

# Zepp-LaRouche, Vereycken to Media: Lift Sanctions, Preserve Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan, Syria and All Nations

Feb. 24—*The following is the transcript of the media briefing given Feb. 22 outside the world headquarters in Paris of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), by Karel Vereycken, leader of the French Schiller Institute, and Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and international leader of the Schiller Institute.*

**Karel Vereycken:** Hello, dear friends, wherever you are. I'm Karel Vereycken of the French Schiller Institute, together with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder of the Schiller Institute. We just went inside this building of UNESCO in Paris, to present the petition we started in November last year in Kabul. It's an international [petition](#) to lift the sanctions against Afghanistan and other countries like Syria which have been cut off from international cooperation on cultural heritage. Everybody is crying, weeping crocodile tears that the cultural heritage of Afghanistan, which is actually world cultural heritage, is being destroyed by ISIS and others. It is completely a kind of cultural Cold War; it's cultural apartheid.

We are calling on UNESCO, we are calling on international governments, to lift the sanctions. We think that in July, during the 46th summit of UNESCO, there should be a full return to normal scientific cooperation on world cultural heritage including all countries of the world. This is the basis for peace and mutual development, to build trust around the common heritage and culture of world civilization.

The petition is now public. We have sent it to 200 delegates of UNESCO. We are calling on them to answer our questions; they should answer. Please circulate this message. Now, I give the word to Helga.

**Helga Zepp-LaRouche:** I greet you as well. Our purpose is to try to lift the sanctions against the archaeological cooperation, because the Afghan people suffered 40 years of war, and they deserve peace and prosperity. They represent an ancient civilization which had a very glorious past. This region has been known as the Land of a Thousand Cities. Many technologies were discovered here, which contributed to the development of all of mankind. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is committed to preserving this heritage, and they have expressed this commitment that they want to preserve the cultural goods.

But the Afghan archaeological scientists need the collaboration with other archaeologists around the world. We have collected 550 signatures from Afghan people and many VIPs around the world. We will continue to make this an issue.

We appeal to UNESCO to stop the sanctions, because they are not hurting the government of Afghanistan, but they are hurting our common cultural heritage. If the sanctions continue, it would mean to continue the geopolitical game which has been played with Afghanistan for a very long time. Our common cultural heritage must be above ephemeral strife, so we will fight for this for the sake of our own identity as one human species, or as one common heritage.

**Vereycken:** I just want to add one thing I forgot to mention. We also are bringing a letter signed by the Minister of Culture of Afghanistan, in which the Minister says that the new government, in power for two years, is completely committed to protecting the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Afghanistan, including the pre-Islamic, the non-Islamic, and the Islamic heritage. Thank you.