond to the idea of German tanks preparing to once again enter Russian territory?

Amb. Freeman: The impact will be minimal in the short term because the tanks are not going to be there. It will take months to familiarize Ukrainian soldiers with how to operate these tanks and more important, how to maintain them. Tanks have a nasty habit of breaking down quite frequently and requiring repairs on the spot. It's not clear to what extent Ukrainians will be able to master these particular tanks, as opposed to the ones they're familiar with, down the road.

Tanks, of course, are offensive instruments. They are effective at breaking through enemy lines and allowing infantry to advance behind them. They are not generally thought of as defensive. This ties into the Ukrainian idea of some sort of counteroffensive against Russian holdings in Ukraine. On the other hand, by the time they get there, the situation on the battlefield is likely to be quite different. We're on the eve of what appears to be a major Russian push against the

Ukrainians, both in the east and in the south. The ground has frozen in the south, allowing heavy vehicles and tanks to advance through what would otherwise be pretty impenetrable mud.

As far as the appearance of German tanks in Ukraine is concerned, I think you can see that from several perspectives. It obviously will evoke all sorts of nasty memories in Russia of the last time German tanks

effect, to hedge against what they perceive to be American unreliability. In both cases, I think the decisions are influenced by the uncertain course of American politics, not knowing whether the commitments that the United States has made will be honored by the next administration. The Trump administration set the precedent, saying that whatever its predecessors did, had no binding effect on it.



CC BY-SA 3.0 de/Bundesarchiv/Schröter

“The appearance of German tanks in Ukraine will evoke all sorts of nasty memories in Russia.” —Chas Freeman. Here, a German StuG III Assault Gun near Stalingrad, Sept. 1942.

appeared on Russia’s borders. But aside from that, it represents an important further evidence of German abandonment of the pacifism that was imposed on it by World War II. This makes Germany a belligerent in the war, and it was something that the German government was obviously very reluctant to do, understanding the importance of it and the fact that a militarized Germany will be of concern not just to the Russians, but to many other Europeans, and given memories of the past. So this is an important political moment, one that has major implications for European security. And it’s not clear where we are headed with this.

Japan’s Remilitarization

Billington: Do you compare that in your view of this with Japan’s turn towards remilitarizing and forming various kinds of pacts with the UK and with the U.S.?

Amb. Freeman: The two are connected in two ways. One: in both cases, the United States has urged remilitarization, reversing Japan’s earlier course. And second, both represent efforts by the defeated parties in World War II to reestablish independent military capabilities, in

Billington: It has become recognized pretty much universally that the U.S. is in fact engaged in a war with Russia, not simply a proxy war in Ukraine, which includes economic and political sanctions and other things, as well as the military side. And virtually no nation outside of the Five Eyes [intelligence alliance] and the G7 and most of Europe, wants to have anything to do with this. They reject the U.S. war policy. They reject the U.S. sanctions against Russia. India is even buying discounted Russian oil and gas and reselling it to the United States. In fact, the Russia-China relationship has become a new pole to the NATO countries, but not for military confrontation, but for development rather than austerity and sanctions and war.

A New, Multipolar World

You noted in a recent speech that the division of the world by the Anglo-Americans into “democracies versus autocracies” should actually be characterized as the former colonial powers, who have regrouped as NATO or Global NATO perhaps, versus the former colonies, which are again being treated as colonies economically and militarily. The U.S. bureaucracy appears to have no interest and shows no knowledge of the cultures of other nations. They only insist that they obey the unipolar world run by the United States, which actually doesn’t really exist anymore. But they act as if it does. So what is to be done to restore America to our historic role as a beacon on the hill?

Amb. Freeman: The major answer to that has to be domestic reform that makes us once again appealing to the world. Part of that is demonstrating that we have aspirations to improve. We face major domestic problems, including racism, police violence, poverty, homelessness, a government that is in gridlock, politics



KCNA

“Decades of ‘maximum pressure,’ sanctions, and isolation have accomplished nothing other than stimulating the North Koreans to build ICBMs....” —Chas Freeman. Shown: A Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile on its launch vehicle in a photo released by North Korea March 25, 2022.

which are polarized to the point where no decisions can be made about many issues. As long as we exhibit these characteristics, we have very limited appeal to others. And I note that despite our continuing wealth, immigration to the United States is dropping. We’re also, in the case of the Chinese, losing some of our most talented scientists and technologists due to what they perceive to be racial profiling and persecution by law enforcement. So, the answer has to be domestic.

