

*Schiller Institute Webcast Dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche*

# What Putin's Re-Election Means for NATO's War Hawks

*The following is an edited transcript of the weekly Schiller Institute dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche on Wednesday, March 20, 2024. Embedded links have been added. The video is available [here](#).*

**Harley Schlanger:** Hello and welcome to our weekly dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and chairwoman of the Schiller Institute. Today is Wednesday, March 20, 2024. I'm Harley Schlanger and I'll be your host today. Please send your questions and comments to [questions@schillerinstitute.org](mailto:questions@schillerinstitute.org)

Let's begin our discussion by talking about the re-election of Russia's President Putin, who easily overcame efforts by the West to undermine him by targeting Russia, by running operations against Russia designed to weaken it. And yet they didn't succeed, and that helped give him an overwhelming margin. But among the statements attacking his reelection, Western leaders are repeating their warnings that NATO has to prepare for a war with Russia, saying the Western governments must gear up military budgets to prepare for war. European Union Council President Charles Michel even did a parody of Orwell's *1984*, saying, "If we want peace, we must prepare for war."

There are two questions on the Russian election. The first one is: "What is driving this reckless rhetoric from NATO?" And secondly, from someone from the Middle East, "How is the non-Eurocentric world responding to Putin's reelection and the war buildup overall in the Global North?"

**Helga Zepp-LaRouche:** Well, if you are trying to look at this election result, it's almost as if this happened in two different universes: One is the Western media and mainstream politicians who all say this is a complete farce, this was no democracy, this was pre-orchestrated. But then when you look at it from the Russian side—and

I did watch the celebrations in the Kremlin, in which Putin's election victory coincided with the 10th anniversary of Crimea rejoining Russia—you get a very different picture. People who are actually knowledgeable about the internal situation in Russia are telling you that Putin does have the support of the population, reflected by him receiving 87% of the vote. And it is especially the perception of the Russian population how incredibly venomous the West has become against Russia, which made this election result even stronger.

So the West is obviously driven, and there are peo-



kremlin.ru

*Vladimir Putin addresses Russian citizens on the outcome of the presidential election.*

ple who are more concerned about their own position as leaders of government and reelection, rather than the consequence of what is happening. I think in a certain sense, the election result was to be expected and in my view, [it] is a good thing, because compared with most of the leaders in the West, Putin is actually the incarnation of patience and reason. And I know that a lot of people will now get hyperventilation attacks, but so be it.

The problem is that there is right now a rush to war.

You mentioned some of it, and I could elaborate much more, but I think the greatest wakeup call comes from the [UN Secretary-General Guterres](#), who yesterday spoke at the open debate of the UN Security Council. He gave a warning, and I actually find this warning so precise in its wording that I want to read it to you, because I think it will not be published widely in the Western media. But I think its appeal to wake up is of the utmost importance. So let me read you an important quote from that speech. He said:

Today, we meet at a time when geopolitical tensions and mistrust have escalated the risk of nuclear warfare to its highest point in decades....

From academics and civil society groups, calling for an end to the nuclear madness.... Humanity ... [is] calling the world back from the brink....

And what is the response? States possessing nuclear weapons are absent from the table of dialogue. Investments in the tools of war are outstripping investments in the tools of peace. Arms budgets are growing, while diplomacy and development budgets are shrinking....

The [dialogue must turn to valuing](#) and developing populations for their skills, their talents, their genius. A cynical, dog-eat-dog mentality, where to get ahead requires pushing someone else down, has led us to a horrid specter of famine, death and thermonuclear extermination.

And actually, if you want to read the whole speech, do so, because it is absolutely not one iota of an exaggeration. Right now, I think we are reaching an extremely dangerous point, because there are many reports, from the French military and others, estimates that the Ukrainian army is about to be defeated; about to collapse. And



NATO

*A French marine fires his machine gun during mechanized infantry maneuvers in Ādaži, Latvia.*

then, naturally, you have all these efforts to surround Russia with new military encroachments. Macron supposedly is threatening to send 20,000 French troops into Ukraine, which from the Russian standpoint is a red line. Then you have the Polish-German rapid deployment force being built; you have British efforts to massively increase the drone supply; you have Stoltenberg

visiting Azerbaijan, making a special treaty between Azerbaijan and NATO: Now, look at the map! What happened to the promise “not to move NATO one inch to the East”? You have an encroachment on Russia from all sides, and I think we are really heading toward nuclear war if we don’t stop this. And if you look at the hysteria: You have all these warmongers—bellicose people—in Germany, for example.

