

SCHILLER INSTITUTE FORUM

End the Sanctions and Occupation of Syria!

“If Americans Knew What the U.S. Has Done to Syria, the Government Would Fall.”

Col. Richard Black (ret.) closed his passionate presentation to the Feb. 21, 2023, Schiller Institute [forum](#) with the words above. The forum titled “Syria Sanctions Must Be Lifted,” featured speakers from Europe, the U.S., the Middle East and Asia, all of whom have had direct and deep knowledge of the U.S. devastation of that once proud and progressive nation of Southwest Asia, and especially the effects of the dehumanizing and evil Caesar Sanctions imposed explicitly to prevent the reconstruction of the nation, tortured by war, prior sanctions, and now a massive earthquake.



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Dennis Speed



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Helga Zepp-LaRouche

The Anglosphere Has Weaponized the Earthquake

Dennis Speed

Moderator Dennis Speed of the Schiller Institute opened the forum by noting that the Feb. 6 earthquake

has caused nearly 50,000 deaths in Türkiye and Syria: “The United States—and the Anglosphere more broadly—continues to weaponize the earthquake, even to the point of using it as the occasion to, if possible, re-start armed conflict in the area. The United States has so far not lifted its notorious Caesar Sanctions, thus prohibiting a full international effort to respond to



EU/Begum Iman

The Anglosphere is weaponizing the earthquake that has killed upwards of 50,000 in Türkiye and Syria, to the point of using it, if possible, to re-start armed conflict in the area. Shown: searching among the collapsed buildings in Gaziantep, Türkiye, Feb. 7, 2023.

the catastrophe. The process of demonization of the Syrian regime continues to the exclusion of the suffering and death of tens of thousands, and the displacement of millions. This is Malthusianism in its most brutal form; the kind of four horsemen of the Apocalypse diplomacy.”

Immediately Lift the Sanctions!

Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and Chairwoman of the Schiller Institute, in her keynote address, said:

What must be done—and this is an appeal to the world community—there must be immediate humanitarian aid; but that requires that the sanctions which prevent any aid to arrive in Syria in time or in any noteworthy dimension, must be immediately lifted. These sanctions are illegal anyway.... Archbishop Mario Zenari, the Apostolic Nuncio of Syria, who already had called several years ago for the sanctions to be urgently lifted because they have led to a situation where, on top of war, on top of the country being torn apart in large part because of Western backing of the rebels, of al-Qaeda, of ISIS; more than 90% of the people are already living in severe poverty. And that was before the earthquake.

The evil Caesar Sanctions, she noted, were “based on a complete fraud”; to claiming that pictures of terrorists torturing and murdering Syrian soldiers were instead Syrian government officials torturing rebels. The sanctions were directly targeted on the civilian population, with secondary sanctions on any foreign government or business which attempted to help rebuild the country from the decade-long (and continuing) war on Syria. The intention was regime-change—“to make their suffering so unbearable, that they will contribute to and become an instrument of regime change.” She demanded that such illegal sanctions must be banned.

End the U.S. Occupation!

Vanessa Beeley

Vanessa Beeley, a British journalist who has worked and lived in Syria for seven years, asserted, “The sanctions go hand-in-hand with the illegal occupation of this country on three sectors of its borders,” by Türkiye

in the north, the U.S. in the east, and Israel in the south. “The only friendly border is with Lebanon; and we know that Lebanon itself is also under attack by the Anglosphere to further weaken it so that it’s unable or not as capable of coming to the full aid of Syria.” She noted that Israel has responded to the earthquake by launching bombing raids on Syria, which have been “going on since 2011.”

Most devastating was Beeley’s revelation that “the CIA/MI-6-run White Helmet organization, which we know to be nothing more than an auxiliary of al-Qaeda and the various splinter armed groups,” is being reconstituted under the guise of “humanitarian aid” for earthquake victims.

