

Live Dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche

BRICS on the Move To Replace the West's 'Law of the Jungle'

The full video of this webcast is available [here](#). The following is an edited transcript of the live dialogue.

Harley Schlanger: Hello and welcome to our weekly dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and chairwoman of the Schiller Institute. Today is Wednesday, January 17, 2024. I'm Harley Schlanger and I will be your host. If you have questions or comments, you can send them to questions@schillerinstitute.org.

Helga, we're in what might be described as a zone of increased instability, between a collapsing, discredited unipolar order which is defended by a U.S.-NATO military force, and an emerging order of mutually beneficial cooperation, sometimes inadequately described as a multipolar order. The wars and provocations from the West are continuing, even as diplomacy for economic cooperation, typified by the BRICS process, is moving ahead.

Geopolitical Conflicts vs. Economic Development

You've pointed out that this is both a very dangerous moment, but also one of great potential: So we have a lot of questions from people on what can be done to make sure this goes in the right direction, so let's begin with your analysis of these two opposing directionalities, toward the geopolitical conflicts and expanding war, versus cooperation and economic development. Where are we headed, and what can people do to make us get in the right direction?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Let me start with the dangerous side: I think we are clearly in an extremely

dangerous situation. The situation in Southwest Asia is on the edge of getting into a larger conflict, a regional conflict. You had the hype around the attacks on ships in the Red Sea, by the Houthis [in Yemen]; the blame is that they were backed by Iran, meaning that eventually Iran could be involved. Now, there is no proof to my knowledge that the Houthis are backed by Iran—as a matter of fact, they have stated many



U.S. Navy/Christopher J. Krucke

U.S. warships are now patrolling the Red Sea. Shown: On the bridge aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Mason, Jan. 3, 2024.

times, that they are very independent. Be that as it may, Russia has just signed a major treaty with Iran, including a large military component, so it is now crystal clear that—what was known to observers for many decades—once a Mideast war expands involving Iran, it has the potential of becoming an even larger, eventually world war. Because Iran and Russia are now united by a military treaty, then that for sure has been made very clear. India has good relations with Iran. India's Secretary of External Affairs Sub-



UNICEF/Omar Al-Qattaa

A five-year-old boy amidst the rubble which used to be his home in Sheikh Zayed City, Gaza, after an Israeli airstrike. Jan. 11, 2024.

rahmanyam Jaishankar was just in Tehran, also making major agreements.

So, I think the situation of Southwest Asia remains the absolute center of the dangers, especially because, after the historic events last week in The Hague, where the South African government has sued Israel with the accusation of committing genocide in Gaza—which was totally denied by Israel. Even the Israeli paper *Ha'aretz* said, let's assume what is happening is not genocide, then what would you call the denying of food, medicine, water to almost 2 million people—where even the World Health Organization and other UN experts are saying that the danger is that many more people will die of disease in the coming weeks—especially children? Children, babies, sucklings, small children, pregnant women are the most vulnerable in this situation and what would you call that, if not genocide? So, that's coming from Israel itself.

Hopefully, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague will make an injunction, forcing Israel to make a cease-fire and allow unlimited access for humanitarian supplies. Hopefully, this will happen this week or next week because it's super-urgent. What will happen with The Hague judgment in general is the big question. Normally it could take several months before a ruling is made. It is also clear that the United States has a

very hard position: [U.S. Secretary of State Antony] Blinken said that South Africa's accusation before the ICJ has "no merit"—I mean, come on! So, one can expect that there will be maximum pressure on these judges. In the meantime, more than forty lawyers from South Africa plan to file a lawsuit against the United States and Great Britain for complicity in genocide, and also, inside the United States there is a suit against President Joe Biden for similar reasons.

So, this issue will remain with us.

I think we have to start to discuss the question of what to do about it, what we have put on the agenda, in terms of immediate ceasefire, a Middle East comprehensive conference, especially putting the question of a two-state solution on the table. That solution, however, can only work if there is the implementation of the "Oasis Plan,"—the idea of a comprehensive economic development plan focussing on the creation of new freshwater through building of canals



ICJ

In charging Israel with genocide in Gaza, South Africa pressed the International Court of Justice to take interim measures requiring Israel to cease fire and allow unlimited access for humanitarian supplies to reach the Palestinians. The Hague, Netherlands, Jan. 11, 2024.

from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and the Dead Sea and using that water then for massive desalination, irrigation of the deserts, and that way create economic conditions for Israel and Palestine to work in a two-state solution, with the idea that everybody will benefit from it. That's the only workable way we can get out of this crisis.

