

Ray McGovern

## The Real Interest of the United States in Asia

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Schiller Institute

It's been rather enlightening to be participating in this seminar. I have to tell you, this is unique. The perspectives that have been adduced are not available in mainstream media in the United States. My compliments to the organizers. I also would like to welcome the 82nd Airborne, in the person of one of the former speakers. I know about the 82nd Airborne. I spent a lot of time at Ft. Bragg. 82nd all the way! Just by way of mentioning that I have military as well as intelligence credentials.

Now, I've been taking some notes on what's going on this morning and am really quite interested in sharing just a couple of thoughts before my [pre-recorded] presentation.

Vision: What we heard from Helga [Zepp-LaRouche] was visionary. And, without vision, the people perish. I'm not the first to say that, right? So, I welcome the chance to think, outside the box, to identify the real factors in play, and I'm not astonished, but I'm just really, really elated to see that that can be done in a forum such as this.

*Metanoia* is the Greek word for what we need. *Nous* is mind, *meta*, adding strength—turn the mind upside down and have a different outlook on life. That's what we need. That's what we need in the United States, when we talk about how the United States fits into all this. I'm going to say a little bit about this, because it's *metanoia* that we need. It's hubris—another Greek word—overweening arrogance, overweening pride which was the

downfall of many a Greek hero—that's what we have to contend with.

Mr. Arlacchi acknowledged two of the main problems. One, of course, is the media, and the other is the MIC—the Military Industrial Complex. People need an enemy. If you want to develop and make and sell arms, you need an enemy. Okay? Those are big, big factors in our outlook [we are examining] here.

There's been no acknowledgement of how these same people who planned Afghanistan escape any accountability for the hundreds of thousands of people killed in Iraq, Afghanistan; the millions of refugees driven from their homes. They've escaped that accountability.

And so, when I look at this, and I hear pronouncements, still, in U.S. media, I'm really struck by the hubris that's tinged with—let's admit it—racism. I will address that in my remarks later.

FDR, Franklin Roosevelt has been cited. Let me cite someone who goes back a little farther, a couple centuries before, and was a specialist in this particular area we're talking about today—Afghanistan: Kipling, Rudyard Kipling: [recites]

It is not wise for the Christian white  
To hustle the Asian brown.  
For the Christian riles and the Asian smiles,  
And he weareth the Christian down.  
At the end of the fight,  
Lies a tombstone white,  
With the name of the late deceased.  
And the epitaph drear:  
"A fool lies here,  
Who tried to hustle the East."

Now, in terms of the people responsible for this 20 years of carnage in Afghanistan, people like [Donald] Rumsfeld and [Zbigniew] Brzezinski, are probably where they're supposed to be right now. But there are other people still around; there's [former Vice President] Dick Cheney, there's [former] Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, all those generals: McChrystal, Pe-

traeus—they need to be held to account. I don't suggest we send them to Gitmo [U.S. detention camp in Guantánamo Bay], but the Isle of Elba sounds like a pretty good place for Napoleonic folks like them. They need to be held accountable.

Now, is that likely? Well, because of the media role, and because the generals escape all kinds of responsibility and accountability, nothing is going to happen about that now. In other words, when Kipling said much more briefly when his son died in another feckless war, "If they ask us why we died, tell them, 'Because our fathers lied.'" That's what we're dealing with, here. The problem is the American people have been brainwashed with these lies, and these lies have been tinged with racism.

So, not to be the skunk at the picnic, not to be a wet blanket on vision, which is necessary, lest the people perish, let me just warn, that *metanoia* of the kind needed here, is going to take a long time. What's my "bottom line"? *Don't wait! Don't wait!* There are enough people, there are enough countries immediately involved in the area, and I would dare say, allies in Europe and the Far East—U.S. allies—who've shown a measure of independence, not evident since 76 years ago when World War II ended.... What am I thinking about? I'm thinking about Germany and Nord Stream 2. Man! It looks like the Germans have said, "Well, it looks like we can stand on our own. We can defy the diktat of the United States."

So, *Don't wait! Don't wait! Metanoia* will come. Sadly, it often comes only by pressure, by experience of circumstance. But it will come. Meanwhile, we have to forget about bombing the hell out of Afghanistan. That has to stop. And it should be within the capability of the world community to stop that right now, to speak out against it.

I've said enough by way of introduction, but I just want to lead into what I have to say subsequently, by saying that we have to deal with this hubris, we have to deal with this *weltanschauung* tinged with racism, to get the American people to realize what's going on. That's going to take time. *Don't wait!* Thank you very much.