Literally \$85 million from U.S. aid; hundreds of millions pledged by their PR complex in the West—where is this money going?... Heavy machinery and equipment for the White Helmets ..., effectively to re-arm and reinforce the armed groups in the northwest to restart the military campaign against a now even more fragile Syrian state.... We know the entire proxy military effort is being re-energized and resurrected by the West, because they see an opportunity to now militarily strike again at Syria.

Also of critical importance, Beeley noted:

Who is coming to the aid of Syrians? Russia, Iran, Algeria, Armenia, Venezuela, Lebanon, Hezbollah, Hashd Al-Shaabi from Iraq. The allies, the Non-Aligned bloc effectively, has defied the Caesar Sanctions and has not been punished for it—so far. [This has helped to] draw the battle lines. It’s drawn the lines where we can see very clearly the countries that are prepared to challenge U.S., Zionist, and UK-EU hegemony in the region. What Syria needs now is, yes, for the sanctions to be lifted; but more than anything, it needs U.S. occupation ended.

Defy American Hegemony!

Marwa Osman

Marwa Osman, a journalist living in Lebanon, focused heavily on the on-the-ground reality of the



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Chandra Muzaffar

Caesar Sanctions in Syria:

Everything that we read eight days after the earthquake, coming from the United States of America, saying that it is lifting the sanctions on Syria, is a big lie. I will explain why. Because no money was being allowed to be wired into the banking system of Syria to directly help the people affected, because that was not included in the latest statement issued by the Treasury.

Osman also noted that the manipulated collapse of the exchange value of the Syrian lira, from 400+ to the dollar in 2019, to 6,800 today, with salaries still the same, has had a debilitating impact on the population.

Proof that the sanctions are still in place was evident in the fact that “we didn’t see any plane of aid and relief from the European Union, from the biggest allies of the U.S.” landing in Syria, whether in Aleppo or in Damascus.

She noted that the sanctions, according to the U.S., were imposed only on the government, not the people.

Now, the people in the West might think that sanctioning the elite in the government in Syria means sanctioning the President and his wife and the ministers. But in Syria everything is actually organized and coordinated and managed by the government, including the education system, the system of health, and everything that’s related to daily lives of the Syrian people.

All of this was devastated by the sanctions.

[Also,] you have direct sanctions on energy, construction, and reconstruction sectors inside Syria, and on the banking sector inside Syria. What does that mean? It means that the country, Syria, is prevented from, basically, securing its needs in modern machinery. That’s why we saw people under the rubble up until—they’re still there—up until now, because there’s no machinery necessary to bring the people from under the rubble. They don’t have machinery parts, they don’t have spare parts, they don’t have technical support. Accordingly, these sectors were not in a position to deal with the repercussions of the earthquake, without any international support.

She called on all countries to

defy American hegemony against the entire region of West Asia. How can that be defied? The same way Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, *Yemen*—war-torn *Yemen* sent aid to Syria! They found a way, and they did send aid to Syria! The only way is to defy these Western hegemony acts against Syria, against Lebanon, against Iraq, as well....

Well, they can’t stop us anymore! Because we’re now more than one. We’re more than two. It’s no longer just Iraq and Lebanon. It’s Iraq, Lebanon, Algeria, Egypt, the U.A.E., Jordan: It’s a lot of countries that are contributing right now to aid and help Syria.

‘Self-Determination Is the Antithesis of Hegemony’

Chandra Muzaffar

Chandra Muzaffar is the founder and leader of the International Movement for a Just World, based in Malaysia. He is a prolific writer and speaker on Islam and on issues of justice in international affairs. He began by thanking the previous speakers for

an evening which has been saturated with facts, with analysis, with insights which you don’t get from the mainstream media, or even the alternative media. And this, I think is the role which the Schiller Institute has played, which I think is really remarkable. It is something which deserves accolades from us.

First, I agree that we can only understand sanctions within the context of the larger situation. The occupation of various countries in West Asia, the occupation brought about to some extent by Israel and the role that Israel and the Zionist entity has played in this occupation, that I think is very, very important, something one has to understand. Sanctions by themselves, the oppressive sanctions are suffocating, sanctions are dehumanizing, sanctions are a slur upon our dignity as human beings.