Internationally, I think it’s fair to say that the United States is not only engaged in an epic struggle to weaken and isolate Russia, but is engaged in economic warfare with China. And it has just conducted in the recent past, at least three major exercises with Israel practicing an attack on Iran. The issue of North Korea is instructive, in that decades of “maximum pressure,” sanctions, and isolation have accomplished nothing other than stimulating the North Koreans to build ICBMs with which they can launch a nuclear counterattack on the United States in the event that their fears of regime change operations by us are realized.

So, we have many problems at home which we’re not addressing. And we are creating more problems abroad than we are solving. Russia and China are now in an *entente* directed at frustrating the American effort to retain global primacy. You mentioned, or you quoted me as mentioning, the former colonial countries. They are not colonies anymore. They have determined to be independent and they are acting on that basis. So there

is no more automatic followership.

The world is not divided into two neat opposing camps. It is becoming multipolar. There are many regional powers that are taking charge of their own destiny in their own regions, and are not willing to accept dictation from any outside party—the United States, Russia, China or anyone else. So, the world is changing. And as you indicated, it appears that our leadership in Washington is mostly oblivious to this. They resemble the eunuchs within the Forbidden City, who were so interested in playing games with each other that they didn’t notice that the people outside the Forbidden City were restive, dissatisfied, and about to launch a revolution.

Billington: Interesting comparison.

Amb. Chas Freeman: Well, I wouldn’t knock eunuchs, you know. They kept the Byzantines in business for 800 years and they ran China pretty effectively. I think we have the moral equivalent of eunuchs now running Washington.

A War with China?

Billington: On January 31, the RAND Corporation issued a [paper](#) called “Avoiding a Long War—U.S. Policy and the Trajectory of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict,” which interestingly argues, quite sensibly, that “the costs and risks of a long war in Ukraine are significant, and outweigh the possible benefits of such a trajectory for the United States.” But behind this rather sane statement of the situation, is the fear that we won’t be ready for the war with China. The way the authors put it was:

The U.S. ability to focus on its other global priorities, particularly competition with China, will remain constrained as long as the war is absorbing senior policymakers time and U.S. military resources.

How do you respond to that?

Amb. Freeman: Well, I think the RAND Corporation does not necessarily stand behind this report. It was the report of a number of people at RAND. I believe it was commissioned by an outside donation. And I think



DoD/Jackie Sanders

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III: “One of the U.S.’s goals in Ukraine is to see a weakened Russia. The U.S. is ready to move Heaven and Earth to help Ukraine win the war against Russia.”

it represents the views of the authors, not RAND, which remains, of course, a military think tank focused on military things. That’s a problem because many of the challenges the United States faces have nothing to do with military power. They have to do with the fact that other countries like China are overtaking us in some areas of technology and outperforming us economically. RAND doesn’t really deal with that.

As for why they end the report, which says sensible things like the benefits of a war in Ukraine are much outweighed by the costs, both in the short and long term, as they end by noting that the Ukraine is a distraction from China. This, unfortunately, is what you have to do to sell ideas in Washington these days, where everyone but yours truly and you, I suppose, thinks that China is worthy of being demonized and is our great enemy.

Billington: Our dear Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said recently: “One of the U.S.’s goals in Ukraine is to see a weakened Russia. The U.S. is ready to move Heaven and Earth to help Ukraine win the war against Russia.” And of course, we had the German Green Foreign Minister, Annalena Baerbock, who just openly said “We’re fighting a war against Russia” and had to take it back, of course.

Do you think the madness in the leadership in the U.S. and in Europe has gone so far that if Russia is clearly winning the war in Ukraine, which most intelligent military analysts believe that in fact it is—they’ve already won essentially—but would that lead

the U.S. to make the decision to use nuclear weapons to “move heaven and earth,” as Gen. Austin said, to defeat Russia?

Amb. Freeman: No, this is not an existential question for the United States, although it may be one for Russia. And so if there are nuclear weapons to be used, the more likely use is by the Russians, in the event of their being defeated, which they don’t appear likely to experience.