## What Has Driven U.S. Foreign Policy?

*Mr. McGovern's pre-recorded presentation follows.*

I want to talk a little bit about the U.S. attitude toward places like Vietnam. An attitude, which is, of course, that we are the indispensable country and that others are less worthy. There is a notable racist tinge to

this, and I dare say more than a tinge.

I have a bunch of quotes which we'll go through here, but I also want to just start out with my conscience being awakened by this fellow named General Westmoreland, who headed our troops in Vietnam. After the battle, he saw fit to say, "Well, you know, the Oriental, they don't put the same value on life. You know, life is cheap in the Orient, so you have to understand that, right?"—which is a throwback to 1945. Westmoreland's from South Carolina. So is Jimmy Burns, then Secretary of State. It was only Jimmy Burns and Harry Truman—who himself was a racist—that approved and ordered the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. So, racism plays a big role in all this. And in Vietnam, of course, the talk was of these bare-footed people who couldn't measure up to what the Ivy Leaguers in our government knew that would be the challenge from the U.S.

Let's go to the first quote, from the war hero, France's Gen. Philippe Leclerc, who was sent to Indochina after World War II to report on the number of troops required for France to recapture it. He said:

It would require 500,000 men, and even with 500,000, France could not win.

Now that was 1946.

Fast forward to the 1960s, the U.S. puts in more than 500,000 troops, and could not win. What gave us the idea that we could win?

Ah! Another warning. This one to President John Kennedy in April 1961 from Gen. Douglas MacArthur:

Anyone wanting to commit American ground forces to the mainland of Asia should have his head examined.

I would add a little footnote here that the people running the war in Afghanistan, including Bobby Gates, Secretary of Defense—they knew what they were doing. They knew how feckless this operation was. And then Gates had the temerity to say at West Point just before he left office, "You know, if I were advising U.S. presidents, I would tell them what MacArthur told them. Never get involved in a ground war in Asia." He was responsible, largely responsible—he and Hillary [Clinton] and the generals, for egging [President] Obama on to reinforce the surge, the surge. And here we are, 20 years after the start of the war.

Here's Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus. He actually was bragging about how his troops and his Marines especially, could deliver gasoline through the Khyber Pass, through all, through a couple of these passes. They'd take losses from the Taliban; they'd have to pay off a bunch of people. But they'd get that gasoline down to those tanks. And guess how much it would cost? Only \$400 a gallon. Wow.

He said, as quoted in the *New York Times* on October 4, 2010:

Fossil fuel is the No. 1 thing we import to Afghanistan, and guarding that fuel is keeping the troops from doing what they were sent there to do, to fight or engage local people.

And in *The Hill* on October 6, 2009:

The Pentagon pays an average of \$400 to put a gallon of fuel into a combat vehicle or aircraft in Afghanistan.

Now what this brings to mind for me, an old infantry intelligence officer? Well, I have to tell you that in basic ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] camp, as well as in infantry officer orientation course, they taught us, you know, before you go in an operation, you have to do an "estimate of the situation." Sounds pretty obvious, right? Well, what did that entail? That entailed knowing your enemy; how many there were, where they were, what they had in the way of weapons. Then it had to do with terrain. It had to do with weather, and then it had to do with LOCS. Now, not the kind of lox with the bagels up in New York City—LOCS—Lines of Communication and Supply.

Did Ray Mabus, did the generals who were involved, not remember that they had to make an estimate of the situation with respect to Afghanistan? Not even to mention the failure of imperialism beforehand, like the British, and the Indians, and the Russians—all these people that went before and failed, failed to conquer this really bizarre country where the people didn't like foreign invaders and would take it out on them.

Next: James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, said the same thing in the fall of 2010:

We had a couple of tenuous supply lines across Pakistan that are costing us a heck of a lot, and they're very dangerous.

Why were they tenuous? Well, look on a map for God's sake, and look at the terrain, and look at the relief map. We had a couple of tenuous supply lines across Pakistan and they're costing us a heck of a lot in terms of U.S. casualties, and they're very dangerous. Across Pakistan—well, were the Pakistanis cooperating with us? No, they had just the opposite objective. They wanted to keep India out of Afghanistan; that was their priority. So, they were actually fostering the folks that were fighting our troops in Afghanistan. The notion that our generals didn't know that, well, I leave it to your own imagination as to whether that's true.

Next: Ah! General McChrystal. He knows how to do things. He's going to roll out a—remember—a "government in a box." That's just a decade ago, but some of you were not old enough then.