What is happening in the Middle East is just one aspect, because the other major event of the last week, which did not stop last week, but it started Monday last week, with the German farmers, being supported by transport unions, truck drivers, by bakers, by craftsmen. On Jan. 8, they started a weeklong protest in 100 cities in Germany, in all 16 states, blocking highways, making large rallies, blocking traffic in all of these cities; and then culminating in a major rally in Berlin at the Brandenburg Gate on Saturday, Jan. 13, where German Finance Minister Christian Lindner spoke at the invitation of the peasant farmers' association. His speech was completely booed out, because he said there would be no compromise on the government's intended cuts in supporting prices of fuel for the farmers. So, this is an unresolved situation.

In the coming week, truckers will basically do likewise. And in the meantime, the protests are spreading to Italy. On Jan. 22, there will be a large Italian farmers' protest, and they are already making contact with the German farmers. And it is now spreading to



X/@visegrad24
In large tractor rallies in Nuremberg, Jan. 14 (above) and Dresden, Jan. 10 (left), German farmers and their allies rallied in a Week of Action against the government's policies hostile to food production.

X/@PeterSweden

France, and the French farmers are protesting.

Now, this is an absolute nightmare for the establishments that have moved away from the daily interest of the population to such an extent that it is like a gulf. The governments are pursuing their specific power games and interests and have lost the trust of the population in almost every country. That was also demonstrated by the fact that in the United States, former President Donald Trump won the Republican caucus in Iowa with 51%. Ron DeSantis and Nikki Haley, the two other major Republican contenders, got somewhere around 40% between them. So, Trump won, by far, more than the two of them together, making him clearly the recognized frontrunner for the Republican ticket, which is absolutely freaking out the neoliberal establishment on both sides of the Atlantic. But, as it was with the first vote for Trump in 2016, he is getting the vote of his base, but there are a lot of people who are also expressing just their complete rejection of the neoliberal paradigm.

So, you have a situation where the establishments of the neoliberal, so-called "rules-based order" (and



C-SPAN

Former President Donald Trump, now frontrunner for the Republican Party's nomination in 2024, after winning the Iowa caucuses, Jan. 16, 2024.

nobody knows what these rules are, if they ever existed), have moved away from the populations. The establishments are really scared—and what do they do? Well, on the one side, they have this mega-show [at the World Economic Forum] in Davos, Switzerland Jan. 15-19, where all the millionaires and billionaires and their hangers-on are meeting. This time, the theme of the Davos conference is “Rebuilding Trust.” Well, they will not “rebuild trust” because in order to do that they would have to change policy, and there’s no sign that they’re willing to do that.

What you have instead—and I think people should really pay attention here—is that while the war danger is real, and while the continuation of the present policy, if not changed, has the clear danger of leading to a global war—there are also war scare-stories popping out of the media in many countries. In Germany, for example, *Bild Zeitung* claimed in the past week, in reaction to the farmers’ protests, that they had got their hands on a leaked document of the Defense Ministry saying there may be war with Russia as soon as summer 2025, which happens to be the same time as the German election—how convenient, so maybe you don’t need elections, if there’s this war danger. Similar stories have appeared in Finland, saying war in two years; Sweden, war in three years with Russia. One should be aware of the fact that there is a very large psychological warfare component in all of this, trying to get people back under control: don’t go into the streets, don’t challenge the present policies, because there is this war danger; and supposedly the enemies are Russia, China, Iran, and so forth.

One has to differentiate between the real danger, that this present geopolitical confrontation, in which NATO, the countries of Europe, the U.S., plus a few others like Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, are somehow trying to form a bloc against the BRICS-Plus, the Global South, the Global Majority. But look at the numbers. The North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) countries, which are now claiming that they have some business in the Pacific for whatever reasons, are the minority! The Global Majority [countries] represent 85% of the world’s population, and they’re determined to go for a new economic system which allows the economic development of all of them. They are working with China, because its rise has given them an alternative to the Western neoliberal imperial model. Rather than asking, “How can we talk

to these countries, how can we cooperate and solve the problems of the world together?” the West is trying to stay with its unipolar position, which they have, in any case, already lost, irreversibly. But they don’t want to admit that.