In all, sanctions wouldn’t mean a thing without occupation. It is the larger occupation of the region, for the purpose that we must always keep in mind. And that is the second point that I want to make: that we must understand that occupation continues in West Asia for certain reasons. But that occupation is linked to hegemony, the desire of the United States and its allies to maintain global hegemony, global dominance.... This is determined by the hegemon to bring about regime change in Syria, which is, again, linked to this desire for hegemony. And why, you would ask.... Because Syria is independent. It wants to maintain its independence. It refuses to yield to hegemony; it refuses to succumb to the power of the mighty. This is what the hegemon does not want.

Self-determination is a vital element in this struggle: Self-determination is the antithesis of hegemony. You cannot have self-determination,

nations shaping their own future, nations upholding their sovereignty, in a situation where hegemony is all powerful. Which is why I think this principle of sovereignty, of self-determination, of the freedom of individual nation-states, which the Schiller Institute is committed to and to which the late Lyndon LaRouche was committed, is a very important dimension of international relations.

He noted that Syria is “the third most severely sanctioned country in the world at this moment, a small country of 23 million people.”

Chandra Muzaffar knows the history of Southwest Asia well:

One cannot deny, that in three respects, Syria’s done better than many other countries in the region. One, for a long while, before 2011, before the turbulence and the turmoil of the last few years, Syria’s been able to provide a good health care system and an education system for its people. It has outdone many of the other countries, richer countries in the region, through its healthcare service, and that I think is very, very important. That it is a government which has cared for the people, and the healthcare program is a good example of this, as is the education program, an attempt to provide free, affordable education to its own people. And this is something that we tend to ignore. That, I think, is very sad.

Number two, we commend Syria, also because it is a country where women play a major role, compared to some of its neighbors. Women are important in Syrian society. Women have held very high positions in Syrian society.

It is a society which has—and it’s related to this point that I’m making about women—an approach to Islam which is liberating. It is not the sort of approach that one associates with certain other countries in the region, something that is part of its history and its tradition, open, inclusive, an approach that is universal, that brings out the essence of Islam.

And that leads me to the third point I want to make about Syria, which is remarkable. You know, 10% of its population is Christian. Syria

has had good relations between Muslims and Christians for a very, very long while. It is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, which in spite of all the pulls and pressures of the region, in spite of all the things we have witnessed in other parts of West Asia and North Africa, Syria has been able to sustain this open approach to religion, and at the same time, to establish good relations amongst different people.

Now, isn't it amazing that it is this sort of society, where there's a certain degree of inclusiveness, of universality, of good relations between communities, a society which looks after the poor, and gives priority to the health of the poor and dispossessed, that it is this society that is being targeted by the United States of America and its allies!...

And we believe, and this has been our position all along, that rather than dominate and control, we should cooperate and work together, different communities, different religions, different nationalities: We should be able to bring about a different world, a more just world, a world where true humanity flourishes, where reason flourishes, where the finest values of our respective civilizations would be able to flourish. And this has been the goal of the whole of humanity, as we struggle through Syria and its people.

End the 'Doctrine of Horror' Col. Richard Black (ret.)

Col. Richard Black, a former U.S. Marine combat officer and also a former head of the Army's Criminal Law Division at the Pentagon, later served in the Virginia House of Commons and the Virginia Senate. He described the U.S. policy "to overtake the Middle East by military force" as, "in many ways a great failure," with Syria a central part of it.

It has drained the moral strength of America, to where, now, it really is the East that is morally



Col. Richard H. Black (ret.)

ascendant, and we're in a moral decline. It is a shame. I hate to see it, because I love my country. I want it to be a better place, than it was when I was growing up. And I have hope and prayer that it will become better, but we could certainly start by ending these *obscene* Caesar Sanctions that are imposing famine and freezing on innocent people.