According to a February 23, 2010 report from Reuters:

U.S. General Stanley McChrystal boasts of a "government-in-a-box" ready to roll into the southern Afghan town of Marjah once military operations are over, but many experts question whether it will work.

He was going to roll it into the south Afghan town of Marjah, once military operations were over. This is February 2010. But "many experts question whether it will work." Well, hello! I'm proud to be, to have been one of those experts.

Next: How can we do all this? Well, we know that we are the indispensable country. This is what then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said, on NBC's *Today Show*, February 19, 1998, well before all this:

...if we have to use force, it's because we are America; we are the indispensable nation; we stand tall, and we see further than other countries into the future...

Whoa! So, the indispensable country. What does that make other countries? Well, when I asked that of college audiences, they say, "Well, dispensable?" Yeah, that's right, yeah. The antonym for indispensable is dispensable. I'd have to comment here that even Vladimir Putin brought President Obama up short on this, saying in a *New York Times* op-ed that he disagreed very much

with the notion that there's one indispensable country in the world. And I have to say on that I agree with Vladimir Putin.

Next Petraeus on Afghans sacrificing their own children—the divine Petraeus, so lionized by our press. For once a light broke through the *Washington Post* and this is what they reported on February 21, 2011:

To the shock of [Afghan] President Hamid Karzai's aides, Gen. David H. Petraeus suggested Sunday at the presidential palace that the Afghans caught up in a coalition attack in northeastern Afghanistan *might have burned their own children* to exaggerate claims of civilian casualties, according to two participants....

“Burned their own children.” What kind of humans burn their own children? I mean, these must be subhuman. These must be the kind of people who are—indispensable.

Next: Now, this is something that most Americans probably never heard. This was during Vietnam, and Angela Davis had just been captured. She was an anti-war campaigner and she was pictured on the cover of *Newsweek* in chains. James Baldwin wrote her a letter from France where he was taking refuge, and he said this:

As long as white Americans take refuge in their whiteness ... they will allow millions of other people to be slaughtered.... So long as their whiteness puts so sinister a distance between their own experience and the experience of others, they will never feel themselves sufficiently worthwhile to become responsible for themselves. As we once put it, in our black church, “They will perish in their sins”—that is, in their delusions.

James Baldwin wrote that letter to Angela Davis on November 19, 1970. And I daresay if you look at that closely with an unbiased view, and, for example, you think about the battle royale that has existed in the United States as to whether our children should be taught the truth about our racist history; about what we did to the Native Americans, what we did to the blacks in this country, there was a great, great debate about whether our children should be exposed to this truth. Well, looks like James Baldwin has hit it

on the head, and we have quite a ways to go before we make peace with this truth.

### A Hope for *Metanoia*

Let me just add here that the situation is not hopeless. One has to have hope. And the hope really is that the kind of thinking that characterizes this superior, this racist, this indispensable attitude that the U.S. has, is beginning to peter before the light of day and the experience of real facts. What will it take for Americans to realize what lies behind this kind of behavior? Well, information, of course, and that's what we're doing. We're doing all we can to get access to Americans who frankly don't know how to distinguish between truth or falsity in the major media.

We're also hopeful that the Europeans—now I've been saying this for many years, so I hesitate to say it again. But this time there's a little bit of evidence for it. It's what, 76 years since the end of the war? Europeans need to grow up. They don't have to act like little children anymore or adolescents. They don't have to do what Big Daddy says anymore. And *mirabile dictu*, wonder of wonders, Angela Merkel has stood up to the United States on Nord Stream 2: The gas pipeline going from Russia to Germany is almost finished. That is big. That is unusual; I would say, almost unprecedented.

We need that kind of behavior on the part of our “allies.” We need them not to be sort of sycophants and vassals. We need them to stand up for the truth and for reality. And then we Americans need to have what I call a change of thinking. The old Greek term for this was *metanoia*: *nous*, *noia*, the brain; *meta*, adding force—meaning a change of outlook. Hey, look at these things, OK? And when you experience the real world, then this hubris, which again is a Greek tragic flaw, this hubris has a chance of being eroded.

So, the hope I see here is that our allies wishing the best of us, will not salute blindly and follow our diktat. And that Americans themselves will finally realize that, you know, this kind of Petraeus-type, this kind of McChrystal-type, this kind of Albright-type of super, well, it's sort of like *Übermensch*, right? [Singing:] *Deutschland, Deutschland, über Alles*. Well, you know, it's the same mentality. *über alles*—above everything else. So, let's hope, let's pray, and let's work real hard to cause this kind of *metanoia* among Americans who are still thinking people.

Thanks very much for listening.