While this geopolitical confrontation is going on, the war danger is very real, and will increase. What people can do is to go in the direction of supporting the farmers, who need the unified support of the entire population, all segments. And we need to move to a completely new paradigm of working together as the one humanity and stop the idea that Russia, China, and the Global South are the “enemy” of mankind—because they are not.

A Public Dialogue on Security and Development

Schlanger: We have two questions from Munashe, who asks: “In the current geopolitical tensions, what are the key steps that can be taken to promote a dialogue and negotiation between global powers and the Global Majority?” And “How can your proposed fundamental principles contribute to shaping this new paradigm?”

Zepp-LaRouche: The optimal thing would obviously be if the UN Security Council and UN General Assembly, or some organization like that, would just put it on the agenda, and say, “We need a new security and development architecture. Let’s discuss the components of this, to make it work.”

Now, given the veto power of the U.S., which they have applied on many occasions, it’s not likely that this will happen like that. So, I think we need a better dialogue in the population about statecraft, about what it takes to self-govern, not only in one country, but among all countries in the world. And why not have student bodies? You can organize, if you are a student in the university, you can organize a forum; if you are a professor, you can organize dialogues among universities; if you are a think-tank member you can organize international Zoom conferences among think-tanks, or you can discuss in any kind of organization you are part of, you can say, “we are in a world crisis and why not have a discussion how we, as probably the only intelligent species in the universe, how can we organize our affairs that we can all survive and have a future?”

Anything is better than what most people say, “Oh,

the world is so horrible I can't even watch the news anymore," and then they don't do anything—and that's the problem!

So, the more people think of themselves as state citizens, who take responsibility for what develops in their country and beyond, the better. Because if we had a lot of educated state citizens, these politicians wouldn't get away with what they're doing.

Western Government Hypocrisy and Citizen Intervention

Schlanger: I'm going to put two questions together here, which build on what you've been talking about. One is from a contact from United Kingdom, about Blinken's trip to Southwest Asia: "What is Biden's actual policy? As the U.S. is calling on Israel to scale back the fighting, the U.S. seems to be expanding the war by joining the UK in targetting Yemen." And, connected to that, we have a question from Paul, who I think is also from the UK: "Who are these Western governments representing? Bankers, the Zionists? Is it even possible to negotiate with psychopaths?" [laughter]

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, you know, the hypocrisy is really quite enormous. Given that the events in Gaza have been transmitted by many live TV newscasts, there were gruesome reports about those who are dying in Gaza, so it's not that there is some horrible genocide happening behind closed doors: It is happening very much in the awareness of the world public. The fact that 57 countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and about 20–30 other countries have come out on the side of South Africa in their suit, it is very clear that the world public [opinion] is shifting, and the whole Global South is shifting, and has been for quite some time, to the side of the Palestinians. So, I think that this statement of Biden, trying to tell Israel to scale down its fight, is a typical (as a lady, I shouldn't say this, but you know what I mean), but there is the phrase to "cover your behind." That's what it is! Because, at the same time, [the U.S.] is continuing to supply weapons to



Federal Ministry of Finance

Christian Lindner, Germany's Minister of Finance, addressed the farmers' rally in Berlin, Jan. 13, and was booed when he insisted there would be no compromise in the government's ruinous agriculture policies.

Israel to continue to conduct exactly the [same] kinds of operations. So where are the words and where are the deeds?

In answer to the second question: I don't know if you could call all of these people psychopaths, but what you can say for sure is that they are so out of touch with reality that they may not be able anymore to understand the real population. I'll give you one funny example: Germany's Finance Minister [Christian] Lindner, as I said, was invited to give a speech to the crowd at the farmers' rally in Berlin. Before he spoke, his lips showed that he was clearly scared of the possible response,

and there was booing all the time against him. And then, when he finally did speak, nothing big happened; there were no eggs thrown at him, and so on, and he was very relieved.