On the history of the conflict in Syria, Col. Black said:

"[It] was not a domestic uprising in any respect. The United States

planned and instigated the war from the outset, in 2007, which was four years before the war actually began, Wikileaks intercepted a 2007 cable where the U.S. embassy in Damascus was describing in detail how we could overthrow the government. One of the key things they proposed was that we foster religious hatred between the Shi'a and Sunni Muslims, and that that would have a very destabilizing effect on the country. Indeed, that turned out to be the case.

"In 2011, three months before the war began in Syria, the United States, the UK, and France launched an unprovoked attack against Libya. We captured their huge arsenal of weapons; we sent those weapons to Türkiye, which then funneled them across the border to the Islamist terrorists who were destabilizing the Syrian nation. By 2012, just shortly after the beginning of the war, within a year, the CIA was already channeling weapons to all Syrian terrorists. There were mountains of weapons being sent from warehouses that were built secretly by the Central Intelligence Agency across the border inside of Türkiye. President Obama authorized this under covert program Timber Sycamore.

"The terrorists who conducted the uprising against the legitimate government of Syria employed a doctrine of horror. The "doctrine of horror" was the notion that if you could create such paralyzing fear among the people, they would simply give up and they would not resist. Our biggest proxies throughout this war have been al-Qaeda in Syria, which has gone through a number of names—al Nusra, Tahrir al-Sham, and sort of this blur designed to confuse the public. But they have been our principle [asset] during the war—al-Qa-

eda, the same group that flew the jets into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon on 9/11, killing some 3,000 Americans here in this country. These were the groups that we now allied ourselves with just ten years after 9/11.

“The ‘doctrine of horror’ was so grisly and so barbaric, that it was not possible for the CIA to directly supply weapons to al-Qaeda and ISIS. For that reason, we funneled tanks, artillery, missiles, all sorts of heavy advanced weapons in massive quantities, selling them to Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar for the express purpose of arming al-Qaeda and ISIS. There was no crime that was too hideous for us to support. Our ultimate goal throughout this was to create a neo-colonial empire with the United States at its head, in which we could

have said very publicly that their desire was to impose a radical Islamic state, which would be governed by 8th-Century Sharia law. The entire media narrative has been completely false.

“The ‘doctrine of horror’ employed as one of its key weapons mass rape. Now, we hear a lot of allegations about rape. That this happens, that that happens. There are rapes that occur as incidents of war. The difference is that in Syria, *mass rape* was employed as a fundamental element of the terrorist doctrine. It was the idea that you could plant your seeds within all of the women of the nation, and that that would advance your cause. And you could also create this sense of paralyzing fear. Many Syrian women committed suicide rather than be gang-raped by jihadists when they knew that the terrorists

were about to come through. The incidence of rape has been so horrific in Syria that the government, the legislature, and the President found it necessary to enact new laws modifying the traditional Islamic approach on paternity, so that the rapists would not have paternal rights over the children of the women that they impregnated through rape.

“The Syrian people never at any stage during this 11-year war have come behind any of the leaders that the United States has proposed. Not a single one has achieved widespread popularity with the people of Syria. The people of Syria back Bashar al-Assad, their President. They have elected and re-elected him. They want their freedom; they want

their Constitution. Syria has the only constitution among all of the Arab countries that provides guarantees of religious freedom.

“Well, what happened? The Syrian people, through enormous force of will ... here’s a small country of 23 million people, who confronted 2/3 of the world’s military and industrial might which was determined to crush them; hoping to tear apart pieces of their flesh and accumulate whatever wealth they could. Yet, Syria fought off all of these countries—all of the NATO countries, the Western countries. So what hap-



SANA

“The Syrian people, through enormous force of will, fought off all of the NATO countries who were determined to crush Syria.” Here, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad visits troops near Damascus, March 19, 2018.

control all of the oil and gas resources of the Middle East. We set about that in part through invading Iraq, an unprovoked war that has resulted in the loss of 1-2 million people. Syria has been the major stumbling block for NATO and the Western powers and what they’re trying to do.