There’s an interesting contrast, not to get into personalities, between Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, who is understood to have opposed the sending of U.S. tanks to Ukraine and to be quite cautious about the consequences of the escalation that we are engaged in, and Ms. Baerbock, who, to my knowledge, never served in the military, has never seen a war, and therefore may not be mentally prepared to deal with the consequences of starting a war. This is a problem because the generations in the United States, and for that matter in Germany, who did experience war have now passed. Even the Vietnam War, which was a horror for those who participated in it, on both sides, is now a fading memory.

Many people who deal with important issues of peace and war seem to look at war as some sort of video game in which they are not at risk. There is no one quite so bloodthirsty, I might add, as a civilian. After all, civilians can stand by usually while the military give their lives in whatever war the civilians have urged them to enter. But we’re talking about contesting interests of Russia that are, from the Russian perspective, truly vital, maybe even existential. And the balance of fervor in this contest is very much with the Russians.

Billington: Let’s discuss the China side of this. You were, as I mentioned in the introduction, the official interpreter for President Richard Nixon’s historic visit to China and served in Foreign Service as a leading expert on China for many years. And you continue to write and speak on issues having to do with China generally, in regard to U.S.-China relations in particular. You saw the rise of China. You were there in ’72. You saw it when it was a vast, very poor country, not very well developed industrially yet.

And you’ve seen it grow into a leading scientific and industrial power, including the miracle—and I think it’s worth calling it a miracle—of virtually eliminating extreme poverty altogether through

development and infrastructure. Now the Belt and Road Initiative is taking that approach to ending poverty and building up modern agro-industrial countries in the rest of the world. And yet China is being portrayed, in the U.S. and in Europe, and in the UK in particular, as an evil dictatorship. The Belt and Road is described as a plot to take over the world—“from us.”

How do you respond when you hear these accusations?

‘The World Doesn’t Belong to the U.S.’

Amb. Freeman: Well, I don’t think the world belongs to us, to begin with. I think it’s the possession of those who live in the various parts of it. And I don’t see how you can really oppose investment and market opening and connectivity that enriches others as it connects them to what is now the world’s largest industrial power. China has industrial production which is roughly twice that of the United States. And it is a huge market which is lifting everyone around it to greater prosperity.

The problem we have in dealing with this is our supposition that everything must be addressed through a military lens. This is not a military project. It is a geo-economic project. It began with no real design behind it. China had surplus capital, surplus production capabilities in key sectors, steel, concrete, aluminum and so forth. It had gotten very good at building infrastructure, but its demand domestically was less than its capabilities. So it began to look for markets abroad. And when it did, I think a few bright people in Beijing thought actually this would be a very good program, that would be good for China.

It would be good for China’s political and economic relations with its participating countries. And it would open markets. In fact, it would connect everything on the Eurasian landmass from Lisbon to Kamchatka and the Bering Strait, or from Arkhangelsk in the north to Colombo, Sri Lanka. And gradually, China has taken this approach to opening markets and building infrastructure and connecting different parts of the

globe beyond the Eurasian landmass. First to East Africa and now importantly, to Latin America and the rest of Africa. This is not a military project; it can’t be dealt with by military means. And the strange thing is, that instead of trying to benefit from this, we’re trying to inhibit it.

Billington: We tried to prevent them from doing what America pledged to do itself under FDR at the end of the war.

Amb. Freeman: There’s an important point here.



CGTN

China is opening markets, building infrastructure, and connecting parts of the globe beyond Eurasia. Financed in part by a loan from China’s Exim Bank, a 759 km standard-gauge rail line connects Addis Ababa in landlocked Ethiopia to the port city of Djibouti on the Gulf of Aden. It is the backbone of the new National Railway Network of Ethiopia, the continent’s second electrified railway network.

Our efforts to counter the Belt and Road, misguided as they may be, basically are rhetorical. There are no real resources. We’re not offering alternatives to Chinese investment or construction or trade deals. A very important part of the Belt and Road Initiative is the negotiation of free trade arrangements. Agreements about the transit of goods, customs clearance and so forth.

We offer no alternative. On the contrary, at the moment we are pulling back from free trade agreements. We are insisting on government direction of investment in trade in the name of national security. We have trashed the institutions that we were so proud of having created, like the World Trade Organization, and when it rules

against us, we condemn the ruling and refuse to comply. So we're behaving in a fairly sociopathic fashion, if you will. And that, going back to your original question, that doesn't gain us much support abroad.