One voice of reason is coming from the SPD Bundestag leader Rolf Mützenich, who says—he does all the verbiage which you’re

supposed to do, about Russian aggression and so forth, but then he says: “It’s time to think about freezing the war, to then eventually come to a diplomatic solution.”

Now, if you look at the condition of Ukraine, more than 500,000 people have been killed, the economy is



CC/Michael Lucan

*SPD Bundestag leader Rolf Mützenich has called for freezing the war in Ukraine to seek a diplomatic solution.*

in a shambles, people are desperate, and refugees have left the country. So, it is no longer in a position to keep up this fight. It's not for Ukraine, it's for the ambition of the West to defeat Russia, as they have said many times. But this will not happen, because Russia is a nuclear power, and contrary to Western media, Putin did not threaten the West with nuclear war. In his recent speech and interview with RIA Novosti on March 13, he simply said again what is the official Russian doctrine: that if the territorial integrity of Russia is threatened, then the use of nuclear weapons is an option for Russia and probably will happen.

So, to keep pushing this idea that you have to defeat Russia, which is right now the strongest nuclear weapons power on the planet, is pure insanity. And I can only say that people should listen to Guterres and get to the negotiation table. In the age of nuclear war, war cannot be an option of conflict resolution. Now compare this crazy behavior from the Western politicians with the statesman-like behavior of Mrs. Pandor, the South African Foreign Minister who just visited Washington. She is calling for diplomacy, and basically saying you have to talk to everybody, because if you don't talk any more, you deprive yourself of any option for a solution.

So, I think the situation is extremely worrisome. And all people of reason, who are not completely crazy, should join the chorus of people demanding a change in this policy.

**Schlanger:** We have a follow-up question on that. Someone wrote in: "With the West in disarray and with the election campaigns looking pretty bad for Western countries, the fact that Putin is now reelected for six years, and that last year, China's President Xi Jinping was reelected, that the two of them together represent a source of stability for a move away from a unipolar order. Do you think that's part of the reason for the hysteria coming from the West?"

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Yes, because the Western establishments, rather than reviewing their own policy and recognizing that the present escalation in the strategic situation is the blowback from what they initiated, rather than having a thoughtful analysis of what caused the present crisis, they keep doing the blame-game. They call any country which does not submit to the un-

ipolar conception of the world, "dictatorships," and "autocracies," and so forth, which in most cases bears very little resemblance with actual reality, because it does not take into account the tradition and culture and history of these nations that are accused like that. China is a prime example.

So, I think they are not willing to look at the policies which caused this, above all the expansion of NATO to the East, which is crossing again and again, lines which the Russians regard as red lines. When Guterres says this is the worst crisis in decades, this includes the Cuban Missile Crisis. Because if you look at what happened in the Cuban Missile Crisis, when Soviet missiles were put in Cuba, well, if you



UN Photo/Violaine Martin

*Dr. Naledi Pandor, Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, who says one must talk to everyone if solutions to conflicts are to be found.*

now have American and NATO warheads all along the Russian border, what is the difference? None! So, if Russia says, there has to be a stop, it is completely understandable; the only difference is, you don't have a Kennedy in the White House, and you don't have a Khrushchev; you have a quite different constellation right now.

So, I think we are really at a point of maximum crisis, and we have to defeat this war-mongering faction in the West, or else it may be too late very soon.

**Schlanger:** You mentioned the visit of the Foreign Minister of South Africa Naledi Pandor to Washington. From a South African viewer, we have the comment: "I'm very proud of South Africa's Foreign Minister Pandor going to Washington and speaking the truth about Israel's policy of genocide against the Palestin-



ians. The South African government has played a very important role at the International Court of Justice. Will her words in Washington have any effect?”

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I’m sure they will have an effect among many people, because what she does is followed by the entire international diplomatic community. There are many good-hearted Americans who are looking at the situation, who are not in favor of what the Biden administration does, nor are they in favor—if this report is actually confirmed—of Kushner, the son-in-law of former President Donald Trump, who is praising the lush water-front real estate in Gaza which soon will be on the market. Now, if that turns out to be a real remark, it would be quite disgusting and telling.

But there are many Americans who find it abhorrent; they are really generally disgusted with what the American policy is right now. So I think her words will be heard. And hopefully, the better-minded Americans will do something to push the situation in Gaza to an immediate ceasefire, and put so much pressure on the Biden administration, that they have to do it.

**Schlanger:** I have a follow-up question from someone from Africa, Menashe, who asks: “Given Putin’s warnings about the potential consequences of a direct conflict between Russia and NATO, what are your thoughts on the role of African nations in promoting peace and stability on the global stage?”