In his speech he said, "Oh, I understand your agriculture problems so well, because one time I was in the countryside, and I cleaned out the horse stable. So, I know how hard you are working all day, and if you're doing this all day long, I can understand how hard this is." Later on, a woman farm representative turned to Lindner and told him, "Well, if you think that going one time to clean out a horse stable gives you any knowledge about agriculture, you're completely off the wall!"

That's typical. That was so telling with these people, most of whom really have no idea what the hardships are for the population, what are their problems, because they're sitting in their fancy ministries, and going from conference to conference in luxury jets—they don't get it.

The only thing that can be done is, you have to support what the farmers are doing. Every segment of the population should ally with them because we need a complete change in policy. We need to reject this fraudulent ecological policy which is only used to create another bubble—and the farmers are quite aware of that. We need to go back to a policy like in the postwar period of reconstruction, focussing on scientific and technological progress, on values like in-

dustriousness, on honesty, all of these things which we seem to have lost in the West— only the Chinese seem to have such values these days. And we need to go back to our own great Classical culture.

So, it's not that there is no way for us to solve it, but it does require much more active intervention by a lot of citizens.

BRICS Trading in National Currencies

Schlanger: This is Helga Zepp-LaRouche you're listening to. She has an [article](#) on the farm demonstrations posted on the Schiller Institute website.

Helga we have a question from India, from someone who has signed onto some of our initiatives: "How would a BRICS currency help in overcoming the economic problems of third world countries?"

Zepp-LaRouche: Oh, I think it is very clear that the New Development Bank—headquartered in Shanghai under the leadership of former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, and about which Brazil's current President Lula da Silva said it "will become the great bank of the Global South"—will like certain other banks that already exist around the Belt and Road Initiative, issue credit for investment in productive areas, like industry, agriculture, infrastructure, science, technology. And I think the idea of a reserve currency, separate from the U.S. dollar—which I know countries are working on—will mean that the countries that are part of this new system will no longer be dependent on the IMF [and therefore subject to its onerous] conditionalities.

We have been aware of these IMF conditionalities, for many, many decades. They are largely responsible for [creating] the present [depressed] condition of many developing countries, particularly before China came into play. The IMF forbids investment in infrastructure, forbids investment in healthcare systems or education, forcing the respective countries to pay off their debt first! So, if you want to talk about a "debt trap," it wasn't China that caused the debt trap. Most of the [accumulated] debt of African na-



Brazilian Presidency

The New Development Bank under its new President, Dilma Rousseff, will issue credit for investments in productive fields such as industry, agriculture, infrastructure, science, and technology.

tions, for example, is owed to the banks of the Club of Paris.

Now there is trade in national currencies, which is happening already all over the place—in rupees, in rubles, in renminbi, in reals—all kinds of other local currencies—that already gives a greater sovereignty to the countries that engage in such trade. But then add to that a credit system, which functions like a clearing-house between the different national systems.

Every country should have a national bank [as opposed to a private central bank]. And then, you have clearing houses to regulate long-term international investments among the different countries. It will be totally regulated by the sovereign decisions of these countries, and not by some political criteria and sermons—that countries should make usually austere social changes, under the rubric of "democracy" or "rule of law," all synonyms for some intervention into the internal affairs of the respective countries. Once there is this new system, it will give much, much greater power to the sovereign countries themselves.

It would be most advisable for the countries of the Global South to join that [system]—because the problem is not a conflict among countries! The conflict is with what we call the British Empire. The British Empire is not the British people; it is the system of neoliberal finance sitting in Wall Street, sitting in Silicon Valley, sitting in the City of London, and the associated military-industrial complex. The major in-

vestment firms, of these entities, the military-industrial complex associated with that—and the food cartels, and insurance companies, are completely interwoven. So the “enemy,” is not countries and conflict among countries, but a vast system of exploitation run for the benefit of the few—those people who can afford to speculate big time, who are becoming richer and richer by the day—and the vast majority of countries whose people are becoming poorer in every country around the globe.

So, I think the more quickly everybody moves to a new system—which used to be called the “American System” of Alexander Hamilton, and which is applied today by many countries, and which actually is the tradition of what Lyndon LaRouche developed in terms of his physical economy, and the associated credit system with that—[the better]. All of these things are available, and I think we may even see a big change to this, in this present year of 2024.