Billington: And the sanctions imposed under the excuse that U.S. dollars are being used by countries around the world for their trade and so forth has simply encouraged many, many countries, including across the Global South, to listen very carefully to Sergei Glazyev and the Russia-China discussion about setting up an alternative currency which would be independent of the dollar altogether.

The 'Chip War' Against China Will Backfire

Amb. Freeman: There is a clear global trend toward greater use of bilateral swap arrangements, the creation of common currencies, the development of trade settlement mechanisms within regional organizations. And all of this, sometimes in the United States, is all portrayed as some kind of Chinese plot. But actually, it has far less to do with China than it does to a backlash to American actions that infringe other countries' sovereignty and impose policies on them with which they don't agree.

We even do this to our allies. Look at the recent alleged agreement—the details of which are not clear because they're probably very embarrassing—by the Netherlands and Japan, agreeing [to the U.S. demand] to restrict their exports of chip manufacturing equipment, various forms of ultra-violet lithography, to China. This is clearly coerced. It was not voluntary.

Whatever its content may be, it is likely to have two effects. One is to somewhat embitter the Dutch and Japanese for having been pushed around, costing them their major market, but more importantly, stimulating China to do exactly what we're trying to prevent. We were allegedly trying to prevent China from developing its own independent chip industry, which will compete with the Dutch, the Japanese. And to the extent we're able to rebuild the chip industry in the United States, us.



CC/Briáxis F. Mendes

“The U.S. is, in effect, stripping Taiwan of both its comparative advantage economically, and its shield against an attack from the PRC, which depends on TSMC.” —Chas Freeman. Shown: a TSMC semiconductor fabrication plant in Taichung, Taiwan. TSMC produces the world's most advanced integrated circuits.

So if you wish to find a perfect policy boomerang, this meets the criteria.

The leading company in this business, the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, TSMC, was founded by an immigrant to the United States who worked at Texas Instruments. When he was denied a promotion within that company, basically because he was Chinese, he was offered an opportunity in Taiwan



CC BY 2.0/Taiwan Presidential Office

Morris Chang, founder of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co.

to try out a new concept for the development of chip manufacturing, which proved to be fantastically successful. The chips that TSMC produces are the most advanced in the world.

Now, TSMC and this man, Morris Chang, have noted that producing chips in the United States is at least 50% more expensive than doing that in Taiwan. So, from an economic point of view, this U.S. effort to create its own chip operation in Arizona makes no sense. And there is increasing concern in Taiwan that the United States is, in effect, stripping Taiwan of both its comparative advantage

economically, and its shield against an attack from the Chinese. Because China too, depends on TSMC. And an attack, a war over Taiwan, whatever the outcome, would have one certain outcome, which is the destruction of Taiwan's prosperity and democracy.

So this is a case of American unilateralism that is

not much appreciated in Taiwan, and of course, is antagonistic to China, and stimulating China, as I said, to do what anyone would do if you know that something can be done and you know more or less how to do it, and you're willing to put enough effort into doing it, you will do it. So, we will see. The major result of this policy, as I said, will be the creation of a Chinese semiconductor industry that is fully competitive, not just with [that in] Taiwan or South Korea, the two major producers, but probably more advanced.

The Complexity Which Is Taiwan

Billington: Let me ask a more general question about Taiwan. It was your work, your research, which became the intellectual basis for the Taiwan Relations Act. So, you've had a long history working with Taiwan as well as with the People's Republic of China overall.

Is there a shift in leadership in Taiwan taking place as reflected by the recent loss by Taiwan's pro-independence party in the more recent local elections? And what is the actual business relationship between Taiwan and the mainland at this point? What influence do the many Taiwan business leaders who work with the mainland, and in many cases now live in the mainland, have in the Taiwan political process?

Amb. Freeman: Well, those are multiple questions. I don't think the elections in Taiwan were about cross-strait relations or Taiwan's policy toward the China mainland. I think they were about local issues. There's been a general loss of confidence in the Tsai Ing-wen administration. As for where Taiwan's politics are going, first of all, they're heavily polarized on the issue of relations with China, as well as on some other issues. Taiwan is a society which has a very complex past, part of which was the Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship, [that was when] mainlanders came to Taiwan and used it as a base from which they had proposed, for about three decades, to reconquer the rest of China with American support. And local Chinese of various sorts, are Taiwanese speakers, Hakka speakers and so forth.