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I think Mrs. Pandor is a prime example of the moral status which African leaders have at this moment, and I think the African continent as a whole is really moving forward and assuming its rightful role on the world stage. I think the Spirit of Bandung, which will have its 70th anniversary next year, is fully revived. The idea that colonialism will be put to sleep forever is clearly guiding most African leaders right now, and many African nations have a clear policy that they want to be middle-level income countries very soon; they assert the right that they produce and process their own resources: In other words, the status of just being raw materials exporters, and leaving the profit to

the cartels, is definitely over. African nations rightfully demand the control over resources and land to process these resources in semi-finished production, finished production, and have the full industrial chain, so that there is a perspective of reaching decent living standards fairly soon.

I think this is the most fantastic development, and if people in the West would not be so completely decadent, they would be happy about that! What better situation than to end the poverty for literally billions of people around the world! And one can only hope that the present motion to increase the BRICS—the BRICS are now BRICS-10; soon they will be BRICS-40 or -50, because 40 countries have applied for membership.



UNRWA Facebook Page

*Those who are refusing entry into Palestine of the food convoys “must assume responsibility” for the consequences, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in Jordan, March 25.*

And I think the majority of the Global South wants to establish a just new world economic order, which will not be replacing the present imperial design, but it will put up some completely different system, whereby national sovereignty and equal status of all countries will be respected. I think this is really the lesson people understand from the 600 years of colonialism; and that era is fortunately coming to an end.

So I expect big changes. I think really, that motion by the Global South in one sense is the real reason that some countries are fearing to lose hegemony; but I think we must find a bridge whereby the common interest of every single country, including the United States, including even the British (even so, that some-

times seems difficult to imagine), but even the Europeans who under the EU are presently in a grip of trying to—they're almost more crazy than some of the Americans in their push for war, in which the word diplomacy has been almost completely forgotten. But we have to change that; and we have to establish a system where equal participation of every country, big and small, in the new system, will be made possible.

Or, else, we will not survive—and I'm quite serious about that. If it comes to nuclear war, I'm absolutely certain that it will be the end of civilization. All the efforts by various departments and ministries and whatnot to prove that there will be no nuclear winter after a nuclear strike, that only 20 million people in the United States will die—that's horrible enough—but that will not happen. I think the big danger is that you're really playing with the existence of the entire civilization.

**Schlanger:** Now, I want to take a few questions on Southwest Asia and what's happening in Gaza.

First: "On Schumer's comments calling for new elections to replace Netanyahu, there's some ambiguity in what Schumer actually said, that is, that the elections should wait until the war is winding down." The questioner asks, "Does this reflect a shift in Biden's policy, or is it just hypocritical rhetoric in response to the growing opposition to Biden and his support, military and financial, for Israel?"

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I'm afraid it's not anything good. Because if you look at the situation in Gaza right now, the reports coming from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk and other UN institutions, there is no longer the threat of famine, there is a full-fledged famine. Reports are that every single day 450 people in Gaza are dying, not of bullets, but of hunger, disease, of just being weakened and dying of all of these factors. And altogether, I think, 1.9 million people in Gaza, or maybe even 2.2 million people are immediately in danger of starvation!

Now, there is only one option: That would be to *immediately—immediately*—without any second pause,

withdraw all support from Israel—financially, militarily—and force Israel—I mean, Israel is just a small country. The United States is supposedly the biggest military power on the planet. It would be quite easy for the United States to assert its authority: that this should stop; and an immediate, permanent ceasefire be established; and immediate humanitarian aid, without restraint, because it's a huge job—and the farcical dropping of food by helicopter, that's just so ridiculous it doesn't mean anything. A small number of people are helped, but it's not in proportion to what is going on.

This failure will be a stain on the moral stature of all of humanity, at least those who are not fighting it.

So in this situation, you have Schumer, who says that Netanyahu is no longer representing the interests of Israel, because if Israel becomes a pariah, then that is not in Israel's interest. Therefore, there should be new elections—once the war winds down!

I think that particular phrase is something to be noted, because that means Schumer is condoning this operation which Netanyahu is conducting right now, "destroying Hamas, making sure that Gaza will never be a threat" (these are quotes, now), translates into that there will be no people left at the end of this whole affair! So, Schumer may sound like he's criticizing Netanyahu, but if you look at the wording, "until after the war has wound down," I don't think that's a

real change, at all.

**Schlanger:** Sticking with the situation in Southwest Asia, we have a question from Richard Trifan, a composer, a director of performing arts at the Eurasia Center, and he asks: "Is it possible that the Oasis Plan can be submitted to the United States House of Representatives for their support?" And then he says, "I believe Speaker Johnson is a reasonable man and would see the benefits to all parties that this plan will bring."