German Farmers Fight for their Existence

Schlanger: Helga, we have this from Diana, who always watches you from Canada: “I’m so happy to see the German farmers and others standing up for the people.” And there is a second question from someone who identifies herself as a “small-town girl”: “Will the farm demonstrations fizzle out in Germany, or keep expanding? And how can we support them?”

Zepp-LaRouche: As of now, I don’t think they will fizzle out, simply because the German government is playing hard [ball]—they’re not giving up, they’re not making a compromise. So, the farmers have said that since this is a fight for their existence—especially the smaller and medium-size farms—I think it will continue. And as I said, it will now spread to the logistics people, to the truckers, to the transport people.

And I can only say: Send support messages. If you are someplace close by these demonstrations, join them! Or contact the Schiller Institute, and we will make sure that we will find some way that you can get active. Many farmers have told us they are really out on a limb. One farmer made a very moving video which is on the internet; it’s in German, but I think you can get the idea easily enough. It is from a farmer who said he drove his tractor 1,200 km round trip, that he spent €100 for a hotel, and many of his colleagues

did likewise, or many of them slept in their tractors in the freezing cold; and he said “we did all of that, and then, there was nobody from the government to talk to us!”

He told us he has never experienced anything so degrading, so absolutely indifferent and uncaring about what is going on in the population. And he and many others said, “therefore, it is so important” when they see support from the population, and they get a thumbs up from people on the side of the road.

So, find a way of organizing in your environment to support them. I’m very happy that the German farmers have had the courage to do this, because Germany is about to collapse! It’s not just the farmers who are at risk of losing everything. I really hope that other organizations, like the medium-size industries join them, because the farmers have taken the responsibility to fight for the interest of all of Germany.

Germany is collapsing! The Mittelstand (mid-sized) industry is in a free fall for the same reason the farmers can’t make it under the rising energy prices, and the absolutely insane bureaucratic rules coming from Berlin, and also from Brussels. So, I can only say, do something to organize support for this movement, because they’re fighting not only for themselves, they’re fighting for all of Germany, and actually for the whole world.

‘Rules-Based Order’ Responsible for Mass Migrations

Schlanger: And here’s the final question, concerning the Republican caucus vote in Iowa. Daniel writes: “I don’t see the vote in Iowa as a reaction to the collapse of the West, but as a protest against immigration. What is your view of this?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, yes, but what is “immigration”? Why is there a “refugee problem”? I think all the problems in the world can be really brought down to the rise of the so-called “rules-based order,” especially after the end of the Cold War. This was a branching point in time where communism was given up, by free will, without violence, no tanks—[it] peacefully disintegrated. Lyndon LaRouche and the Schiller Institute intervened with a peace plan, the Eurasian Land-Bridge, to connect all of Europe and Asia through development corridors, and also connect them with similar corridors in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

Now that would have been the economic basis for a peace plan. It would have meant going back to [President] Franklin D. Roosevelt's original idea, what he thought the Bretton Woods system should have become—namely, a mechanism to massively increase the living standards in the so-called developing sector. Now, Roosevelt died at the wrong moment. Harry Truman took over with [UK Prime Minister Winston] Churchill, and they designed the Bretton Woods system in order *not* to end the underdevelopment of the developing countries! So, colonialism continued.

What you're seeing right now, with the rebellion of the Global South, is an absolute determination to end this colonialism in its new form. Now, why are people migrating as refugees through the Americas to the Mexican-American border? Why are they risking drowning in the Mediterranean to get to Europe, where they are not treated well at all? Why are there refugee problems at all? Because of the lack of development!

If you have prosperous countries in Africa, in Latin America, in Asia, people will stay home! Normally,

everybody likes their own home better than some far-away country! So, the migrant question as such is already the result of this colonialism in its modern form. I'm not sure if Trump, if he becomes President, has the wisdom to ally with the countries of the Global South, because that's the only way how this problem can be solved.

So, I think you should rethink it, because it may not be so easy and so simple. What we have right now is a revolt of the Global South, and a revolt of the countries protesting against the colonialist conditions for them, and the fight of the farmers protesting against the same mechanism, the same financial system, the same cartels, the same structures: Then you recognize that the situation hangs much more together than you would think.

Schlanger: With that, Helga, thank you for joining us today, and hopefully we'll see you again next week.

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes. And get active with us in the meantime!

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