So it is a very complex society and has many issues which don't have anything to do with cross-strait relations. Having said that, Taiwan's economy is very interdependent now with that of the mainland, which is its largest market and source of imports, and many in the business community there are very unhappy about the sort of thing that they see going on with [then Speaker of the U.S. House, Democrat] Nancy Pelosi, flying to Taiwan to gratify her own ego and to give China the bird at their expense. And now, apparently, [the current Speaker, Republican] Kevin McCarthy is about to do the same thing.



Taiwan Presidential Office

"There has been a general loss of confidence in the administration of Tsai Ing-wen, President of the Republic of China." —Chas Freeman.

The issues are complex. Many in Taiwan would prefer to be completely independent of China. That is not possible for many reasons. The first basic reason—the same reason that Cuba can't be prosperous or secure without a good relationship with the great country to its north—Taiwan cannot be prosperous or secure without an agreed relationship with the rest of China. So that is a fact. Politically, Taiwan cannot achieve independence any more than the United States could against the British in 1776 without prevailing on the battlefield, and the prospects of

it doing so are zero. So, Taiwan is in a bit of a bind with many people wanting independence, but no possibility of achieving it. Sadly, in human history, this kind of dilemma is not very rare.

U.S. Sanctions on China Turning the U.S. Illiberal

Billington: So you have the U.S. decoupling from China. You've already brought up the shooting-themselves-in-the-foot with the chip war idea. This includes sanctions on Chinese companies almost as severe as those that have been imposed on Russia, at least in some areas. But many of the companies that do business with China are also being sanctioned. As you pointed out, that is going to destroy companies around the world who depend on doing business with China, including in Taiwan.

What do you think is going to be the result of this chip war and related sanctions on China?

Amb. Freeman: The sanctions on China will have two immediate effects. First, they will retard Chinese economic growth and slow down its technological advance. That's in the short term. And then, in the long term, they will give rise to a competitive Chinese semiconductor industry. Exactly what we're proposing must be prevented. The sanctions on China are far less broad and deep than those on Russia, in part because China is the largest trading partner of about 120 countries in the world. And our economy is interdependent with it. In fact, the sanctions on China did not result in a reduction of our imports from China. Our trade deficit went up, not down.

But I think the great irony here is that what made the United States great, what made us admired internationally, was our devotion to free trade, to open borders, and to personal freedom. And the theory that some had—I must say I never shared it—was that opening relations with China would cause China to become more like the United States. The irony is that, instead, it has caused the United States to become more like China, that is, protectionist, against free trade. I'm not speaking of China today, but China in the past, and with a national security apparatus that is increasingly intrusive and disregarding of the citizens' privacy and personal liberty. So we set out maybe with some thought to liberalize China. We have ended by becoming illiberal or ill-liberalizing ourselves.

China in the Middle East and Africa

Billington: As I mentioned, you were U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. You have great experience in the Middle East in general. We're not only looking at potential war dangers with Russia and China, but things are heating up again in the Middle East, with the Israelis moving violently, as usual, against the Palestinians and also against Iran, with even some bombings in Iran over the last few days. You've spoken often about China's role in the Middle East, pointing to the deal that they struck with Saudi Arabia, where you're going to have, instead of petrodollars, we're going to have petro-yuan, or petro-renminbi, trading with China in local currencies. Also the Belt and Road projects in Iraq and other Arab states, not to mention that there's a dramatic increase in Chinese investments in Israel and Israeli investments in China.

So how is China changing the Middle East, and also Africa, in general? What's your view of China's shifting of the policies and the developments in that sector of

the world?

Amb. Freeman: China's been very careful to stay out of the regional quarrels that have troubled the Middle East. China is clearly, rhetorically, on the side of the Palestinians, for example. But it maintains cordial relations with the government of Israel. It has a very productive working relationship with Iran, but it also has similar relationships with the Gulf Arab states across the Persian Gulf. So China's policy resembles that of the United States shortly after our establishment as an independent country that seeks friendship and commerce with all and entangling alliances with none. This is a policy that worked very well for us throughout the 19th century, and it's working out quite well for China.

I don't think the Middle East is being much changed by China or that China indeed has much aspiration to change the Middle East. Its demands on Middle Eastern governments are minimal. It has nothing to say about how they organize their domestic politics or societies. All it asks is that they not challenge China's one-China policy as it applies to Taiwan. Beyond that, China is open for business and trying to generate business.