What do you think, Helga?

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Well, Mr. Trifan, help us to bring it there. I think it's an excellent idea. I think—look, this thing is so visionary, it really can solve the situation,



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*A report from UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk states that there is a full-fledged famine. Every day 450 people die in Gaza, not from bullets, but from hunger and disease.*

maybe not in a day or so; but just imagine what the difference would be if, from the United States and maybe other countries as well, there would come the announcement, “Yes, we are going to implement the Oasis Plan. We will create a future for Israel, for Palestine, for all the neighbors”—because many of the neighbors are quite in a distressed situation, like Yemen, or Syria, or Iraq; all the other countries of the region: What a change it would be if such an announcement would come! It would change the dynamic immediately! It would create hope; it would motivate young and old people to take up shovels, start to build houses, build streets. And what we have proposed in terms of creating much more freshwater in the region: We have the canals we have proposed, but one can even think about other projects.

With modern technology and cheap energy which you would get through nuclear energy, you can create new rivers! That’s a very fascinating idea, that if you take this whole region—which is desert, desert, desert—you can make it green. First you can access aquifers, you can make ionization of the atmosphere, you create dams, you create new rivers, but you make the whole region green. You have enough to develop agriculture, forests, build new cities.

And then the terrorism would stop, because the main injustice would be overcome by a system of prosperity, of plenty, of hope for every young person who is looking to the future, and would see, it is much more advantageous to study, to create a family, to be a teacher. So I think this is really something. If we can just find some wise politicians who have the courage right now, they can change history for the better.

So I would ask you and all our other viewers to help us to put it on the agenda. Because I’m perfectly certain that all you need is a couple of breakthroughs, and it is an idea which will take a road of its own.

**Schlanger:** Let me remind people that on April 13, there will be a [Schiller Institute online conference](#) on the Oasis Plan. You can find the information for the conference on the Schiller Institute website, and you can register for it: That’s on April 13.



UN Photo/Manuel Elias

*The Oasis Plan concept is applicable well beyond Israel-Palestine. Here the UN Security Council meets on the catastrophic situation in Sudan and South Sudan.*

And also, you can get the [Oasis Plan video](#), which will give you the information you need to follow through with what Helga just said, about bringing this to every elected body in the United States, and in Europe, and all over the world.

Helga, here’s a question on the United Nations: “A multipolar world requires a truly democratic UN, with well-equipped peacekeeping forces. How, in your opinion, will the world overcome the West in the United Nations”—I think primarily the United States and the British—“or do you think that another institute, for example, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization could take over that role?”

**Zepp-LaRouche:** No, I think the United Nations should remain, and there are many forces, because it’s the only truly representative organization in which every country has a voice. However, it is generally discussed right now that the UN Security Council no longer is capable of dealing with it. First of all, because if only five nuclear powers have veto power, then it is unfortunately possible that one country, again and again, vetoes everything and makes the whole UN Security Council dysfunctional.

There is right now a huge effort to reform the UN. I think Mrs. Pandor also mentioned the fact that India is 1.4 billion people, and they have no permanent presence, which makes it, for example, already not very representative. The fact that Africa is not yet on the



permanent UN Security Council, is also a complete travesty.

One other problem is that the UN Security Council is the only legal institution that can enforce policies which are made as decisions by the Security Council itself, or as we are witnessing right now, by the International Court of Justice, which doesn't have an enforcement side. The International Court of Justice, for example, makes a ruling and then gives it to the UN Security Council, which is supposed to implement it. But if that institution is blocked by vetoes, then there is no enforcement.

So, I think the reform of the United Nations definitely has to have a way of having peacekeeping troops, and having the strength to make governments comply with decisions. That's the only way, until the human species develops to be reasonable, which I think will be possible because, I think the present behavior of some countries is really not a reflection of the adulthood of mankind, but for the time being I think we need such instruments.

I'm perfectly certain that some time, not too far in the future, we will become reasonable, meaning that you pursue your policies in a completely different way, like scientists do, or like musicians working and playing together in an orchestra: Why can not the United Nations work like scientific teams, who are working in a crash program to get results? Why can they not work like orchestras with choruses, and nice performances where everybody is focused on the result?

I think that will be the future of humanity: And I think mankind is capable of that, and I don't think it's a utopia, because I think the present behavior of greed and bellicose efforts, I think that's a childhood disease—and I'm quite certain that mankind will grow out of it.