“Throughout this war in Syria, the media have been complicit in the war crimes that have dominated the war. They have portrayed the terrorists as nice fellows who simply want a little more democracy. The fact is that all of these groups have come forward and they

pened is that in 2016, by the grace of God, the Syrian Army began to drive back. They defeated ISIS; they pushed them out of Palmyra first. Later, they pushed them out of Aleppo in a great battle that was reminiscent of the tremendous World War II battle at Stalingrad, where Hitler's forces finally lost the battle at Stalingrad. And that was the beginning of the end. The loss of Aleppo, which had been fought over for four years, was the beginning of the end for the Syrian terrorists.

"At that point, John Kerry, the Secretary of State under Barack Obama, was absolutely furious. He saw ISIS and al-Qaeda being pushed back, seeing them lose the initiative. At that point, he announced that the United States would now implement Plan B. Plan B was designed where the United States would invade Syria in the northern part. Northern Syria is the breadbasket of the entire country. That's where the wheat is grown, and it also is the primary source of oil for heating and transportation. John Kerry's Plan B was designed to capture that; which we did.

"We landed American troops; we occupied; we fought against the Syrian Army in many respects. We provided air support to ISIS forces in the battle at Deir Ezzor, and allowed ISIS to cut apart the heroic defenders at Deir Ezzor in a two-hour airstrike by American troops, followed immediately by an enormous attack by ISIS troops who were preparing and had coordinated with the United States in that battle. We now, by virtue of the United States [military forces], occupy all of northern Syria.

"What did we do? We had two objectives in seizing the north. The first was to impose widespread famine on the entire country; to create starvation, to create childhood malnutrition. The other objective was to freeze to death the Syrian people; particularly the elderly people who were more vulnerable to being exposed with all of the buildings having been blown down by American weapons throughout this 11-year war. Plan B has been effective; but Plan B needed another facet, and that was the Caesar Sanctions. The United States imposed a military-naval blockade, and using that blockade, we have imposed these absolutely inhuman sanctions that were designed to prevent Syria from rebuilding. A specific provision of the Caesar Sanctions punishes anyone who helps in the rebuilding effort. We want the people to remain living in rubble, exposed to the cold, freezing, starving. This

was the objective of the Caesar Sanctions....

"It is a disgrace! It is a horror! If the American people understood what is happening, this government would fall. This government could not exist in the United States if the American people were not shielded by the complicit media in the horrors that we have imposed on the Syrian people."

The Higher One Supersedes Conflicts **Helga Zepp-LaRouche**

Helga Zepp-LaRouche in her concluding remarks, after an extended dialogue among the participants at the forum, said:

"The evolutionary change which we have to be conscious about, is that we are entering a new epoch, where man is capable of thinking about the one humanity first, and then thinking about one's nation second, and the two must not be in contradiction. As Friedrich Schiller correctly said, there must be no contradiction between a patriot and a world citizen. We have to train ourselves and the people we are working with, to think in terms of this higher One as a method of thinking. I always resort to Cusa and his *Coincidentia Oppositorum*, the "Coincidence of Opposites," which is that there is a higher One which supersedes the conflicts on the lower level of the Many. Nicholas of Cusa naturally came to that through a theological discussion: The higher One obviously being the Creator.

"But it is not only a theological argument, it is a method of thinking. You always can think the higher interest of the totality—in this case, of all of humanity—as a primary consideration. And if we think this way, it will follow, quite naturally, that we will also start to understand that the present outgrowth of this geopolitical confrontation is not natural. And we will see that we should, as a creative species, think about what kind of order we can give ourselves to enable us all to live peacefully together.

"Again, Nicholas of Cusa, a scientist from the 15th Century, said that the only reason people from different nations and different cultures can communicate and be peaceful together, is because they all produce artists, scientists, musicians, people who have universal principles as their concern. Universal principles are universal. They are true in Africa, they are true in Malaysia, they are true in Ohio, and therefore, we can agree on these principles."