The one area where there may be some major difference looming is in the area of military industries. Many countries in the Middle East, not just Israel—which has a very substantial high tech industrial military sector—are trying to build their own military industries to reduce dependence on foreign imports, having had the experience of seeing foreign suppliers embargo exports or suspend them in ways that were injurious to their security as they conceived it. And the Chinese, I think, are going to be more willing than Western countries have been to share technology in the new military industries in countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and so forth. So, to that extent, China will make a difference in the region. Otherwise, China is perfectly happy to have people in the region continue to be who they are.

Billington: They don't believe in hegemony-ism, as they like to say.

Amb. Freeman: Well, they don't have an ideology that they insist on imposing on others. Yeah, right. Whether the ideology is a wonderful thing or not is beside the point. You know, I believe that democracy in many respects is a very good system and a desirable one. But if people in other countries don't agree with me, that

is their prerogative. I think the Chinese deserve respect for doing what President Kennedy once advocated, and that is trying to make the world safe for diversity.

Ten Principles

Billington: Let me conclude by referencing the fact that Helga Zepp-LaRouche recently issued something she called the [Ten Principles](#) [of a New International Security and Development Architecture] that were aimed at provoking discussion around the world, with the problem being, as she identified it, that people seem to have lost a sense of principles in their way of thinking, that they limit themselves to taking sides on issues that are usually defined by governments or by the media. And usually both sides of those issues are irrelevant or negative on both sides, or they're the same side in different dressing.

The *Ten Principles* include, and I'll just reference them briefly: A new international security and development architecture among perfectly sovereign nation states based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence and the UN Charter; to alleviate poverty; to build modern health systems in all countries; universal education for all; a new just international financial system to provide the financing for modern industries and agriculture for all nations; to end geopolitics and "bloc" thinking, and respect the security needs of all nations; a universal commitment to cooperation in the frontiers of science, such as space exploration and fusion energy development; and most importantly, her 10th point, a universal acknowledgement that the nature of man is fundamentally good.

How can we intervene in the global dialogue to nurture this form of thinking in a world that seems to be tipping into madness?

Amb. Freeman: I think the first nine principles are entirely sensible and desirable. I have a problem with the last because I myself do not believe that man is inherently good. I believe that man is a big, ambivalent creature who must be taught to be good. And so if by this, Helga Zepp-LaRouche means that we should educate ourselves and our species to be good, I'm all for it. How do we do that? I cannot say. At the moment, we seem to have enormous difficulty looking beyond the ends of our noses, let alone more distant objectives. So I find myself in great sympathy with her aspirations, but unable to chart a course toward their achievement that is practical in the world we now live in. But I think we should all

aspire to these principles. But the fact that I believe that, is not going to carry much weight on Capitol Hill.

The Power of Vision and Truth

Billington: I did want to mention, though, that the result of my previous interview with you, not only had thousands of people who watched it and hundreds who commented very positively, about somebody who tells the truth from a position of influence and power, where you very seldom hear any reference to truth.

Amb. Freeman: Because I have no power.

Billington: Well, your power is the truth. That's the basis on which we can achieve those ten principles, by sticking to the truth. Even when, as [Mohandas] Gandhi said, even if we have to suffer occasionally for sticking with the truth, sometimes suffering is needed. And of course, Martin Luther King, Jr. took that advice.

Amb. Freeman: Well, I think there is a moral principle that is very important and relevant to Helga Zepp-LaRouche's principles, and that is, if you believe in something, if you believe it's important, the fact that it is not within easy reach should not deter you from trying to implement it. And so I'm all for continued education and discussion, which efforts work to raise the standards of our species, [that is] if we don't first finish ourselves off by one means or another.

Billington: , I encourage people to go to the Schiller Institute website to [watch](#) our Feb. 4 conference. The name of that conference is "The Age of Reason or the Annihilation of Humanity?," which is indeed a real question.

Amb. Freeman: Yes, that is a real question with multiple factors making it real—climate change, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. You should never start a war without knowing how you're going to end it and on what terms. But there has been no vision, which is demonstrated in the wars that we are engaged in. Without vision, there can be no strategy. Strategy is a statement of objectives linked to resources to achieve them. There is no strategy. As I recall, the great Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu said: "Strategy without tactics cannot succeed. But tactics without strategy are the noise before a defeat." And that's what we're doing now. Tactics with no strategy.