**Schlanger:** Two more questions, Helga. You may not know much about this, because it just happened, but from our friend Angela from Ireland, she reported that the Prime Minister of Ireland resigned today, after a failed attempt to push constitutional changes, which she said would have been on behalf of the World Economic Forum. The referendum failed, and she said, "the people won."

Do you have any information on what's going on in Ireland? Clearly the Irish are standing fairly strongly in defense of the Palestinian people, but other than that, I'm not sure.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** No, this news catches me by surprise. But I can only say that I followed the Irish policy in the recent period with great interest, for exactly the reason you just said. But I'll inform myself, immediately after this broadcast.

**Schlanger:** OK. A final question, then, and this is somewhat urgent: There are reports that Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti, who remains in prison in Israel, as he has been at least more than 20 years—that he's being tortured and subjected to beatings. And that many people see him as a leader who could serve in the interests of peace in the region. The person who sent the email said, "Please, can you call attention to this? We need a mobilization to demand his release."

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I think that this is absolutely right, because of the historic role of Mr. Barghouti, and the fact that he's really appreciated by all factions in the political spectrum makes him an absolutely unique potential figure to be a leader of a Palestinian State in the near future. And we should obviously get more information about what you're reporting, and I'm promising that we will make it a big factor in our mobilization. And I'm calling upon all of you watching to help.

What is happening right now in Palestine, and in Gaza in particular, but also in the West Bank, is really something in which the world conscience is called upon: This is not an affair of the Palestinians. The moral fitness of the entire human species is being tested. If we allow this to happen, and that includes the fate of Mr. Barghouti, then our own ability to survive as a species is highly in doubt. So, I call on all people of conscience to help with what you are proposing.

**Schlanger:** OK, those are the questions I have for you. Any closing words for today, Helga?

**Zepp-LaRouche:** Well, we have now the Oasis Plan conference on April 13: Organize for that. Tell your neighbors, your social media contacts, just everybody to attend that, and make that conference a forceful intervention into the present situation. Every week, on Fridays, we have the IPC—the International Peace Coalition meeting, in which we are trying to pull in more and more people, warning of the immediate danger of nuclear war, and naturally the war in Gaza.

And so, help us in building an International Peace

Coalition, which eventually should include everybody, because we are all world citizens, in light of the danger of a world war.

We are also fighting for a [new international security and development architecture](#) which must take into account the interest of every single country, because otherwise it does not function.

We have the open letter by [Mexican Congressman Benjamín Robles Montoya](#), who is appealing to that, that in light of the danger of nuclear war, such a security architecture must be put on the agenda. So spread the [letter of Congressman Robles](#), in multiple languages. Get it to all parliamentarians, all mayors, elected officials. Let's try to get a break in the situation. We really must be aware that we have never been in such a danger as right now—that is my most firm conviction. And we have to get out of it by changing the paradigm completely.

**Schlanger:** Helga, let me close with this: We got a response from someone who had asked a question about the United Nations, and he wrote back: "Thank you for taking my question. Thank you so much for your insightful answer. It really helped me understand the time and the role of the United Nations." So, I think we



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*Mexican Congressman Benjamín Robles Montoya is calling for a new international security and development architecture to prevent a nuclear war.*

should make sure that people come to us, every week, with questions and comments, precisely because this is the best way to ensure that people are equipped to do the organizing that's necessary.

So, with that, we'll close, and hopefully we'll see you again next week, Helga.

**Zepp-LaRouche:** I hope we have another week!

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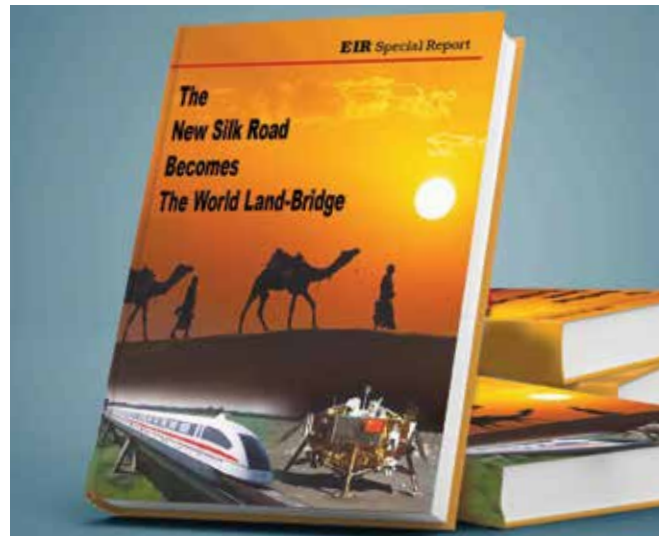
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